

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Colonel Olcott, in 'The Theosophist' (7, Duke-street, Adelphi), unequivocally gives up, not only the infallibility, but the credibility of 'H. P. B.' He bluntly says that it is a 'monstrous pretence' to say that she was 'the transmitter of only genuine messages from the Masters.' On the contrary, she was 'as human and fallible as either one of us.' It is true that the Colonel goes on to say that if a message is proved to be fictitious 'it does not follow that H. P. B. consciously falsified.' He falls back on the theory of 'evil influences,' and says that 'the discoveries of hypnotic science have already furnished proof of its entire reasonableness.' We quite agree, but that may be true and yet H. P. B. may have been a conscious cheat—or, let us say, a *mixture*.

In this same number of 'The Theosophist' the Colonel continues his most interesting series of 'Old Diary Leaves.'

Mr. J. A. Parker (through 'The Leadenhall Press') has just published 'A Drama for the Closet,' entitled 'Earnest England: or, A Soul Laid Bare.' The dramatic form is merely a convenient peg for hanging a varied assortment of reflections and fancies. There is but little of real value in the book. It has merit, however; and we should imagine that the writer is somewhat of a Spiritualist from the side of Swedenborgianism. He might write a most interesting book if he would try less to be interesting. He is an essayist, not a dramatist.

We are informed that the Russian Government is capturing every copy it can get hold of of the English translation of Tolstoy's 'Harmony of the Gospels.' What a country to live in! What a government! The poor young man at the head must either be very terrified or very powerless; and his close contact with England appears to have done him but little good. It is a miserable life he is called upon to live—if he is at all serious-minded. What a sight for the world, if he made a brave dash for freedom, and rose up to the height of that fine saying of Paul's: 'Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty'! Here, again, Spiritualists may rejoice in their Gospel, which not only proclaims freedom, but reveals the vital reason for it.

'The English Mechanic and World of Science' has been instructing its readers concerning 'Witches and Witchcraft.' It does this because, as it explains, there has been 'a singular recrudescence of the superstition about witches'; and it cites France, Russia, and Ireland. Certainly the paper with this long-winded and pretentious title usefully busies itself in exposing the gross follies of the past and the present—follies which date at least, say, from the time of the writing of the Book of Ezekiel; but there is a lack of

discrimination, inasmuch as it pitches into its rubbish pit 'the farce of crystallo-mancy' and 'the man with the divining rod, searching for water.' That is absurdly wasteful, and we may be pardoned for once more recalling the good old German proverb which warns people against emptying out the baby with the water in the bath.

For our own part, we strongly incline to the opinion that the folly of belief in 'witchcraft' was as nothing compared with the hellish cruelty of the legal and theological vampires who, sharing the belief, tried, by torture and murder, to put it down. The truth is, that beneath the disgusting manifestations of folly or ignorance connected with so-called 'witchcraft,' there has always been a certain amount of truth; and we venture to tell the people who speak for 'The English Mechanic and World of Science' that they will not understand this serious subject until they read their Bibles and understand them. Where the smoke has been, for thousands of years, there is fire.

For instance, has the writer we have referred to ever read A. Putnam's great work on 'Witchcraft of New England Explained by Modern Spiritualism'? We risk the assertion that he has not, because his Article has in it no gleam of real knowledge;—and is only an echo of the commonplace and ignorant prejudices of the man in the street.

Dr. Hensoldt had, in the April 'Arena,' a rather clever shot at the 'Student of Occultism,' whose effusion on the 'Brotherhood of India' we noticed at the time of its publication. This 'Student' contended that 'the spirit of an individual is as truly a material organism as the physical body which envelops it'; and he gave a neat illustration which Dr. Hensoldt reproduces with his reply. But we rather fancy there is a misunderstanding. The 'Student' said 'the spirit,' and Dr. Hensoldt makes him say 'mind,' which need not be the same thing, by any means. We are in sympathy, however, with Dr. Hensoldt when he reverses the 'Student's' suggestion, and says that 'matter has no positive existence': so that, instead of spirit being fine matter, matter is a manifestation of spirit. He says, truly:—

The moment we look upon the so-called 'physical universe as a *product of mind* the great riddle is solved, and we behold order and symmetry where all before was chaos and confusion. 'Look within your own self' is the lesson of the Upanishads; and no amount of materialistic research will unravel the world-mystery.

Mind is the only reality has been the conclusion of the wisest of all times, and this is also the verdict of the highest *Western* philosophy.

The following is difficult to believe, but it is true. It is a pitiable revelation of the unnecessary brutality of what is called the 'discipline' of the workhouse.

Thomas Spicer is a venerable-looking old man, and he is an inmate of the Bethnal Green Overflow Workhouse in Well-street, Hackney. At tea-time on Sunday, Spicer was guilty of a heinous offence, and was led before the master and cautioned. He replied in rebellious terms and consequently figured before Mr. Lane at North London Police-court.

The heinous offence was—chatting with his neighbour.

Mr. Lane: 'Do you mean to say that the paupers must take their tea in dead silence?'

The Official: 'Yes.'

Mr. Lane: 'But surely they can speak in a reasonable tone?'

The Official: 'That would upset all discipline.'

The magistrate found it useless to try to work up moral indignation against a poor old man who had said to a neighbour, 'Good day, how are you?'

Discharged.

Now what we persist in saying is that our Spiritualism would make this impossible. Why? Because it would recognise the profound practical truth that the main thing is the man, not his condition. Kings or beggars, princes or paupers, we are all immortal spirits, and stand alike, really equals, before God *to-day*. Remember that, 'guardians of the poor'!

The huge majority of persons are so careless or so pre-occupied, and the professional and vested interests are so powerful and persistent, that we may, any day, wake up and find some tricky law passed, on behalf of the medical profession, against personal liberty, and under the pretence of protecting the public. The danger of to-day is a proposal which is 'already afloat for the restraint of so-called 'un-qualified' doctors. The huge trade-union of the medical profession naturally wishes to put down the free lances, but it is very questionable whether the public would be advantaged by that. Many doctors are pliable and teachable, but the majority are as much bound to their formulas as any priest is to his ritual; and, for the public good, free lances are really needed. We hope that any attempt to set up a medical priestcraft will be carefully watched and sturdily resisted. The spirited little 'Magnetic and Botanic Journal' is sensible on this subject when it says:—

No door should be shut on any school. Every kind of worker in the vineyard of healing should be allowed to practise. Perhaps certain restrictions might be necessary, but certainly not restrictions laid down by rival competitors.

It was not long ago that the Homœopathic physicians were under the ban in this country and had a hard time of it, but by perseverance and united effort, integrity, and the constant and consistent appeals to the common-sense of our legislature and their love of fair play, prevailed to a large extent, and apparently, open war does not exist between the Allopath and the Homœopath, as was the case but a short time ago.

Then war was waged on women. Female doctors were reviled and scoffed at and scorned by the immaculate school, but to their honour be it recorded, the Homœopaths so influenced public opinion as to compel the recognition of woman, the heaven-born nurse, as a natural minister to all the ills that flesh is heir to.

Fighting has, however, been kept up persistently with changes of pose, and to-day there are arrayed some Homœopaths and women doctors, as well as Allopaths, against other men and women who seek to cure by other methods than theirs. This is all wrong, unmanly, unwomanly, narrow-gauged, selfish, un-English. 'A fair field and no favour,' is all that is asked, and ought to be the motto of us all. Let the best man win.

This is really the common-sense of it. We are probably on the eve of fresh departures in relation to the art of healing, and the last thing we want is any forceful arrest of experiment in, for instance, such directions as healing by suggestion and the laying on of hands. We do not want a law that would have made the first Christians liable to prosecution.

CONFERENCE EXPENSES FUND.—The following contributions have been received in addition to those already acknowledged:—Mr. James Robertson, £2; Mrs. Russell, £2; Rev. W. R. Tomlinson, £1 1s.; Mr. Gilbert Elliot, £1; Mrs. S., £1; Mrs. Morgan (per Mr. J. J. Morse), 10s.; Mr. C. Jacoby, 10s.; A Friend, 5s.; Lieut. Boger, R.N., 5s.; Madame B. de Laversay, 5s.; Mr. J. Delves, 5s.; Miss Porter, 5s.; Mr. A. Colbeck, 3s.; Mr. W. Hawes, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Goodall, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. H. Pears, 2s. 6d.

BACK NUMBERS OF 'LIGHT,' for some years past, can be supplied for 2½d. each, post free.

MORE FRENCH DIABOLISM.

An article in 'The Globe' of April 30th induces me to take up again the subject of French diabolism:—

Lovers of the occult sciences are looking forward to a strange libel case which will shortly come before the Paris tribunal. It is brought by a Mlle. Lucie Claraz against a fantastic publication called the 'Revue du Diable.' The suit in itself is not of any importance, but it will be rendered curious and interesting by the production of a number of documents concerning the two mysterious sects known as Luciferism and Satanism.

'Satanism' I take to be the cultus that Mons. Huysman has recently described. I refrained from giving the title even of the novel which chiefly deals with it, as the details are insufferably gross. The object of the black Mass seems to be simply the incarnation of Satan in the form of a Eucharistic wafer, composed of every filthy substance conceivable, including the minced baby. There is very little psychism about it. After the ceremony some of the congregation become possessed, as in a revival meeting. It seems to me not so much a worship of Satan as an elaborate and puerile system of insult, not to Christ, scarcely to Christianity, an insult to the rites and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. How can anyone really believe that a fallen angel like Milton's Satan would feel honoured by being compelled to incarnate in a mass of filth, which is afterwards subject to the grossest indignities?

All things have a meaning at first. Let us see if anything in the past throws a light upon this. One hundred years ago, and probably at the present time, just before the patriarch goes into the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, at Easter, to bring out the miraculous fire, the temple is darkened, and the congregation bite, kick, and pinch each other not at all in pleasant sport. The meaning of this seems to be that during the nominal three days that Christ is supposed to lie in the tomb the world is given over to the powers of darkness. A similar idea seems to have been the basis of the old 'Feast of Fools.' The students of the colleges elected a boy-bishop, and for some days occupied the cathedrals, intoning obscene and grotesque psalms, and making a farce of all holy rites. Mons. Alphonse Karr, in giving a sketch of this, says that after the Mass scenes so gross took place that they cannot be noticed in print. This seems, pin for pin, like Mons. Huysman's *Messe Noire*. It is to be remarked that all this was done with the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities, who went so far as to rule that if the boy-bishop died during his tenure of office he was entitled to the same funereal honours as a real bishop. The coffin and sculptured monument of one of these boy-bishops has been discovered in Salisbury Cathedral. The deacons of this functionary forcibly exacted money contributions during the festival. The Eton Montem was a survival of all this, the Catholic deacons being changed to Protestant highwaymen.

The Luciferists seem to be descendants of the Illuminate, who are sketched in my 'Modern Mystics and Modern Magic.' But it is to be confessed that neither Saint Martin nor Lavater would have quite endorsed all this:—

Luciferism dates from the last century, and will be found mentioned in one of the works of Georges Sand. It is a kind of Manicheism. Lucifer is the eternal rival of Adonai, but the Luciferans, far from recognising in the all-powerful angel overthrown by Adonai the principle of evil opposed to the principle of good, adore in him the supernatural power which produces equilibrium, and renders unto nature the rights ignored by Adonai, the God of Christians. To Him life should be made up of sorrow, constraint, and mortification. He exacts from his followers the repression of all the faculties which form the joy and happiness of humanity. His cult is that of sacrifice. Lucifer, on the contrary, accords to humanity all its most legitimate desires. He allows it every joy and satisfaction, and guarantees the expansion of all its faculties, thereby making man free. What the Adonaiists call sin, we Luciferans call virtue. We

regard Lucifer as the Good God. The Satanists are in reality only schismatics in the Christian family. They accept the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and do not contest His victory over the fallen angel. They admit that virtue and duty are where the religions of Adonai have placed them, but during the struggle they side with the vanquished against the victor. They prefer Satan dethroned to Christ King. They are merely revolutionists and conspirators. They defy God in order to brave Him and ridicule His laws. Their cult is not based on any philosophy: they are maniacs, demoniacs, blasphemers, conscious of their impiety. The Luciferans sacrifice themselves to the principle of what they believe to be good; the Satanists sacrifice themselves to the principle of what they believe to be evil. Lucifer is our Good God: Satan is their Wicked God.

The 'Globe' goes on to give an account of their quaint rites:—

At Bulle, not far from Fribourg, a barrister, a confirmed anti-clerical, a well-educated man, and fond of studying things philosophical, opened his house as a Freethinking club, which was soon transformed into a Masonic lodge, entitled 'La Réformée,' and placed under the direction of Mons. Steckelin. The lodge was composed of noted and respected persons. In a short time they began to take an interest in Luciferism, and Mons. Steckelin, after having converted his brethren, undertook to celebrate the Luciferan ceremonies with all the pomp with which the Catholic churches surrounded the cult of Adonai. He forthwith bought a garden in the Rue de la Grande-Fontaine, at the bottom of which were the remains of a granite cliff. Out of that cliff he cut a subterranean temple, similar to that of Albert de Rudolstadt in the 'Consuelo' of Georges Sand. This Luciferan sanctuary was fitted up in Roman style. It contained two large square altars, one for the sacrifice, and the other for masses, with three small ones in the form of triangles, destined for other ceremonies. The choir was perched above in a gallery shut out from the public gaze. Conspicuous in the services was the 'Grande-Maitresse.' In religion she was called 'Deodata-Lucif.' She was accompanied by a procession of 'sisters,' whose co-operation was necessary in the celebration of the mysteries of Lucifer, the God of Joy and Pleasure. The question was soon raised who was the lady hidden under the sacred name of Deodata-Lucif? The good people of Fribourg at once said it was Mlle. Lucie Claraz, notwithstanding that she was more fit to be the servant of a curate than a priestess of Lucifer. She was forty-five years of age, very thin, with sunken eyes and protruding lips. She lived in the house of Mons. Steckelin, her brother-in-law, and was regarded as a most ardent Catholic. One day she wrote a letter to the Bishop of the locality, denouncing the abominations of which the Luciferan temple was daily the theatre. Aided by the alms of indignant Catholics, and subscriptions from Italy, France, and Belgium, she bought up the garden, together with the temple, and announced her intention to found a religious order on the spot, in expiation of the sacrileges which had been committed there. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, it is said, was so pleased with her zeal that he sent to her the decoration of the Holy Sepulchre.

So far Mlle. Lucie Claraz succeeded in carrying out her scheme, but, unfortunately, a change in the scene took place. 'At the moment when the funds collected by her began to flow in from all quarters,' says the writer in the 'Matin' who is responsible for these details, 'the financial situation of the Luciferans was in a desperate state. The converts to the Good God refused to pay their share of the expenses caused by the construction and establishment of the temple. Mons. Steckelin had no money. The creditors thereon seized all the holy objects used in the ceremonies, and the mystery was exploded. Here Mlle. Claraz stepped in and paid the debts of the High Priest of Luciferism, her brother-in-law, but with the funds subscribed by the faithful for the creation of a new religious order. Naturally there was a great outcry among the clergy when they learned to what use the subscriptions had been put. The curate of Gruyère refused to admit her to the Holy Communion, and she brought her appeal before the ecclesiastical authorities, but to no purpose, and she was condemned to pay the costs. The singular case was published at the time in several papers. As regards the reports that she acted as Grande-Maitresse in the Luciferan services, she stoutly denies it. It is probable it was due to the circumstance that her brother-in-law was High Priest of the sect. What has become of him is not stated. Such,' says the writer in conclu-

sion, 'are the facts which will be laid before the Paris tribunal. It remains with the French law to decide if Mlle. Lucie Claraz was libelled when she was accused of having filled the part of the mysterious Deodata-Lucif.' Many more curious details relating to the affair are expected to be made during the trial, in which the Luciferans and the Satanists will probably be examined in respect to their extraordinary aberrations of religious sentiment and the mystic doctrines which they profess to hold.

Many Occultists have told us from time to time the great dangers that Spiritualists run if they meddle with occult subjects without the traditions and checks of the past. But do these checks and traditions ensure absolute safety? It is amongst the Occultists that this diabolism has arisen.

ARTHUR LILLIE.

RECEPTION TO MRS. CARRIE P. PRATT.

On Friday evening, the 3rd inst., a reception was held at Morse's Library, 26, Osnaburgh-street, Regent's Park, N.W., in honour of Mrs. Carrie P. Pratt, President of the 'Spiritualist Helping Hand Society' (an auxiliary of the Berkley Hall Temple Society), of Boston, U.S.A. There was a large attendance. Mrs. Pratt received a very cordial greeting from the visitors. After some pleasant intercourse with the guest of the evening, and a charmingly executed piano solo by Miss Alice Hunt, Mr. J. J. Morse introduced Mrs. Pratt to the general notice, in a brief speech descriptive of her life and work, extending to her a cordial welcome as a co-worker from that new England which had so much of the sturdiness and independence of this old England in its traditions, life, and sentiment. The society of which she was the president, said Mr. Morse, was devoted to succouring the needy, ministering to the sick, and doing good to all, as far as its means allowed. Mr. Morse referred to the long and useful services of Dr. Pratt, as a magnetic healer, under the control of 'Red Medicine,' regretting that he, the doctor, was not with us. On behalf of the present company, in which were several well-known mediums, and, he felt sure he might say, on behalf of the Spiritualists of London, who were always pleased to welcome visitors of worth and goodness, he gave Mrs. Pratt every welcome that heart could feel or tongue could voice. Mrs. Bathe then favoured the company with a sympathetic and exquisitely rendered nocturne. Mr. G. Breasley contributed a vocal solo, as did also Miss Florence Morse. Miss A. Rowan Vincent added some felicitous observations, expressing her opinion that such reunions did much to unite us all, and hoped that Mrs. Pratt would return home feeling that she had friends here interested in her labours, even as she would be interested in our work and workers. It was good to assemble thus, to encourage one another, and to testify our esteem and respect for workers from other lands. Mrs. Pratt then gracefully responded to all that had been said, expressing her deep pleasure thereat. She narrated several moving incidents in the early days of American Spiritualism, referring particularly to Mrs. Fannie Davis Smith, Mrs. Amanda Spence, Mr. H. P. Fairfield, and others, and added her conviction that the impending Conference would be the starting point of a great extension of interest and work, in and for our cause. Refreshments were served during the evening, the amiable hostess, Mrs. Morse, presiding thereat in her usual genial and hospitable fashion. Among the numerous company present we noted the following: Mrs. Carrie P. Pratt, Mrs. Hunt, Miss Alice Hunt, Miss Nellie Dixon, Mrs. Brinkley, Mr. Braund, Dr. Jagielski, Mr. G. W. Breasley, Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Bathe, Mrs. Bessie Russell-Davies, Miss Davies, Mr. J. J. Vango, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Mrs. Carp, Mrs. Moffatt, Mrs. Westphall, Mr. H. Rumford, Miss A. Rowan Vincent, Miss Dixon, Miss Porter, Mr. W. H. Parker, Miss Day, Miss Dunbar, Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Bliss, Signor Eric Conti, Mr. Boulding, Mr. W. R., Mrs., and Miss Ray, Mr. J. T. and Miss Davis, Mrs. Wilford, Mr. Martin, Mr. Parker, Dr. Mack, Mr. Lewis, Mr. J. J., Mrs., and Miss Morse.

WE are requested to state that Dr. Mack has gone on a short visit to America. Any communications sent to 53, Margaret-street, Cavendish-square, W., will be forwarded.

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TELEPATHY AND SPIRIT RETURN.

BY QUÆSTOR VITÆ.

As no one else has replied to the query of Mr. J. Coates on this subject, I will venture to present a few suggestions which may elicit further communications. The subject cannot be fairly treated, however, in a short space, as it comprises both metaphysical and psychological and ontological considerations.

Telepathy is a term made from the combination of two roots, signifying 'afar' and 'feel,' *i.e.*, feeling from afar. As feeling implies perception, it means perceiving from a distance. Consequently it may embrace both thought-transference and form-transference. It may also embrace perception by normal and by intra-normal modes.

Mr. Coates is perturbed by the implications conveyed in telepathy or thought-transference, and demurs to the presumed attempt to 'rob us of the evidence of our living dead,' but I would beg to suggest that this evidence is itself in no way affected; it is the deductions to be drawn therefrom, solely, which are in question.

This subject will be much simplified if we bear in mind that all our knowledge of our surroundings consists in subjective phenomena. We do not perceive material things, as is popularly supposed. We only perceive the images presented by our own sense impressions. A relating circuit is established between our interior percipience and the 'things' surrounding us, which results in some of the life-quality (noumenon) constituting those things being brought into re-action with our perception. This re-action produces conception (spirit-life being positive, and the receptive soul-life being negative), in which the form, or image, or appearance, or phenomenon pertaining to that noumenal-life is re-presented or perceived. Thus it is *not* the thing external to us which we perceive, but the presence within us of some of its noumenon, which inevitably entails inseparable phenomenon. This will explain what is meant by the saying that to think is to 'thing.'

Distance does not prevent this relation or relating-circuit being established, and the image being presented to us, so long as the 'thing' comes within the field of sense-relations and pertains to the same degree or mode of life (as is witnessed in our perception of stars millions of miles away from us). Philosophy makes it very clear, consequently, that we do not know 'things-in-themselves,' but only their adjectival quality or appearance as presented within our interior perception. But I add to the accepted teachings of philosophy, the explanation that this occurs by the fact that we accrete and integrate part of the life-quality (noumenon) of the 'things' related. Hence their phenomenal appearance becomes re-presented within our perception (and it is this life-quality integration, or noumenal integration, which constitutes the basis of memory*).

It is this same law also which operates in producing the subjective 'presences' which have led to the supposition that spirits return to this plane; with the difference, however, that these phenomena are presented from 'within'—*i.e.*, from intra-normal degrees of life, instead of from without, or from the superficial plane of life. In both cases, however, the presence of some of the life-quality which has emanated either from the external thing by sense-relation, or from a spirit individual by thought-transference, causes the re-presentation of its characteristic form or phenomenon, or appearance, to perception.

Mr. Coates admits that thought-transference has been demonstrated as occurring between human beings. There are also numerous instances on record in which the form, or appearance, or image of human beings, has been similarly transferred. But this has been erroneously termed astral projection. The imaged presence, though really a subjective presentation, has been supposed to be external to the percipient, and has been called the 'double,' or the 'astral-form.' But I say that this is a misconception. On the other hand, Mr. Myers and his school have called these subjective presentations 'hallucinations,' which term is equally open to objection, as such phenomena are as qualificative and valid of the individual, and as actual, as any sense-presented phenomena is of a thing-in-itself.

That these form presentations are not necessarily 'doubles' externally projected from one human being to another is shown from the rudimentary experiments in form transmission made and recorded by the Psychical Research Society, from which it appears clearly that human thought may convey impressions even of an imagined form, to a human percipient. This is also confirmed by experiments in hypnotic suggestion in which forms which are imaginative (but quality-bearing consequently) to the operator, become vivid and actual to the subject's percipience.

I have referred on p. 104 to an instance in which a sensitive perceived the thought-form presence of a living person. She imagined this vision to be external to herself. The perception was so vivid that she thought the person must have died, and that it was his spirit that appeared to her, but found, on inquiry, that he was alive and as well as usual. I know of other similar cases, and no doubt your readers could add plenty of similar illustrations.

But these cases do not occur by the projection of an astral double, as is generally supposed. Life, spirit, and soul inhere inseparably, and constitute a triune-unity. The spirit cannot separate from the body without entailing the death of the latter. The above cases are the phenomenal presentations, necessarily accompanying vital thought-transference, purely and simply.

In the instance of human thought-transference above referred to, the image, or presence, was so vivid to the perception of the sensitive that she thought it was a spirit. That is to say, the presence was apparently similar in all respects to those she was accustomed to conceive of, and speak of, as spirits who had 'returned' to earth. And here we have the solution of the problem.

If thought-transference from incarnate spirits, or men, can carry the image of the person from whom it emanates, so that the sensitive thinks that the person's spirit is actually present, then, evidently, thought-transference from discarnate spirits will entail a similar appearance, and cause the sensitive to think that the 'spirit' has returned to earth and is actually present, though it really remains in its own state or sphere, or plane, from which its form-carrying vital-thoughts, received by the sensitive, emanate. Both perceptions are subjective objects, and are constituted by the quality of the noumenal life, which is the vehicle of the thought transferred, and which quality presents its inseparable phenomenal appearance when reacting in conception.

Messages from disembodied spirits or 'communing' and image presentations or psychical visions are, therefore, constituted by thought-transference, such as we see illustrated as occurring between embodied spirits.

This explanation does not in any way 'exclude the evidence of spirit return,' though it demonstrates that that evidence occurs without entailing, or necessitating, or being accompanied by, the 'return' of the spirit to this plane. A psychical spirit can no more 'return' and occupy this plane than an embodied spirit could go to, and occupy, the psychical plane. A plane must not be taken to be identical with locality. A plane is constituted by the relations of self-consciousness, and a change of plane pre-supposes a change of state, or of degree of self-conscious-being. For a spirit to return to this plane would imply, as pre-condition thereof, its reversion or retrogression to this superficial degree of self-conscious-being, by which fact it would cease to be what we understand and imply by the term 'a spirit.' It is solely by thought-transference from the psychical plane of being, *i.e.*, by the transference of life in its psychical degree of becoming to man, that the psychical degree of conscious life can be developed in man. Not by any effort pertaining to his normal empirical or superficial degree of conscious life can this be accomplished.

I would say to that school which describes these intra-normal or subliminal presentations of psychical origin as hallucinations, that both in these and in phenomena resulting from human thought-transference it is thought-life or vital-thought which is the vehicle of transmission; the principle in action. Now thought is consciousness in action; it is the Universal principle; it is Omniscience self-explicating in distinction. It is Reality in process. The Hegelians have proved beyond dispute that appearance is inseparable from reality; that phenomenon implies noumenon. How, in the face of this, can it be maintained that only the phenomena of sense-related presentations are real? It is evident, from the above facts, that phenomena can be presented from within as well as from without; that there is a more immediate, a more direct

* Philosophy recognises that experience is presented in the form of a permanent flux, and individuality is constituted by the unifying of the manifold of this flux, in one identity. On the other hand, physiology also recognises that there is a permanent flux of life through the human form. But these two processes have not yet been identified. I say that knowing and being inhere inseparably, and that the two above processes are identical, or one and the same.

mediacy, than sense-relations, and the phenomena of the former are as valid, and actual, and as much imply the presence of reality as those of the latter; nor can they be any more limited to sub-conscious memory presentations, from a submerged stratum of the self, than those of the latter. If the phenomena of the former are hallucinations, then equally so are those of sense-relations.

I would beg to say that I entirely agree with Mr. Coates that what have been miscalled distinct secondary personalities, by the above school, are really either partial, and alternate aspects of the same personality, or distinctive degrees of self-conscious-being in the same abiding individuality.

DEMATERIALIZATION OF THE HUMAN BODY.

The Hon. Alexander Aksakoff has for some time been carrying on a rigid investigation of the circumstances connected with the above rare phenomenon. All the documents associated with the results of his research have from time to time been printed in the pages of his journal, 'Psychische Studien,' and we have now and then translated from this periodical such portions of the evidence as we thought might interest our readers. The medium in this case—Mrs. D'Esperance—being the only one who, as far as known to Herr Aksakoff, does not fall into a trance during her materialisation séances, the investigator thought it would be of the highest interest to obtain from her as clear an account as possible of her bodily and mental condition during the progress of a sitting. With this object he set before her a series of questions which she answers in the frankest manner, and the information contained in these replies may throw some light on curious, and as yet, unsolved problems which have tended to introduce discord where there should have been harmony. It is interesting to note that Mrs. D'Esperance was an unbeliever in materialisations until a simple incident brought about the revelation of the phenomenon in relation to herself. She had called upon Mrs. Mellon (then Miss Fairlamb) in Newcastle. Although she disbelieved the fact of materialisation, she did not doubt her friend's good faith. That lady suggested, in order to pass the time, that Mrs. D'Esperance should sit in the cabinet herself. The latter laughingly consented, and was no sooner seated than a shape appeared. From that moment the gift developed, but as she knew as well as most people how mediums were blamed for fraudulently enacting the parts of the spirits, she determined that only on one condition would she enter a cabinet again. That condition was that she should not be entranced, but retain, all the time, full possession of her consciousness, if the spirits could work on such terms. It was said to be possible, and the promise was given, and so Herr Aksakoff has been enabled to obtain from her these deeply-interesting descriptions of her mental and physical state during some of these extraordinary séances. The report is a long one, and one or two extracts from her replies must suffice.

'At first, when I sit down and the curtain is closed, I feel that I wish to know whether all the sitters are properly and suitably arranged on their seats. As long as I can see the sitters, I do not feel that any attempt on the part of the spirits will be made to use me; when the curtain is closed, my attention is generally directed to the sitters, so as to gather if everything is in order with them. A feeling of perplexity usually prevails, and a sensation that everything must be in order before I sit down, so that I may not have to think of the sitters. I am always disturbed by a seeming confusion, and if this is not removed I am not sufficiently restful for manifestations. When all is quiet and still, I feel no anxiety about anything, not even about myself; and the longer I sit, the less I care. If I make a remark to the effect that "some one is in the cabinet," I do so because I reckon it my duty to let the sitters know, and not because I feel any particular interest in the circumstance.'

The first psychical sensation is described as follows:—

'Over my face and hands I feel as if spiders' webs were woven, and then I rub my face and hands. This sensation passes, and the air grows stuffy, so that I have a difficulty in breathing. That passes, and I then know that a shape will be built up. The spider-web sensation is the beginning of the manifestation, and I do not feel it again unless the séance is interrupted, in which case it seems to be renewed. At unsuccessful séances it is present the whole time. If a little light comes in between the curtains, I can see the white misty mass floating about like steam from a locomotive. I have often thrust my hand into this mass, but I could never say that I perceived or touched anything. It does not often happen that I see it, and only on rare occasions have I had

sufficient curiosity to seek to find out what sort of a mass it is. I am only curious about it, perhaps, when others are; failing this, I am indifferent. After this mist has floated hither and thither for from a few minutes to half an hour, it suddenly ceases, and I know that a living being is standing beside me. The mist may be there the one instant, and the living creature the moment following. I have always a feeling of emptiness, which begins at once after the spider's-web sensation comes. If I endeavour to move myself, I am not certain as to distance. I cannot say how far I move my finger, nor, when I do move it, what it will touch—somewhat like the movement of the limbs in water. The law of gravity appears to be abolished. I seem to become more and more inactive, and, although I know that there is only a narrow space between me and the end of the cabinet, the cabinet appears to have vanished, and the space to be boundless. When Yolande (one of her materialisations) comes she seems to approach me from a great distance.'

In reply to other questions regarding this favourite visitant, Mrs. D'Esperance says:—

'I cannot say whether the shape or the drapery is first formed, the whole appearance is so sudden. When Yolande comes I always feel an interest in her, although I have not often the opportunity of seeing her. I have placed my hand upon her, and touched her hair, but I have not had sufficient curiosity to make a thorough examination of it. As far as I know, she has never taken anything from my clothing in order to clothe herself. On one occasion the fashion of her dress was observed to be almost exactly like mine, but what she usually wore was well examined and found to be such as might have been washed, mangled, and apparently laid by for a time. Since then I have always taken care to wear a dark robe, as Yolande continues to wear white.'

In answer to another query, Mrs. D'Esperance replied:—

'Each quick movement on Yolande's part causes me to perspire slightly. I do not know where she moves. I only know she moves, because I have now learned from experience that exertion on her part affects me much more than if it had been my own. After a séance it often occurs that my clothes are so saturated with perspiration that I am compelled to change them. In my normal condition I never perspire. [During a séance Mrs. D'Esperance drinks water in abundance. In her ordinary state she drinks none.] When Yolande is outside the cabinet I know she is there, but that may be because I have seen her go out. When she dematerialises outside, I feel myself getting stronger, and I conclude from that that she has returned, but I cannot say I know it as a certainty. All I feel when she is outside is a nervous anxiety as to what she is doing, just as if she had got beyond my control and might do something she should not do. I never think of myself, but always of her, just as I should do if a child were committed to my care. This is never the case in regard to any other shapes. They are nothing to me. I am curious about them, but not anxious. When Yolande is outside and touches anyone, or anyone touches her, I can always feel it. I do not know when she touches a table or a book, but if she seizes anything I feel as if my hand had caught something—I feel a contraction of the muscles.'

In answer to another question, the medium says:—

'If I touch Yolande, I feel as if I touched myself; but I know there are four hands there, and I conclude from that that they (the other two) are not mine. When she held both my hands—the one being caused to sustain the guitar, and the other to pluck the strings—I felt as if I were touching my own hands. Hers were colder than mine; that was the only difference I could experience.'

In reply to the query, 'Do you touch Yolande when you wish to do so, and as much as you wish?' Mrs. D'Esperance says:—

'I never seek to touch her when she does not come to my side, or when she does not wish me to do something for her. On July 5th, 1890, I felt her, when she was so alarmed and threw herself upon me. I felt her whole body, and her heart-beat, and her breathing—or rather I thought I perceived the beat of her heart. I could not understand why she was so frightened, as it was simply the sound of the guitar that startled her. Her fingers were moist, and when they touched my face there seemed to be earth clinging to them, so I gathered from that that she had been doing something with the plants. I felt the sand.'

Among much else that is interesting, Mrs. D'Esperance states that in hundreds of ways she has convinced herself that Yolande and she are two separate individualities. Herr Aksakoff speaks of Mrs. D'Esperance in the highest terms.

AGENTS FOR 'LIGHT.'—We shall be grateful if our friends will kindly supply us with the names and addresses of any news-vendors or others, whether in London or the country, who either keep 'LIGHT' for sale, or are willing to do so.

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PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

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NEXT WEEK.

We do not propose to anticipate the papers or the discussions next week, but, as we can think of nothing but the Conference just now, and as we are naturally anxious that it should be made very fruitful, we venture to broadly indicate the main outlines of what lies before us, and to point out the channels along which thought and speech might profitably flow.

But, first of all, we would lay emphasis on the fact that nothing will help us so much as to remember that we are going to meet as truth-seekers. The man or woman with a brief to defend, a crank to show off, or an axe to grind (if there be such) will be out of place at the Conference except as a candidate for the 'penitent form.' We profess to be seekers; and, if we have at all found, the upshot of that is to open our eyes, not to our knowledge, but to our ignorance. This carries with it the thought that, as Spiritualists, we are (or need to be) not more, but less indulgent to imposture and delusion than the unbelievers. They can afford to laugh: we cannot. Our only chance is along the road of absolute honesty and resolute determination to recognise all the facts. But that brings with it a consolation. It ought to absolutely wipe out all risk of dissension. We are persuaded that a great deal of so-called deception and fraud is very instructive: and what we have said does not necessarily involve turning out the presumed 'impostor.' We must do what the patient deep-sea dredger does—turn over every bit of stuff that comes, and try to find out the meaning of it. The people on the other side are very often difficult to understand, and sometimes very difficult to bear with. They can play the fool as well as tricky mediums. How interesting! And yet, even as to this playing the fool; how do we know what is most useful, for the moment? Ridiculous things, disappointing things, apparently vicious things, may have ulterior consequences. The real question for us is—Are we patient enough, strong enough, wise enough, to go on dredging, without rushing to hasty conclusions, or quarrelling because one brings up shells and another slime?

If we grasp the bearing of these reflections, and move on through the Conference, guided by them, we shall have model papers, and especially model discussions. Take, for instance, such a subject as 'Public exhibitions of spiritual phenomena,' or 'Are spirit photographs necessarily the photographs of spirits?' or 'Our duty with regard to acting upon information given, advice offered, or requests made, in spirit messages.' Every one of these subjects palpitates with 'perilous stuff.' At any minute, a prepossession, a bit of old cherished dogma, a personal reference, a peculiarity of personal experience, may strike a spark and force an explosion. The only way to avoid it is to be

strictly scientific, to feel in the hand the pilgrim's staff, to know how little we know, and to be absolutely possessed by the desire to get at the thing which is, whether we like it or not. We must not even mind being told that this or that is 'of the devil.' Well! let us look into it; perhaps it is. There are signs and tokens. Let us apply them. Or signs and tokens may not be sure. Very well; let us wait. We want facts, not fancies, not things that please us, not prettily spun theories. But how difficult to combine genial openness of mind with the unflinching eyes and the hand of steel!

The subjects we have named speak for themselves. They are vitally important and call for high-toned wisdom and broad thoughtfulness. Some of the others are of equal importance; for instance, 'An ideal religious service for Spiritualists and inquirers.' In a sense, this may be regarded as the most practically important subject of the whole. The time has come for showing the bearings of Spiritualism upon the whole subject of religion and life. The Churches are all in a state of transition. They are worm-eaten with superstition or paganism; and, less and less, will Spiritualists be able to find nutrition in them. Their marriage services, especially that of the Established Church, are almost unbearable; and their burial services are entirely untrue for Spiritualists. Their hymn-books, their creeds, their dreadful old heathenisms *must* drive out Spiritualists more and more. And what will happen to them will happen to rationalists, from the opposite point of view. How manifestly important, then, this subject of Sunday meetings for Spiritualists and inquirers! Of course there are difficulties, but where are there not difficulties? Urgent needs imply and involve difficulties, and it is manifest that we shall never accomplish anything if we doubt our power.

But it is difficult to select; and we venture to say that it would be impossible to set before reasonable people deeper subjects for debate. We earnestly hope that the right spirit will dominate our gatherings—as, indeed, we doubt not it will. Then all will be well.

THE CONFERENCE.

We propose in next week's 'LIGHT' to give a succinct report of the entire proceedings of the Conference; and, in regard to matters which may seem to require a more extended notice, we shall hope to deal with them at greater length in subsequent issues.

A full programme of the proceedings at the Conference will be found in our advertisement pages.

MR. GEORGE SPRIGGS.—We had the pleasure of a call, on Wednesday, from Mr. George Spriggs, who had arrived from Melbourne on the previous day. He will attend the Conference next week as a delegate from the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, of which he is the president; the Melbourne Spiritualistic Progressive Lyceum; and the Adelaide Psychological Society. His many friends in this country will be glad of the opportunity of meeting him once again.

THE EXTERNAL WORLD AN ILLUSION.—To the ordinary untrained intellect, with its crude, empirical conceptions, and its blind, unreasoning dogmatism, nothing would seem more absurd than the idea that the external world is not real. The mere suggestion of such a possibility is enough to set every dunce in Christendom bellowing with derisive mirth. 'What! you actually mean to tell us that these chairs and tables do not exist? Are you mad? Why, *here they are!* you can *see and feel* them, and what better proof can there be of their reality?' This is the stock argument resorted to by those who are not accustomed to ponder over the causes of things, but are satisfied to call a certain object a 'stone' and another a 'tree,' because they have from infancy been taught to do so, and who go through life without ever realising the profound mystery which is involved in these conceptions. But where is your universe without your *mind*? Take away a man's mind, and what has become of his world? What, I ask, has *become* of his chairs and tables; of his trees and flowers; of his sun and moon, and the host of stars which make up that universe which now appears to him so substantial? *They have vanished into nothingness.*—DR. HENSOLDT, in 'The Arena.'

THE MATERIAL USE OF SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

On Monday evening, the 29th ult., at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, Mr. J. J. Morse delivered an address under the above title to the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, the President of the Alliance, occupying the chair.

After some introductory remarks by the President, Mr. J. J. MORSE, under influence, said :—In undertaking to address you this evening, friends, on the subject of the 'Material Use of Spiritual Phenomena,' we are conscious, of course, that the possible interpretation to be placed on the subject selected may be the purely monetary value that may be attachable to, or that may ultimately accrue from, such phenomena in relation to the practical business of daily life. Such considerations (the lecturer continued) applied to some extent to the Spiritualism of to-day, inasmuch as what was known as 'professional mediumship' was a matter well recognised amongst Spiritualists. He desired, however, to disabuse the minds of those present of the idea that he intended to look at the question from what might be deemed a sordid and selfish point of view. The realities that passed current in the shape of phenomena exceeded in value all the money that could be computed. They were of transcendent importance to the human race in every department of life ; but it was the purpose of the lecturer that evening to deal with them in relation to the great questions affecting human interests on the material side of being. The presence and operation of spirits in the experiences of human life opened up a wide source of inquiry in regard to the possibilities inherent in the constitution of nature and of man, and were vital issues in relation to religion, science, morals, and personal development. The first consideration to be dealt with was a very old and necessary point. What were the relations that existed between the natural and the spiritual worlds ? For unless they could have some clear and definite understanding on that particular issue, it would be impossible to arrive at a correct solution of the problems presented. It was desirable that they should dismiss from their minds any idea of separateness and discreteness between the two existences. It was a fallacy to suppose that on the one side they had a spirit universe altogether distinct in character, nature, and environment from that on the other side—the material one. So long as the idea of this separateness obtained there was always the risk of miracle being appealed to as an explanation of any natural phenomenon that could not otherwise be accounted for. The adoption of the theory of miracle only tended to expose the ignorance of those who used it to explain the manifestations of that which should be of a piece in every department of its operations, always supposing that the word 'universe' was sufficiently elastic to cover all—spiritual and natural—differing sides of the one same reality. Accepting this explanation, then, the idea of discreteness or separateness might be conveniently dismissed, and we might find that the relationship of the two existences was a matter of natural conditioning, of normal law and principle. The translation known as death would, as a consequence, be seen to be a purely natural transition from the one plane into the other plane. It was not a taking out of one condition and putting into another ; but a progressive continuation of life begun here, which is, so to speak, further unfolded by the process of death, and fitted for the side of the universe known as the spirit side. Admitting this hypothesis, that there was, parallel to this ordinary life, another and subjective life, it was conceivable that, under certain conditions, the consciousness of the human being might alternate between the two states. Under certain circumstances a human being might be normally related to the physical side of the universe ; under other conditions, he might be normally related to the spiritual side ; and in each of these degrees or planes of being the necessary faculties or organs were brought into play, as the occasion required. The duality of man's nature was thereby implied, and if we implied this duality of nature and relationships we must of course imply a duality of states of being. If man was a duality in nature there must be a duality in the universe for his duality to be related to, and under certain circumstances it might be that normally he was conscious on the one plane and normally unconscious on the other. Herein was to be found an explanation of the experiences common to many people who have a vague consciousness of leading a double life. They were the subjects of a variety of impressions during sleep which, im-

perfectly comprehended on waking, nevertheless left a very definite impression on the waking consciousness. This did not imply a duality of consciousness or a duality of personality ; it simply indicated that the personality was operant on different planes at different times. Here the lecturer made a slight digression by dealing with the sensations of the spirit after final separation from the physical body. It frequently happened that a spirit, on looking around after its translation from material conditions, was surprised by the apparent familiarity of its new dwelling place. This feeling was due to the circumstance that, during sleep, the temporal or physical consciousness being withdrawn, the consciousness became operative on the spiritual plane through the spirit organisation ; and, becoming personally related to the spirit state, the external consciousness did not register the impressions received. When the subjective personality became, by death, the objective personality, the impressions received by the spirit during the sleep of the body became part of its conscious experience. This experience of the spirit on entering the spirit world, therefore, was an indication of the alternate action of the consciousness on differing planes of manifestation, so that man might sometimes gain a familiarity with the spirit world during sleep, just as in his waking hours he gained a knowledge of his physical surroundings. It would be suggested, perhaps, that as this was possible (though unconsciously so) to the average individual, it might be wise and useful to cultivate that possibility so that it would become a function operated by the intelligent will itself. Such an idea, however, the lecturer would be inclined to discountenance. At present this particular experience was, in a sense, abnormal, and should be confined to its legitimate expression during sleep. By and by, when the race had progressed beyond its present grade of development, and, in the course of evolution, had unfolded certain latent psychical functions, it would be able to exercise this faculty without any of the strain on the nervous and vital forces which its deliberate volitional operation would now entail. It might be asked : 'If it is unwise to exercise such a power, is it not equally unwise to permit spirits to control and exercise the subjective side of our nature ?' To this question the lecturer would reply : 'Yes ; to some extent.' Mediumship was not an experience for everybody. People who thought they would like to be mediums were often hastily rushing in where wise folk would be afraid to tread. But there were certain people in whom these subjective powers were of a kind normally fitted for the intelligent manipulation and exercise by spirit beings, although even then their use was frequently attended with a certain amount of distress and disturbance. These special persons were easily controlled or directed through their psychical powers, by the spirit people. They were the instruments whereby the spirit world sought to combat the doubts, difficulties, and errors of thought concerning spiritual realities which prevailed in the material world, which it was necessary that spirits should counteract. These mediums must be the world's conscripts. They must bear and suffer and do, that men might be freed from the errors of the ages and the darkness of the times. Yet at the present time even mediumship, under its happiest and best conditions, still remained more or less an abnormal experience.

Let us (said the speaker) consider what is meant by the term spiritual phenomena. It had been objected that the term was a misnomer ; and, logically, perhaps, exception might be taken to its use. Spiritual phenomena were objective realities produced in the material world, the primal cause of them being the intelligent operator in the spirit world ; and in that sense only could they be called spiritual phenomena. Logically and definitively speaking, they were phenomena produced in the material world by spirit beings. The question next arose, how was it that spirits dwelling in the spirit world had sufficient control over matter to produce objective evidences of themselves in the material world. The crux of the question was the relationship subsisting between the two states of being. If it were conceded that these two states of being were not separate and discrete, but coterminous, correlated, intersphering with each other, and each a portion of the great whole, the difficulty of communication between the two states vanished at once, and all that had been said concerning the alternations of the human consciousness on the two planes of being became an important part of the considerations involved in the study of spiritual phenomena. Just a trifle of philosophy (said the lecturer) was needed in an

investigation of this kind, so that some ground of scientific truth and philosophic fact might be obtained on which the inquirer could safely stand. These questions of spiritual phenomena had been so long obscured by ignorance and superstition that it was more than difficult to extricate them, and place them in a clear and definite form. It would, doubtless, be admitted that everything that happened in this world must appeal to man through one of his several senses. Nothing that happened could transcend the operation of the human consciousness. There might be some occurrences that appealed to a higher range of faculties than man was ordinarily familiar with. His senses might be susceptible even of an indefinite extension. It might be that his ear was capable of receiving finer sounds than he was accustomed to; his nerves might respond to more delicate vibrations than any they ordinarily experienced. It was not a case of transcending his faculties; it was a case of extending their possibilities. Was not one of the uses of spiritual phenomena, materially considered, that of elucidating the character of the individual, the make-up of the man? Mediumship required to be analysed in relation to the individual medium, so that definite knowledge might be obtained of what mediumship meant in relation to the individual. That being the case, they had to consider that in the direction of the extension of human senses and faculties there might be the possibilities of manifestation of all kinds through the personality of the individual.

Dealing with the question of spirit control, the lecturer said there must be, if not an identity, at least a similarity between the consciousness of the subject and that of the operator, and between the machinery of the consciousness of both. By coming into relationship with the subjective consciousness of the medium, the spirit operator was enabled to manifest himself on the material side of existence, becoming, so to speak, in possession of a physical organisation. It might be asked whether the spirit thus brought into relationship with the material organisation would feel, suffer, and experience all those things which the legitimate occupant of the physical body might do. In part, no, said the lecturer, in part, yes. It should be remembered that, when this control was effected, the material organisation of the subject had passed into an abnormal condition. The ordinary avenues of sensation and consciousness were closed or inverted, turned inward, so to speak; and under the limitations of these apparently abnormal conditions the spirit operator was compelled to work, in order, perhaps, to cognize and describe the conditions that surrounded a particular organisation. This led to the conclusion that there must be latent powers and energies in the human being, which could be excited into action by the spirit operator, a consideration which opened up a subject prolific in suggestions concerning the real nature of man.

It is not to be supposed, however, that in every case of spirit control the human being actually came into contact with the personality of the spirit—that the spirit put on another man's body, brain and nerves, as one would assume a garment. The process of control would better be described as a psychological effect, produced by the stimulation of certain functions, whereby the spirit infused itself, as to its thoughts, personality, and individual influence, into the personality of the medium. There were many cases where the control was so perfect that it seemed as though the spirit was literally inside the organism of the medium who was being controlled. Yet in the experience of the lecturer, it was not possible for any spirit to exclude the spirit personality of any human being, and assume control of the physical organism in the same way as the spirit who properly belonged to that organism, and was, in consequence, in complete correspondence with it. There might be very complete states of control; the spirit operator might be able to infuse the organism under influence very thoroughly; but it would not be a case of what was termed 'possession' of all. This was an argument the lecturer would commend to the consideration of the audience because it destroyed that dangerous doctrine of absolute personal possession that was held by some people. If there was an absolute possession in the sense of the individual spirit entering into the human organism one might almost say that re-incarnation was an accomplished fact.

Having thus controverted the idea of 'possession,' except in the sense of the influence mesmerically exerted by a spirit over the subjective personality of a human being, the lecturer turned his attention to the objective phenomena 'commonly described as the physical manifestations of the movement,' such as the

levitation of tables and other objects, the production of raps, and so forth, which of necessity involved material factors in their production. Although they had their origin in the spirit world, their perfect accord with natural law would be the more readily recognised when it was remembered that there was nothing that a human being ever did or would do which did not also have its origin on the spirit side. Were not human beings spirits even now? How was it, however, that spirits, living in spiritual conditions, were able to manipulate the material circumstances necessary for the production of these phenomena? The explanation might be found in the relationship between the material and spiritual sides of existence already treated of. As a fact, the lifting of a man's hand was as much a phenomenon produced by a spirit, as much a spirit manifestation, as the lifting of a table. Dealing with the attitude of the average scientist towards these matters, the lecturer said that the imponderables marked the limit of scientific research. There was a plentiful knowledge of the phenomena of matter in its motions, modes, and methods, but of the essential forces behind them how little was known! Little by little, however, it was becoming recognised that the whole of the movements of the universe might be resolved into the action of one primal energy. He asked the scientist to grapple with these questions, to recognise the fact that tables do move, that sounds are made, that writing is done, that lights are seen, and all under conditions and circumstances concerning which modern science could as yet offer no adequate explanation. He asked the scientist to recognise that these were material facts, and in accordance with material laws, and if in accordance with material laws, they must be in accordance with the principles of the universe.

In regard to the use of physical phenomena, such, for example, as the passing of matter through matter, the lecturer said that such a manifestation might realise a use of great importance to the world. It proved that matter was not all. It might even tend to show that matter was a mode of conditioning rather than a reality. It might be a manifestation of something behind itself—the enduring something that was always operating, changing, and phenomenalising (so to speak) the external universe in which they lived; but not on that side of the universe only. It was the power moulding and producing the entire universe. If science thereby was rescued from its difficulties of materialism and its negations of the existence of a Supreme Power, more would be done for the benefit of the spiritual life of mankind than could be accomplished by any other agency. Whatever tended to bless science would bless the race individually and collectively, for, after all, a recognition of the Supreme Power and the reality of the spiritual universe was the main thing that had to be considered in the nineteenth century. They might sentimentalise over it and platitudinise about it; but unless it could be brought home to the consciousness of mankind logically and scientifically, little progress would be made.

Taking next the faculty of clairvoyance, the lecturer graphically delineated its uses, more particularly in the department of therapeutics. The physician was able to employ the assistance of a clairvoyant in discovering the locality and nature of diseases that could not be otherwise diagnosed. Clairvoyance exercised in this direction would also tend, to a great extent, to obviate the necessity for surgical operations; and vivisectional experiments might be rendered utterly unnecessary, were this phase of spirit phenomena properly cultivated and applied.

The principal uses of spiritual phenomena generally, the lecturer pointed out, lay in the avenues of knowledge they opened up, enabling man to obtain an intelligent understanding of the forces by which he was surrounded, and of his own nature and destiny—a knowledge that constituted priceless riches beyond all the other knowledge he could obtain. The discourse concluded with a characteristic peroration descriptive of the value of spiritual phenomena to the material world in extending the boundaries of human thought, increasing the store of human knowledge, sweeping away the delusions, illusions, and superstitions that encumber men's minds, bringing down the problems and mysteries of life into the realms of reason and knowledge, and showing them to be in harmony with God's nature and man's necessities.

Some discussion took place at the conclusion of the lecture, in which the President, Mr. T. Everitt, Mr. J. F. Collingwood, and the lecturer took part, but considerations of space prevent our reproducing this.

The proceedings closed with the usual vote of thanks to the speaker of the evening.

SEANCE IN A CHURCH PRESBYTERY.

Dr. Gaston des Rioux de Messimy gives in 'La Revue Spirite' the following brief account of a séance which he held in the presbytery of a church in Belgium. If some of our clerical friends—or enemies—here, were to follow the example of this intelligent Curé who, though taking no active part in the matter, permitted the demonstration to take place, they would probably speedily attain a degree of conviction quite good enough to save them the trouble of plunging about a 'thesaurus' in search of abusive epithets suitable for throwing into epigrammatic form:—

I am going to give you the results which I obtained at a table séance on February 19th, 1894, at the Presbytery of the Abbé A — E —, Curé of P — (Hérault), in the presence of several young people. Having conversed on various occasions with this esteemed ecclesiastic about the means which Spiritualism afforded us of acquiring, by experiment, a knowledge of the soul's existence, its survival and immortality, he showed some desire that I should give him a proof. He invited me and five young persons, aged from eighteen to twenty. Their names are Messrs. Fulcrand Laval, Henri Combes, Noël Gaillac, Adolph Jobis, and Giraud. I went to the presbytery at 8.30 p.m. as arranged, and found these gentlemen already assembled. I explained the object of the meeting and insisted on the necessary conditions for such manifestations. We sat around a small oval table and placed our hands upon it so as to form the chain. The Abbé, however, remained apart, either through fear or prudence, and impassively watched our proceedings, regarding me with an air of suspicion and curiosity. Two of the young men were so frivolous in their behaviour that they had to be seated out of the circle on chairs a few feet distant. The Abbé stood immovable as a Sphinx. At the end of a few minutes, when nothing had supervened, I addressed some prayers to St. Joseph, the celebration of whose fête occurred that day. Still no movement. I continued my prayers, and presently we began to feel a current in our hands and heard slight dull raps in the interior of the wood. This announced the presence of a spirit, and I begged that the table might be lifted—which was done, contrary to my expectation, from the side at which Mons. Laval Fulcrand sat. Asking that the name might kindly be given, a series of raps, corresponding to letters of the alphabet, spelt out "Joseph Louis Laval," which was that of a grandfather of one of the sitters, a circumstance with which I was wholly unacquainted and at which Mons. Laval Fulcrand was considerably astonished. I then asked if the spirit would indicate the precise time on the Curé's watch. This it did, first striking ten, then forty. Turning to the Abbé, I begged him to tell me the hour.

'Twenty minutes to eleven,' he replied.

I further requested that the spirit would tell us the amount of money which the Abbé had in his pocket, and asked if there was any gold.

'Yes.'

'How many louis?'

'One.'

The Curé turned out his purse, and showed a gold twenty franc piece.

'Do you see any other money?'

'Yes.'

'Where?'

'In the secretaire.'

'Which drawer?'

'The second drawer to the right.'

'Will you kindly tell us what sum there is in it? How many francs?'

'One.'

How many sous?'

'Thirty.'

It was added that the money was wrapped in a piece of paper. The Abbé opened the drawer and found it—the exact amount—in a subscription receipt. We all left that séance convinced by material proof of the possibility of communication between the living and the so-called dead.

MRS. YEELES, of North Shields, informs us that she will be in London during the Conference, and will be happy to give séances. Letters may be addressed to her at the office of 'LIGHT.'

AUTOMATIC PICTURES.

A good deal of interest exists just now in Paris in a series of automatic drawings, which have been produced through the hand of Madame Egoroff, who resides at 82, Avenue de Wagram. The husband of Madame Egoroff was an artist, and did a good deal of fancy painting on china, wood, glass, &c., and she, herself, did some fancy wood work of a curious nature, but nothing in the way of drawing or painting. Her husband, however, had the misfortune to become paralysed, and departed in 1891. After his decease, Madame Wolska, an ardent Spiritualist, sought to comfort her by the assurance that her husband could still communicate with her, and endeavoured to imbue her with Spiritualistic beliefs, but she did not accept or credit her friend's teachings. About a year ago, however, she seemed to hear her husband's voice, and felt impelled to take up a pencil. She did so, and gradually evolved her first picture, which has been followed by twelve others—making a complete set of thirteen, each succeeding one being produced with increased rapidity. The pictures, which are all done in pencil and are decidedly interesting and curious, are symbolic, and the manner of working-in the symbols on the background, and the background itself, are very extraordinary, and are said to be quite original. All the shapes and shades are produced by a system of curves, often in the form of ringlets, the different figures appearing to be developed from the background by more pronounced and definite curves. The pictures have all been photographed, and the complete set of thirteen may be had for 75fr. (£3). One of them, said to represent two spirits in the astral sphere, helping a third still enveloped in matter, is on view at the office of 'LIGHT,' and will be exhibited at the coming Conference. An esteemed correspondent, resident in Paris, informs us that one of the pictures has been accepted for exhibition in the Champs de Mars.

'THE UNKNOWN WORLD.'

Though somewhat late in the day, we may notice the April number of 'The Unknown World' (James Elliott and Co.), which recent pressure upon our space has precluded our referring to before. The editorials exhibit the usual non-committal policy identified with this magazine. 'The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary,' as translated by Madame de Steiger, runs its course. Mrs. Boole writes attractively on 'Anti-Semitic Hysteria'; 'G. W. A.' continues his 'Considerations towards a Philosophy of God and Man,' while Mr. Charles Fox contributes a paper on 'The Universal Magia.' Mr. C. E. Benham discourses concerning 'Hints from the Laws of Pulsation,' and Mr. E. Maitland is represented by an article on 'The Divisibility of Consciousness.' 'The Brotherhood of the New Life,' which sets forth some of the mystical notions of Mr. T. L. Harris concerning 'The Impending World-crisis,' continues its wearisome progress. There is little that is either natural or rational about this series of articles. 'The Rosicrucian Mystery' is continued; and Miss E. Kislingbury contributes 'Extracts and Spiritual Maxims from St. John of the Cross.'

RECEIVED.

- 'The Idler,' for May. (London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, W. 6d.)
- 'The Windsor Magazine,' for May. (London: Ward, Lock, Bowden & Co. 6d.)
- 'The Astrologer's Magazine,' for May. (London: 12, Lugard-road, Peckham, S.E. 6d.)
- 'The New Age,' for April. (Edinburgh: Alex. Duguid, 25, Springwell-place, Dalry-road. 4d.)
- 'The Lyceum Banner,' for May. (London: J. J. Morse, 26, Osnaburgh-street, N.W. 1d.)
- 'The Humanitarian,' for May. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 34, Paternoster-row, E.C. 1s.)
- 'A Student's Plea for Astrology.' By REV. G. H. LOCK. (Hull: Rev. G. H. Lock, 44, Wright-street.)
- 'The Coming Day,' for May. (London: Williams & Norgate, Henrietta-street, Covent Garden, W.C. 3d.)
- 'Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible.' By J. M. WHEELER. (London: R. Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C. 2d.)
- 'Transactions of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society,' No. 24, April. The Astral Plane. By C. W. LEADBEATER. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 7, Duke street, Adelphi, W.C. 1s. nett.)

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.]

The Mahatma Puzzle.

SIR,—I am as much in need as Mr. Gilbert Elliot of the evidence for the existence of Mahatmas which he so urgently demands; but I would ask him what kind of evidence can be given, and what facts, which it is permissible to disclose, would be satisfactory? It appears to me, by all accounts of those who profess to have seen these shadowy gentlemen, that one of the conditions of their appearance is that nothing shall be reported concerning them which is capable of satisfying outsiders. All who have seen them treat their communications as holy secrets, which they have no right to disclose; consequently their very existence can only be known by those who are pledged to secrecy in regard to all the essential proofs of that existence. This is a very perplexing situation. But it is a conceivable one. The question then is, how far anyone can penetrate into Theosophic lore without the help of this belief, or of the knowledge which is so communicated. This is like asking a person to swim who has never taken a header into any waters. The puzzle seems to me insoluble. What do the initiated say? Why do not Mrs. Besant and those of her cult take up this side of the case and tell us how much they expect us to believe without evidence, and what reasons, without objective evidence, can be sufficient to prove such very hard facts?

ROBERT M. THEOBALD.

'Mrs. Besant's Facts.'

SIR,—I confess to a feeling of irritation when reading Mrs. Besant's address. I do not believe in re-incarnation in the flesh. Once I am out of this body, in accordance with natural law and circumstances not controllable by my will, I would prefer to find myself in some form adapted to my greater freedom. I do not think a man can ever become perfect on this planet, or on any planet in the wide infinity of worlds, or systems in infinite space. We read 'the Mahatma,' or 'Great Spirit,' was a man who had become perfect, who had reached union with the Divine. What value in this estimate of comparison between finite man and the Infinite-Divine Person has the term 'perfect' here, in Mrs. Besant's address? I am only a poor groper turned sixty years of age. My days of toil began in 1841-2, and my lot in life has been one of mixed joys and sorrows; mostly sorrows, because of circumstances similar to those which have been the lot of most people. But brief moments of joyous aspiration and encouragement have been mine; and, in the light of experience, I have gone up a step at a time and found rest for my spiritual feet. Lights and shades make life's pictures seem 'natural.' I do not want to be 'perfect.' There seems, to my mind, the most heavenly destiny in store for those who have the prospect of something higher to climb to or aim at eternally. This 'Mahatma' craze has nothing practical about it. Why don't these 'perfect' men come more to the front? Are there three sane persons in existence who can solemnly declare they have ever seen a 'perfect' man—one who can prove himself imbued with all knowledge, power, and present every-where-ness? Pardon the last word; it is as sensibly constructed as the word Ma-hat-ma.

It seems as sensible to argue that every tiny animacule building its lime castle in water must be time after time re-incarnated—and so on with every entity of larger growth up to the elephant—in order to reach perfection after their kind on this planet!

My standpoint is that there is no proof offered us; there are no facts, but there seems no end of arguments based on pure assumption. There are gradations unnumbered between the minute life whose little universe may be circumscribed, so to say, in a tiny globe of water, and the man with the highest physical, mental, and spiritual endowments on this little world called Earth. But the gradations imaginable between a man so endowed and the All Wise, Omnipotent, Infinite Presence are inconceivably greater, by reason that the part, however great, can never equal the Whole. Practically we cannot conceive of a 'perfect' man.

JOHN LORD.

Eternal Progress.

SIR,—We are getting on. On Sunday last I heard a popular Archdeacon, in the diocese of an enlightened Bishop, finish his sermon with the following words: 'The resurrection of eternal progress.'

'MIRROR.'

Fraudulent Mediumship.

SIR,—Much has been said and written about fraudulent mediums and the mischief that is done to Spiritualism through them. What if there were no apparent cheating, or tendency that way? Should we be better off? Should we satisfy our minds, by the process of sifting evidence, of the realities we now value? Would not the exceptional honesty make us alternately credulous and suspicious of everything that came to us claiming origin from an unseen world?

We should rightly conclude that, as you are sure there is a thief at every street corner, almost in every shop or car you enter, so there must sometimes be dishonesty in dealings with strangers between whom and oneself there is no ground, necessarily, of common fellowship.

The only way to avoid being made victims of fraud is to withhold our judgment until it is satisfied that no loophole remains for doubt. It matters little what a medium does, so long as we hold fast to that principle. The pace we travel in our investigations may be slow, but it is, at least, sure; and the few gems in the mass of rock that each person must work for himself, if he is to get any results worth having, will well reward him for years of toil in patience and humility.

It ought to be recognised that fraud is practised from motives other than money gain. Vanity in its various forms; love of notoriety; the desire of being considered an exceptionally gifted individual; amusement in the game of fooling, and other sources of action, lead to a great deal that is mischievous in our private circles. The mischief, however, lies more in the fooled than in the actor. If all of us refused assent to anything that is not absolutely good evidence, there would soon, in my opinion, be a practical end of cheating mediums. M.A.I.

The Scarcity of Mediums.

SIR,—Permit me to say that, in my opinion, persons wishing for phenomena and proofs should set to work themselves and try with a Ouija board, under the guidance of some experienced Spiritualist. The Ouija is a most wonderful aid for developing mediums. I, for my part, have found a number of mediums who now can use the board successfully. Some do not need to use Ouija any longer, as the spirits now respond mentally—or by automatic writing with a pencil. Of course, all these persons were convinced as soon as they were successful. I have remarked that those who have a strong desire to learn about Spiritualism are mediums, and are prompted by their spirit-guides to study and inquire. Before using Ouija, a prayer should always be said for protection against evil influences.

For the first few months all mediums who use Ouija, or a pencil, or any other method, require to be *demagnetised* after the séance. A few passes should be made downwards over the arm or hand. This is absolutely necessary to remove the numbness or pain that is felt by the medium. If the head feels heavy, one should blow on the forehead, or make a few passes till all uneasiness is removed. The mediums who do not pay attention to these rules will remain with their pain for a long time, and not know why they suffer. It is the excess of vital fluid concentrated by the spirits and brought to one point, that is necessary for moving the hand automatically on the board, and causes the pain afterwards in the hand. Some mediums who begin are often put into a cataleptic state, wholly or partially, by spirits, but the medium can be relieved by magnetic passes. Catalepsy brought on by trying to communicate with spirits is caused by the great amount of vital fluid displaced by them, and, as I have been told, by spirits who are not expert in the manner in which the fluids should be used. Everything comes progressively, and spirits must learn to use our vitality very exactly, and restore the proper equilibrium to our faculties when they leave. But this is never achieved till the medium is well developed.

Therefore, mediums who begin should not study alone, as they cannot help themselves should anything happen. If the arm feels stiff or cataleptic, the fluid should be drawn off first from the tips, then from the hand, which gradually loosens; then from the arm, until all feels well again. The legs should be magnetised down if they are stiff. I have seen mediums who were as if nailed to their seats; they could not move from right to left after having been in communication with their guides. Magnetism was indispensable to remove this state, and nothing else is needed. In some old accounts of table-turning we read of persons who were forming a circle with hands on the table

and who were seized with cataleptic fits ; this continued for hours, and the doctors called in could give no relief. These persons had absorbed too much of the vital fluid. Had magnetism been used then, they would have been cured in a few moments.

Let all study who can ; if not successful themselves, they will find a medium among their children or relations. A *great* number of persons are mediumistic, and can communicate with spirits if they will only learn how.

Paris.

(MADAME) B. DE LAVERSAY.

SIR,—An 'Inquirer' in your last issue has raised a right cry at the present moment. The movement, without doubt, is wanting both enthusiasm and system in the development of mediumship, and that is why mediums are scarce.

The suggestion that the London Spiritualist Alliance, or some other public body, should take up the work regularly has been made before. So far back as the end of 1881 I wrote to the Editor of 'LIGHT' suggesting that work more on the lines of the ancient Schools of Prophets would be of greater service to the cause than reunions and lectures. The then Editor in a note seemed to think that old Spiritualists saw danger in the proposal, and the matter fell through.

It is a doubtful point whether any public organisation can be of any use in this work. The development of mediumship is like the development of magnetism. A strongly developed mediumistic personality of a special type, called by the other world a developing medium, imparts the quality of his mediumship to another of a similar spiritual nature to himself, just as a strong magnet imparts its magnetism to a piece of steel and yet loses none of its virtue itself. This is certainly the primary law to be laid down to guide us in this question. Therefore, developing circles must cluster round developing mediums like bees round a queen bee. The ancient Schools of Prophets and Mages were worked on this principle, whether in Egypt, India, Persia, Palestine, or Greece.

But why not make an effort to find out some persons who have this special spiritual gift, or who are surrounded by a band of spirits who will give them this gift—shall I call it 'the gift of the laying on of hands'?

There may be many such persons in our midst with the gift but unconscious of it. Also, why not start a discussion as to the best methods to be adopted for the development of spiritual gifts by circle sitting or private meditation.

Different gifts want different methods, and development circles must be arranged according to the gift they are specially aiming to develop.

As a practical beginning in this work, I am willing to take, at my own expense, some chambers in a central part of London, and to furnish and arrange the rooms to suit especially the holding of development circles of clairvoyance, psychometry, automatic writing, and automatic utterance.

I have my own ideas of how rooms for these purposes should be furnished and arranged, but before setting to work I should be glad of any hints and advice that could be given me in 'LIGHT,' of details that others have found useful, and also of the names of any ladies and gentlemen who would be willing to help me in this work by sitting for development once or twice a week, or by conducting a developing circle themselves in these rooms if the guides and workers on the other side of the curtain should so direct. Names may be sent addressed to me, care of the Editor.

I shall make a further announcement on the subject when the rooms and details have been definitely arranged. At any rate the scheme will hardly be in working order until October next.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

Mr. J. J. Vango.

SIR,—By way of a little testimony to the honesty of purpose and mediumistic gifts of Mr. J. J. Vango, I should esteem it a favour if I may express the hope that by his removal from the South-East district, where he has for some time laboured most generously for the cause, he will in his new quarters meet with the appreciation he deserves as a thoroughly honest and deserving minister of the 'truth' as we know it. I have personally received many proofs of Mr. Vango's powers, and am pleased to speak of him, as I have proved him, as honest and truthful, and above all, anxious to promulgate true Spiritualism in the right way, and for the good of humanity. His new address is 43, Cambridge-gardens, North Kensington.

E. LEUTY COLLINS.

Spiritual Manifestations in Church.

SIR,—Touching your notice of the new church at Brighton, but more especially the spiritual manifestations, I should like to assure you of the actuality of a similar manifestation some years ago to myself, and others who were strangers to me.

It was the occasion of a Eucharistic Celebration (Scotch rite was then used) at a private chapel fitted up in a lady's house in London. I was, with others, only admitted privately and on the promise that I should not publish the personalities of any present. The service was very simple, and there was only a small choir of girls. Just as the Canon of the Mass was about to commence, I and others became aware of and felt an unseen presence, and at the conclusion of the prayer following the Canon, there was seen distinctly by me, and, I think, as distinctly by all, the form of a human being in white, gliding from and through the *stone wall*, but seen distinctly only as it stood in the centre behind the celebrant, with hands upraised as if giving a benediction. No sound, apparently, came from this form, but distinctly audible to each person like a hum were the words : 'Lo ! I am with you always.' I spoke to two of those near, after the service, and they said their experience was the same—a 'sort of hum *inside* the brain,' conveying those words and ending with *Amen*. It is many years ago now, but this is not the only time this manifestation has been seen. In p. 97, of 'New Light on Old Truth,' a similar manifestation is described, and this, with the 'Basket of Fragments,' appears to be used by this 'new' church.

I. O. M. A.

The 'Cyprian Priestess.'

SIR,—As a reader of your valued journal, I have, along with many others of your readers, taken a deep interest in the 'Cyprian Priestess' controversy.

To my mind, there are some incidents which require that a little light should be shed on them, and which have not hitherto been taken notice of.

Mr. Anderson, of Glasgow, in his letter in 'LIGHT' of September 8th, 1894, stated that this same 'personality' had been a familiar spirit for a quarter of a century, and was known as a Cyprian Priestess in the 'Hafed' Circle. Now, Mr. Duguid, when in Kirkcaldy, made statements which are not quite in accordance with those contained in the first paragraph of Mr. Anderson's letter, nor generally with what is stated regarding her by Mr. Glendinning. This needs some explanation and Mr. Duguid, to my mind, is entitled to give it, now that the matter has been made a subject of discussion. I would also ask, and perhaps 'Edina' could answer for Mr. Duguid, whether he abides by the statements made in the first paragraph of the letter referred to, or whether he takes exception to any part of it, and if so, which?

I also observe that my esteemed friend, Mr. Robertson, has on two different occasions asked Mr. Glendinning if, when he got his copy of this 'personality,' Mr. Duguid informed him that others had been before him in receiving this identical likeness. Mr. Glendinning has not seen his way to answer this question, which is very disappointing, as we in Kirkcaldy consider it of much importance, seeing that the answer must reflect either, for good or ill, upon Mr. Duguid. Mr. Glendinning's action latterly in this controversy seems very inconsistent, now that he appears to avoid taking any part in this discussion, when we remember that he stated in 'LIGHT' that 'there will be matters to investigate, of interest to Spiritualists, although of no interest to opponents.'

I will not at present go further into this matter, until I see what comment, if any, Mr. Duguid or his friends have to make on my statements.

21, Maryhall-street, Kirkcaldy.

JOHN BIRNIE.

Psychic Photographs.

SIR,—Reading in 'LIGHT' some months ago about crystal seeing, the idea came into my mind that the picture might be thrown upon the camera lens in the same manner as when seen in the crystal, and that this might explain some of the spirit photographs that have been produced. On further consideration, however, it occurred to me that the picture must pass through the lens at a proper focal distance before it could be impressed on the sensitive plate. Then, from Miss X.'s very comprehensive lecture on Crystal Gazing, we are brought to the conclusion that the picture seen in the crystal is not there at all, but in the eye or mind of the gazer ; so that by no possibility could

any picture be produced on the lens of the camera that could result in a spirit photograph.

Could not the sensitive plate be manipulated by the spirits after being placed in the dark slide, either while in the possession of the medium, or during exposure, in some such way as those wonderful paintings were produced in Mr. Duguid's presence, in an incredibly short space of time, and in darkness?
G. W. ROWE.

SIR,—The reports of 'Edina's' fresh sittings only render the problem more difficult of solution. What is wanted to be known is: Is the photograph that of a spirit, as has been given forth, or is it not? 'Edina,' in 'LIGHT,' of April 20th, speaking for himself, says: 'Whether she is a person or a reproduction of a thought-picture it is not for me to say.' Now, will he kindly tell us, as explicitly, what Mr. Duguid has to say about it, as it is essential to know what the principal actor says on the subject, seeing that no one can be more competent to set the matter at rest than he.

26, Forfar-road, Dundee.

MATTHEW FORBES.

London District Council.

SIR,—The 'London District Council' held its first meeting on April 26th.

It has been decided to hold the annual summer outing of the combined societies on the first Monday in July of each year; while the Council soirée will be held some time in October. This year we journey to Sevenoaks, and only those who take their tickets three days beforehand will be catered for. Application for tickets may be made to the secretaries of any of the affiliated societies or to myself. Tickets, including tea, 2s. 3d. The programme will be announced in due course.

I have been requested by the Council to invite the cordial co-operation of all London societies in our endeavour to bring existing organisations into closer fellowship. Why may we not have field-days on which the workers and friends in the different parts of the Metropolis, by mutual consent, can unite for the interchange of friendly greeting and experience? It is felt that if this object can be achieved, London Spiritualism will receive a fillip that will send it bounding along its course with a far brighter feeling than is at present possible while the strange isolation of our societies exists. The needs of the past are not necessarily the needs of to-day, and most certainly the need of to-day, which is so keenly felt, ought to be removed to-morrow, if we are—as we claim to be—progressive.

At present the Council is only formed to supply speakers wherever possible, when secretaries experience their usual difficulty in supplying the platform, and to organise a summer outing and periodical social gatherings. In the speakers' department I hope to receive no little assistance from volunteers who at present are not associated with any society, but whose abilities would at once place them in the front rank of our workers if the spirit will only move them to volunteer their services on behalf of those who are not so fortunately placed. The constitution, or methods of work in individual societies, is in no way affected by us.

There are no expenses save those incidental to postage, and the rent of the monthly meeting-place of the delegates. At present, thanks to the kindness of the Forest Hill society, we are able to meet free of expense to the affiliated societies; but it is hoped to secure a more central position when circumstances permit. But money forms the sinews of war on this material plane, and should any of our wealthier friends care to assist us financially with a view to widening our sphere of action, I shall be pleased to acknowledge any amounts received in 'LIGHT' and 'Two Worlds' which their kindness enables me to place in the hands of our treasurer, Mrs. Bliss, of Forest Hill.

The meetings of the Council will be open to any Spiritualist who cares to attend, and, although they will have no power to vote, there will always be a notice on the agenda that 'Brief suggestions be received from our visitors.' Everything that is done will be as open to the Spiritualist public as possible. It is very desirable that this organisation should grow as the need of societies demands; and in order that this representation should not be partial, but complete, I append the working basis upon which we have agreed to start, and which is an extract from the fuller report of March 9th, in this journal:—

Resolved: That a District Council be formed of delegates from the three societies, viz., Camberwell, Forest Hill, and Peckham, and that other societies desiring to affiliate shall

make application to the district secretary. Delegates will be two for each society of fifty members or under, with an additional one for every twenty-five, or part of twenty-five, over the original fifty. A list of speakers shall be arranged and published by the Council to provide for the propagation of Spiritualism in the affiliated societies, as needed. Each society will be responsible for the travelling expenses of the speaker supplied. A periodical social and summer outing will be held under the auspices of the Council. The Council will only have power to deal with other matters as they may be laid before them by the members of the affiliated societies.

I shall be pleased if secretaries will kindly lay these matters before their respective societies, and send me their report as early as possible.

30, Upper Tulse-hill, S.W. H. BODDINGTON, Hon. Sec.

Communications from Hans Christian Andersen.

SIR,—Thinking that your readers will regard the following incident as a very remarkable 'test,' I hasten to communicate to you an experience which has filled my own mind with astonished interest.

For months I have had the pleasure of a lively correspondence with the esteemed co-editor of 'The Harbinger of Light,' Mr. James Smith. A couple of months ago this gentleman wrote to me, that through a trance medium in his private dwelling he had had several spoken communications from our Danish poet Hans Christian Andersen. Mr. James Smith writes:—

'The first time this spirit spoke was in June, 1892, when he said: "The Fairy Tales for children should be spiritualised. I want another Baroness — (I could not catch the name; it sounded like Von Wehl) to write through here. I love to gather thousands of children around me and relate one of my new stories to them. You teach the little ones cruel doctrines, you represent to them God as a revengeful, cruel, vindictive Deity. Some day I hope to give you a story for the little angel in this house" (meaning my granddaughter). He kept his promise on September 15th following, and I printed the story, which I will send you, in the "Harbinger." I think you will say that both in essence and form it is not unworthy of Andersen. I imagine that the spirit he speaks of as being "the soul of song when on earth" was Jenny Lind. Hoping to hear from you again, believe me to be, dear madam, very sincerely yours,
'JAMES SMITH.'

The little tale was very charming, and I reprinted it in our little monthly journal for April.

Now comes the sequel which was so interesting. One of our readers, a German born, Concert-master G—, came to me the other day and said to me: 'I know the real name of the Baroness of whom Andersen spoke to Mr. Smith. It is the Baroness Adelma von Vay, in Austria. She has sent me the copy of a little fairy tale which she got in automatic writing from Hans Christian Andersen as far back as 1879.' Mr. G—, at the same time, lent me the little tale, which is most beautiful and perfectly in Andersen's style.

After this I hastened to write to the renowned medium, Baroness von Vay herself, and after a few days I got a most amiable letter from her, in which she told me how delighted she was at 'her dear Andersen' having mentioned his writing through her in such a far away place as Melbourne.

The Baroness at the same time was amiable enough to send me a collection of her famous books and two small volumes of the most charming tales derived from that wonderful source. I only wish we had an English editor for them, as I could easily find a good translator.

If you, Sir, value this remarkable test as much as I do you are welcome to make use of it. MADAME DE C.,

Editress of 'Frade to Verdener,' Denmark.

CORRECTION.—In our last week's report of Mrs. Besant's lecture on the Mahatmas, page 207, first column, third line, for 'principles' read 'pinnacles.'

AN Exchange remarks, with truth, that a newspaper is like a hotel dinner—not prepared especially for any one individual. You look over the bill of fare, even though you do not order everything named therein. You should use a newspaper the same, remembering that what may be 'greens' to you will be rich salad to some one else, and *vice versa*.

THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.—We have printed, in a convenient form, suitable for enclosure in letters or for distribution at public meetings, 'M.A. (Oxon.'s)' 'Advice to Inquirers, for the Conduct of Circles.' We shall be pleased to supply copies free to all friends who will undertake to make good use of them. The only charge will be for postage—25, ½d.; 50, 1d.; 100, 2d.; 200, 3d.; 400, 4½d.; 600, 6d., &c.