

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

No. 756 —VOL. XV.

[Registered as]

SATURDAY, JULY 6 1895

[a Newspaper.]

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We lately noticed a very able scientific work on 'Matter, Force, and Spirit.' The concluding pages are so important and really significant, that we must give them the emphasis of a special note:—

There remains one other kindred subject which has manifested itself as a religion of phenomena. It has attracted world-wide attention, and within the last forty years has attained proportions of thought in all civilised countries, which cannot be ignored. Comprehended under the general term of Spiritualism, it has aroused a degree of enthusiasm and intensity of interest among its advocates, equalled only by the ardent hostility and bitterness of feeling arrayed against it. On one side are millions of men and women earnestly contending for the purity of its doctrines and the genuineness of its marvels. On the other, opposing such sentiments, are the learned, the world of fashion and pleasure, the intolerance of established forms of religion, and the men of science. Its believers are without organisation, without leaders, and without concert of action; the phenomena witnessed are not classified, and honesty is not always insured. Victimised on every side by charlatans; imposed upon by the lies and fraud of pretenders; fed upon by parasites, whose sole purpose is gain, it has been unjustly and unfortunately exposed to ridicule and contempt. Those who have the most readily accepted this form of faith are the humblest and uninformed, without the advantages of learning to enable them to judge wisely, and who yield to their great desire to witness phenomena, either to fortify a waning faith or to gratify intense curiosity. Examined by the cold light of reason, we find that its phenomena point to psychic force, accompanied or directed by uncommon and surprising thought manifestations. And its philosophy we find to be what the broadest religion teaches, love of God and of humanity; that there is no royal road to Heaven; that unselfishness, purity of conduct and thought, are the standards for all, and by which all advance, here and hereafter. In many ways Spiritualism has accomplished vast good. The investigation of all the phenomena of this subject, science owes to itself and to mankind. If science be a leader of physical thought, it should be a leader in all forms of physical and psychical questions.

Here are phenomena far out of the ordinary character, and vouched for by unimpeachable testimony. Surely, if nothing be too lofty for scientific investigation, nothing should be too humble.

To assist those who are unable to inquire for themselves should be the purpose. If there be truths, let them be classified and added to the cabinet of scientific knowledge. If there be illusions, or baseless trumpery, or phenomena connected with laws already known, let their character be established. Truth alone can make man free. Perchance higher spiritual truths stand without, waiting to be recognised. All additions to psychic facts are links, binding together organic life and spirituality, and binding all individual spirituality to the Infinite and Universal Spirit.

As our readers know, we have not always found ourselves in entire accord with Mr. Moses Hull's language in setting forth his keen and, in the main, wholesome

thoughts, but we very gladly recognise his value as a stalwart combatant. Such men are needed. We have received his tract on 'The Outgoing and Incoming Church,' and have read it with pleasure. His ideal is excellent, and his presentation of it is impressive. Here are glimpses of it:—

The incoming Church will spend all its time in teaching its members how to live—how to live with reference to each other and the whole world—how to make good citizens of themselves; and will spend little time in teaching them how to die.

The incoming Church will apply the text, 'Thou shalt not steal,' to thieving corporations and rich monopolists, as well as to the starving man, who, to save the lives of his wife and children, steals a loaf of bread or a link of sausage. The corporation, which, with a few strokes of the pen, doubles its stock and then doubles the expense of fare and freight, will be treated as a thief. The man who takes ten per cent. interest will be considered an unfit associate for honest people.

The incoming Church will teach that, instead of looking to the past for infallibility in creed, Church, tradition, or Scripture, humanity's great light is ahead—not behind; and that it is the duty of everyone to so live that he can receive intuitionally from the great storehouse of knowledge, and then to follow his inspiration—that every age and nation must have its own prophets and apostles. As the stage coaches of the past were needed until we got railroads and palace cars, so the inspirations of the past were adapted to the past, but we can no more live on those inspirations than we can live on the calf with which Abraham fed the angels, or the corn the disciples ate on the Sabbath day.

The incoming Church will teach that we are all spiritual beings, and that God, spirit, and all spiritual things are as near and as tangible to us as spiritual beings, as matter and things material are to our physical senses; and that, therefore, the canon of inspiration or revelation never was, nor never can be closed, except as we shut ourselves up in our own darkness.

The incoming Church, knowing the tendency of everything in the universe is forever upward and onward, will love and trust, but will not fear the powers behind.

The incoming Church will enjoy a religion which will be eyes for the blind, ears for the deaf, legs for the lame, strength for the weak, wealth for the poor, joy for the sorrowing, consolation for the bereaved, and a present, constant, and eternal Heaven for all who enjoy its divine benediction.

We ought to have, in London, a good central bookstore, where all such publications could be seen and purchased.

A late writer in the 'Echo' well represents the average dense man in the street in relation to unseen things. This writer, referring to the moving of material substances by unseen beings, says: 'Just fancy the absurdity (so it seems to me) of saying that a spirit, which does not possess a body, hands, or feet, can pick up a chair and throw it at you!' It is really difficult for a Spiritualist to realise the state of mind of a man who could deliberately write this, and think it a good thing to send it for publication. But we believe it very well represents the spiritual vacancy of the large majority: and yet hundreds of thousands of those who think or write like that imagine they believe in God and a life beyond the grave. As a preliminary step towards comprehending the moving of bodies without physical contact, we would suggest to these gross people a few

elementary lessons in magnetism and electricity, or even on heat and light.

We have no wish to damp the ardour of those Spiritualists who desire to turn Spiritualism into a Religion, and to organise and officer it; but we counsel prudence. The troubles begin when the creeds come in; and the creeds are sure to come in, one way or another, when the Religion is established and the believers are strenuously organised. We note in a late number of 'Lucifer' a very instructive remark as to this. It is as follows:—

At first some teaching is put forward that appeals to the mind of the multitude as true. It is truth to them, and they enshrine it in their hearts, and brood over it. And presently they build around and upon it, enclosing it in walls which hide it, until only the walls are viewed, and the purpose of their building is forgotten. Then they turn their attention to the building, and improve it and adorn it, and discuss its merits and its failings, for the doctrine which once brought light has become a dogma which can reflect back only that light which is thrown upon it. And, finally, the casket which was once a shrine becomes a tomb for the dead truth. Thus it is with all the doctrines, no matter how noble, no matter how true. They must die in time, if they once become part of a creed.

Many who desire to organise Spiritualists would vigorously resent any suggestion that they wanted a creed; in fact, they may think they want to knock all creeds on the head: but could they help themselves? Human nature is human nature everywhere, and there are inevitable consequences which may neither be foreseen nor controllable. Oddly enough, the Theosophical Society, represented by 'Lucifer,' is a sharp illustration of what we mean. It is being shivered to atoms by personalities, constitutions, rules, formalities, officials, and doctrines—all the direct result of intense organisation. Theosophy has not set us an example; it has put up a warning.

A writer in 'The Two Worlds,' whose comments and criticisms are more vigorous than discriminating, asks which Christianity are we to accept, naming a baker's dozen of well-known names—and among them *Voysey!* This is really too comical. The least informed critic ought to know that if Mr. Voysey hates one thing more than another it is anything specifically 'Christian.' We cannot, perhaps, always be gracious, but it is our duty to be accurate, especially upon matters of common knowledge.

There is something of cant in the clerical declaiming against 'filthy lucre'; for, in truth, few of those who declaim against it show any practical antipathy to it. And yet there is a solid verity in the idea which underlies it. Indeed, one of the miseries of our day is our bondage to money. It has become a ghastly infatuation. The rage for it could not be more intense if it were a supreme good in itself, whereas it is nothing by itself. On the contrary, it is a source of peril as well as a help to enjoyment. Its value is only in what it can procure: and it, as often as not, procures that which hurts. On the other hand, though poverty may in some respects hurt, it not seldom helps the personality. He was a wise philosopher who said:—

O beloved and gentle Poverty, pardon me for having wished to fly from thee as I would from want; dwell with me with thy sweet sisters Pity, Patience, Sobriety, Charity. Teach me to endure without complaining, to impart without grudging, to seek the end of life higher than in pleasure, further off than in power. Preserve me from the giddiness of head and hardness of heart that follow prosperity. Thou givest the body strength, thou makest the mind more firm, and, thanks to thee, this life, to which the rich cling as to a rock, becomes only a passage in which our boat is moored, and of which death can cut the cable, without awakening all our fears. Continue to sustain me, O thou whom Christ hath called blessed!

THE VALUE OF SPIRIT MESSAGES.

'OUR DUTY WITH REGARD TO ACTING UPON INFORMATION GIVEN, ADVICE OFFERED, OR REQUESTS MADE IN SPIRIT MESSAGES.'

A PAPER READ BY MR. J. J. MORSE, AT THE CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS, HELD IN THE PORTMAN ROOMS, LONDON, MAY 14TH, 1895.

The wide variety of experiences, incidents, and facts entering into the make-up of what is generally described as Spiritualism requires careful handling, and a nice discrimination, if one is to enter upon the subject understandingly, and emerge from its investigation with fixed convictions and a final satisfaction. Out of our present somewhat conglomerate condition there will eventually be formed a compact and systematic whole, comprising a science and a philosophy, which, jointly, shall remodel our religious, social, and ethical standards, in accord with the immutable laws of existence on the one side, and the ever-expanding necessities of our natures upon the other. Our phenomena will take up the subtler side of science, adding fields, hitherto undreamed of, to our already great conquests in the realms of nature. Our communion with the great world of arisen humanity will solve, where it does not entirely recast, old problems in life, sin, virtue, religion, and conduct; while in the department of mediumship a region of discovery is suggested that may help to unfold more and more of the hidden nature of man, upon the lines, too, of nature, experience, and common-sense, rather than in the direction of the fanciful revivals of a mysticism born of Eastern musings in an age that has passed, by a race that lives to-day because of the sturdier thought which the Western mind has imparted to its life. But whether we be old and seasoned Spiritualists or neophytes newly come to the gates, the question of this paper comes home to us all as a personal and practical matter; a human interest belongs to it. There comes with it a more or less defined conception that the solidarity of human life and love and their associations are undestroyed by death, and that a human interest animates the people of the spirit world, holds them—for a time at least—in sympathy with us, and so softens the hardship of separation, and dulls the keen edge of grief; preaching not only the immortality of the soul but the continuance after death of those graces that made it at once loving and lovable, human and divine. Eminently suggestive as is the topic, the opener feels all too acutely his inability to do it the justice it deserves. It is a momentous topic—the very keystone in fact of our claims concerning spirit communion as a means of help, guidance, and instruction for humanity.

Virtually, my topic involves the reliability and value of spirit messages.

I take it for granted that you are agreed with me that messages are received from the world of spirits: else is the corner-stone of our temple rejected. But, I also take it, that we are not all agreed that all messages said to come from the world of spirits do emanate therefrom. Consequently, one of the purposes of this paper might well be an attempt to differentiate those messages which are palpably spiritual from those which are, either clearly or obscurely, human in their origin. But the limits of my time do not permit me to deal with this aspect of the matter. As students, we expect difficulties and uncertainties. We have not yet entirely passed the experimental in observation, or the tentative in opinion.

Another point that will arise is the methods by which messages are received from spirits, and the agencies employed therein; while the characters of the communicants must needs be dealt with as well. For, in this last-named matter the questions of advice and information are largely concerned. In mapping out my purpose it will be necessary to place my particular points under definite heads, and group around each head when dealing with it, the various, but related, subdivisions. My heads, then, are:

- First, the subject: Spirit messages.
- Secondly, the source of such messages.
- Thirdly, The methods by which messages are conveyed.
- Fourthly, The nature of the messages, and
- Lastly, The value of the messages.

The foregoing five points represent the main elements of the problem before us. Let us take them in their order as stated.

For forty-seven years past, in all civilised countries, people have asserted that the spirits of the dead have revisited this world—I am confining myself to the modern movement—and that these spirits were, in their mortal lives, of every degree of relationship and grade of friendship that exist among us, and bind us together in the social fabric. It is asserted that these visitants from the unseen have communicated with mortals in well nigh every living tongue, in innumerable dialects, in various 'dead' languages; that the subject matter of their communications has been infinitely various, and has embraced every topic dear to human life, thought, action, and affection; that these messages have concerned descriptions of death and the after life, questions of history, philosophy, religion, and morals. The message may be but a whispered word, a date, name or fact, of startling significance to those so addressed; or the message may expand into a set dissertation, or a lengthy discourse. But, whether a sentence, or an oration, these utterances from the world of spirits are, by common consent, called spirit messages, of which voluminous records and books are extant throughout the world; perhaps the two most notable being a bulky volume of communications obtained by Judge Edmonds and his friend, Professor Dexter, in New York, some forty-five or so years ago; and a volume entitled 'Spirit Teachings,' received by Mr. W. Stainton Moses; while a third work may be named, 'Essays from the Unseen,' obtained by Judge A. T. T. Peterson, these works, among the best of their class, being descriptive, biographical, and illustrative of life in the beyond, as lived and described by those therein. But to most of us the message personal to us and ours, is, after all, the message of messages! It is in this sense, too, that mainly the term spirit message is usually restricted.

The question as to the source of these messages is a serious matter. Of course, some will be inclined, a little impatiently, to say, 'Why, the source is clear enough; they come from spirits in the spirit-world!' Granted; but let me ask, From what conditions of the spirit world? And also from what class or classes of spirits? Again, do all spirit messages come from departed spirits? Has the embodied spirit no power to act or to direct the use of his latent energies during life here? Without accepting the expedient of supposing that society in the next world is divided into two arbitrary departments—the good and the bad—as the only means of separating what some people are prone to call the wheat from the chaff, there nevertheless must exist there, as here, people of various grades of moral and spiritual development. And, as to a considerable extent, the sending to us of a message from the spirit side is but a question of knowing how to control the means of communication, it is not improbable that in certain cases mischievous spirits, like their kind here, may occasionally play tricks upon us. Confused, confusing, irrelevant, and irreverent messages are received—no sensible Spiritualist asserts otherwise—and surely it is no injustice to suggest that the source of such messages may be an undeveloped personality to whom our clearer perceptions of responsibility do not yet appeal. But I assert that the proportion of malicious and mendacious messages received from the spirit side are a mere fraction compared with the communications of a similar character we each of us receive every year of our lives in the way of business, social intercourse, and the kind remarks of one's 'good-natured friends' in general, in this world! The great bulk of our messages are intelligent, consolatory, convincing, coming from persons at least as averagely good and sane as ordinary mankind, and more frequently than not breathing a kindlier sentiment than pertains to us or our world. I unhesitatingly assert that messages do come to us from the spirit world, from those whom we have mourned as dead; and bearing in mind the great truth here involved, I am willing to risk a little darkness for the sake of the great and greatly compensating light.

Nevertheless, in insisting upon spirit messages from the spirit world we must not forget the fact that Thought-Transference, Telepathy, and our sympathies and antipathies are factors to be reckoned with; while the dominant idea of a positive mentality may exert an influence which shall produce a result that we, in our haste, anxiety, or ignorance, may easily mistake. But even in such cases it is the exercise of our own latent spiritual powers which produces the result, giving us a spirit 'message' from an embodied, instead of a disembodied, spirit.

We now come to 'the methods by which messages are conveyed,' and, consequently, to the consideration, in some

small degree, of the great question of mediumship. The fact that spirits are in a condition different from this necessitates that they should find some means of coming into connection actively with us—for the time of their communication, at least. The way by which this relation is established is through the instrumentality of certain persons called Mediums. Some of us like to call them Psychics, but I am old-fashioned enough to prefer the good old word 'medium,' a word under which we have won our sternly-contested fight. A medium is a peculiar creature. He is exceedingly sensitive—which, in the vulgar tongue means, so he is told, that he is faddy, foolish, irritable, and excitable! He may be all this, yet be no worse than many a poet, musician, artist, or philosopher. But the peculiar virtue about a medium is that he is sensitive to those finer forces which the spirits know how to use upon his organisation, that they may deliver messages through it by clairaudience, clairvoyance, control, impression, or such other methods of expressing themselves as may be possible and profitable at the time when they are operating. When, however, the message is given outside the personality of the medium, there is an element thrown off by the medium—psychic, etherial, or what not—that is used by the spirits to produce objective results, such as audible voices, direct writings upon books, slates, or papers; rappings to signal out sentences; automatic writing, either by the hand or by planchette, ouija, or other article. But whatever the methods used, the 'message' is the ultimate purpose always held in view by the operator, as it must be by us.

The next consideration involves the nature of the messages, and in this regard one needs to carefully consider the question now raised. There is a strong tendency to seek advice and obtain information from spirits, upon almost all topics. I have heard spirits consulted as to bonnets, pug dogs, and sweethearts; while business matters of all sorts, law-suits, legacies and successions, patents and inventions, are quite common topics upon which information and advice are solicited. I suppose, after all, it is a matter of taste, as the elderly dame remarked after bestowing her osculatory salutation upon her bovine companion, and if certain folks can only understand Spiritualism as a species of gigantic Mrs. Beeton's 'Inquire Within,' it is very little use grumbling about it. My way is not, perhaps, your way, nor is your way, perhaps, my way, but why quarrel because we differ? If I was sick unto death, and fancied a spirit-friend could do better for me than Dr. Bolus, I should not hesitate to seek advice and information from a spirit, providing I was reasonably certain my adviser and informant was capable and reliable. Or, again, suppose by long acquaintance with a spirit I was satisfied of his sincerity, ability, and experience—that his information, advice or request was good—I should then consider it my duty to act upon it, either in all, or in part, as my own judgment would decide; but I should no more think of acting upon the advice of an utterly unknown spirit, whose competency or knowledge I had no means of gauging, than I should of a like person in the flesh. I am not affected with sentimental reverence for a man simply because he has 'died,' nor should I accord his judgment an honour, not its due in this world, just because he had removed to another world. But I certainly do hold that if a relative or friend in the spirit-world can advise or inform me—as I have over and over again been advised and informed—on matters of material importance, I am fully justified in acting on such advice, information, or request, if I am satisfied that my relative or friend is really the source of the message. In so electing, however, I lay down no rule for others, unless they see with me. I also leave it an open question as to whether spirits should be habitually and persistently consulted on the petty concerns or daily business and trade of life.

I now come to the crux of this question—the advice, information, or request, that is spontaneously presented in our spirit messages. One important point here is that, without doubt, we all see things according to our usual and accustomed conditions. When we shall have 'crossed the bar,' we, in our new conditions, may then see old things in new lights. Undoubtedly my belief is that such is the case with our friends in spirit-life; hence at times the—to us—awkward requests that are preferred, as well as the embarrassing nature of some of the information imparted to us. Then, also, it must be admitted that in many, if not in most cases, the change of worlds is a benefit to the party passing on. Sight becomes clearer, mind is more active, perceptions are keener, and as, in a word, the departed so affected can see farther than we can, their advice

—strange, inexpedient, even unsound, as it may sometimes appear—will, after all, be right, just, and safe. The risk of taking such advice, if one may put it so, must rest entirely with the parties concerned. We cannot set the hall mark of infallibility upon either spirits or their messages. But the promiscuous medium hunting for the purpose of consulting any spirit that, jack-in-the-box-like, may turn up and volunteer advice or information, or make requests on any subject sprung upon him there and then, is derogatory to mortals and spirits alike, and is a sad misuse of mediumship—at least, that is, if you agree with me in thinking that spirit-communication, mediumship, and Spiritualism are somewhat higher than a drawing-room craze or the fad of an hour, that may become the curse of an age if not safeguarded by all of us who look at it as a solemn question demanding our highest thought.

As concerns the value of spirit messages, it is difficult to set it out in cold phrases, or express it as a commercial or mathematical quantity, so tender and holy are many of the messages, so full of a subtle aroma; beautiful, in truth, to those for whom they are intended. Many of the most intrinsically valuable, and evidentially important, of these messages are rarely heard of beyond the privacy of domestic life; so it is in the quietude of home where the best results, in the form of spirit messages, have been obtained. How many homes have been brightened, hearts made glad, souls illumined, we may never know. Personally, some of my own richest seasons of refreshing have been in my own home, where the sacred fires burn brightly upon the altar of domestic life. There is, however, a value in these spirit messages that must not be overlooked, a value that marks them apart from all other things of our daily, and, for many, our all too dull existence. This is found in the evidence they give us that immortality is neither the pious fraud of a creed nor the impossible hope of the emotions, but a solid, actual, veritable reality; a fact in our midst, a fact of the most transcendent importance to us all in every rank in life; the confirmation of a religious hope, the answer of many a half-doubting prayer, the suggestion of a higher science, the intimation of a nobler, larger, purer life for us all. And especially, for we must not lose sight of the human interest of the question, it is the argument—may I say evidence?—for the continuance of consciousness, intellect, and affection beyond the lines of our present lives; a personal, intelligent, and, let me add, progressive future for all the race. Plainly the case for the reality of messages from the world of spirits is made out, and my brief analysis of the several points assumed as the bases of my contention maintains the conclusions so far expressed.

What, then, is our duty in regard, not merely to the points enumerated in the title of this paper, but to the general question of spirit messages and those who bring them to us? First, I should certainly say, 'Beloved, try the spirits,' not in the dictatorial or inquisitorial fashion which the new inquirer or the sceptic usually affects, but in the sense of arriving at a sound assurance that the spirits are actually present, that they understand what they are doing, and that they have an instrument through whom they can, with reasonable facility and clearness, express their desires, aims, or purposes. What patience in our present state of knowledge is needed to obtain the certainty referred to, those only can tell who have pursued the course suggested; but, when the goal has been gained, the reward amply repays for the toil endured. Just here the precise nature of spirit messages may call for our attention for a moment or so. Experience ranges them as referring either to business, conduct, health, or the state of departed friends, the nature of spirit-life, and interpretations of religious, ethical, scientific, and philosophic questions; with, of course, in one's earlier experiences, a preponderance of matters concerning the departed, which matters are presented as evidence—or 'tests'—of spirit return. I am satisfied that many of our returning friends can teach us much of their own experiences of death and life in the world to come; can comfort us with evidences of their continued life, advise us soundly on matters of secular concern, personal duty and health. Therefore—always remembering the need of using one's own reason—I venture to assert that our duty is to listen respectfully, judge carefully, and act only upon conviction, in regard to any matter communicated to us. On the other hand, when a valued friend, or loved relative, who has been a shrewd merchant or trader, but who was signalised for no special gifts in this life, returns to earth and presumes to handle problems that appal the most thoughtful, makes assertions that are contradicted by ordinary experience or common

knowledge, it may be my duty to listen courteously, but surely, though I accept the source of the message to be my departed friend, I am not obliged to say 'amen' to nonsense, even if it comes from the other side. If all a spirit chooses to say is to be accepted as *ex cathedra*, we should only be exchanging one form of mental slavery for another. Besides, my friend has been in the spirit-world, say, a year or so. He was densely ignorant of all spiritual truths while on earth—that is, as we Spiritualists know them. He was emotionally pious, theologically narrow, ignorant of science and philosophy; how, then, unless a miracle has been worked, is it that he has plumbed the deeps and scaled the heights? Personally he is an excellent fellow, and, within his limits, safe and reliable in information or advice. But to ask or expect one's lately departed washer-woman to discuss the differential calculus would be as stupid upon our part as, if she attempted it, it would be foolish upon her part. Therefore our duty here is, plainly, to exercise our reason, keep a level head, and 'prove all things,' that we 'may hold fast that which is good.'

To me all that pertains to Spiritualism is of a most serious nature, important above all things. It is my life's work, and has become the ruling influence of my life and home. Yet, always, I have essayed to steer a middle course, letting opinion wait upon experience, and striving to let reason always guide. In this paper I have avoided the introduction of illustrative cases, either in the experience of others or myself, preferring to state my case upon its merits, leaving to others the making of the criticisms which I hope my little effort may call forth. In my mind there is no doubt that it is the desire of every intelligent, wise, and loving spirit, that we should see it our plain duty to exercise our reason at all times, not that we may condemn, or 'damn with faint praise,' but that we may learn to trust our unseen counsellors, as a result of the confidence that arises from experience. If we expect less from the other side, use proper care and wisely apply all the spirits tell or teach us, our messages from the unseen will gain in force, utility, and power.

The weightiest words that I can use in closing are these: Let us study more closely the nature of mediumship and the laws governing its development and operation. Let us study also the construction of our spiritual circles. Knowledge is power. There can be no reason why our knowledge of things spiritual should not be as certain as that which we possess of things material. We have a truth to establish, and defend. We can best succeed by loyally following that truth wherever it leads, no matter what idols are shattered or altars overturned. If I am advised to do that which is unjust or wrong, if information is given me which is palpably false or grossly absurd, if advice is tendered me quite unsuited to the case—whether it come from spirit or mortal is no matter—would it not be my plain duty to reject it? On the other hand, if the information, advice, or request is on the lines of right, reason, and common-sense, would it not be my duty to accept it? I have but one answer to both questions—Yes. If you agree with me, our opinions of our duty in the case will be identical. And such an agreement will be in accord, I venture, with the best thought to-day, of the true and good in this world and in the other.

'LOS ESPIRITUS.'

The second and concluding volume of this work by Dr. Otero Acevedo has just been issued. It should prove of even greater value to his countrymen than the previous one, as it forms a concise and accurate record of the larger strides which Spiritualism has taken during the progress of the nineteenth century. The experiments and observations made in America and England in the course of the last forty years naturally come in for a considerable share of attention. Indeed, the Sisters Fox, Messrs. Home, Slade, Eglinton, and Miss Florence Cook supply the bulk of the phenomena dealt with; but the volume brings the subject quite up to date with an interesting personal narrative of researches made by the author, with the assistance of the now widely known Eusapia Paladino. The book is well and fully illustrated with portraits and diagrams, and is published at the office of 'La Irradiacion,' 6, Calle de Hita, Madrid.

CONFERENCE NUMBER OF 'LIGHT.'—We have a few copies left of the issue of 'LIGHT,' containing a report of the proceedings at the Conference; 2½d. per copy, or 2s. 4½d. per dozen, post free. An excellent number for distribution amongst inquirers.

SOME RECENT MATERIALISATIONS.

BY EDINA.

No. VI.

SEANCES WITH MRS. TITFORD.

I now proceed to deal in the second place with materialisations where the spirit forms were unable to show their faces :—

We had a good many of these manifestations during our various séances, some of which were both interesting and convincing, and others are open to the observation that the form may, for aught we know owing to the darkness, have been one and the same all through. I first chronicle the case of my friend Mr. C., whose wife, he was sure, manifested at Mrs. Mellon's and Mrs. Davidson's séances. Here, my friend was again satisfied by certain infallible signs known to himself and her alone, that in the case of Mrs. Titford, the same psychic form twice came to him and his daughter. On one of the occasions now being dealt with, he said, 'M., if that is you, play me the flourish on the piano you used to give.' Instantly I felt the figure leave his side and heard the rustle of her garments as she crossed the room and sounded a 'roulade' on the instrument, which Mr. C. declared was just what his wife used to do in earth-life. Next, I chronicle the case of my father-in-law, Mr. T., who twice tried to show himself and failed. The control said, 'Here is Mr. T., Mrs. — [my wife's] father. He has white hair and beard.' Immediately after this I felt a form come behind, which patted and caressed me, threw the drapery over my head, &c., but this form could proceed no further. The control then said, 'There is another Miss T. here, a sister of Miss Jane T.; but she has a curious name. She calls herself "Zaddie."' This was quite accurate, being a pet name this sister had in earth-life, in the household. Immediately thereafter a fragile, but quite distinct, female form glided round the circle and caressed all the members of our family present. Further identification was, in the circumstances, impossible. Another old gentleman in the circle was twice caressed by a female form who, the control said, was 'the second Mrs. S.' He had a second wife, and it was she, he assumed, who was then near him; but, in the circumstances, identity is still with him an open question. Another interesting case was that of Robert C., who undoubtedly materialised to the satisfaction of Mr. C. and his daughter (who both recognised him) at Mrs. Davidson's séances. He came thrice on the present occasions, and as often played with great taste and sweetness two of his favourite tunes on the piano. He also came and patted my eldest son on the back, as an old schoolfellow of his at Watson's College. Then Mr. C., formerly a builder in the city, was announced by the control, and came twice to his widow and son. On one occasion his widow said, 'Papa, if that is you, go and play your favourite tune on the piano,' whereupon the form was heard moving round to the instrument, and then played very beautifully, 'When the Mists have Rolled Away,' which his widow assured us was really his favourite tune. Another curious experience befel a Mr. C., a legal gentleman whose first experience of psychic phenomena dates from the fourth séance. He was suddenly patted on the back by a visitor, evidently a male, who informed him, by pats on his arm in answer to his queries, that he was a friend, but not a relative, who had passed on five years ago. He could not remember who this could be; but the control came to his aid and informed him that this was Mr. Taylor; whereupon he at once explained that this was quite accurate, as he had a friend of that name who died at that exact period of time. He was also visited by another deceased chum, who passed over two years ago, named D. R. G., and at my request this person, who was well known to me in earth-life, came over to the other side of the circle and shook me violently from behind. I could certainly testify to his vigour and full development. There were numerous other affecting incidents and recognitions (as far as these were possible in the darkness), but I think those given will suffice.

A SELECT SÉANCE.

At the request of two of the ladies present at our second séance, Mrs. Titford, on her return from Glasgow, gave a select family sitting, at which there were also present Mr. C., his daughter, and four of ourselves. Although Mrs. Titford had sat thrice on three successive nights in Glasgow before coming here, she was in excellent condition, and it was a most exhausting séance. Into the sacred details of this sitting it is not my intention to enter; but I chronicle two striking features of it,

which marked it out from the others. (1) It was the only one of the seven at which a powerful and well-built man clearly showed himself. The face and moustache were perfect, and the identity was recognised by five members of the circle. (2) The control, shortly after the circle had been arranged and the medium in trance in the cabinet, came to me and said, 'Mr. —, my medium has been sitting under test conditions in Glasgow [a fact of which we were unaware], and we wish this to be a test séance too. You will ask Misses B. and R. to go to the cabinet, wake the medium, take her into the other room and strip off all her clothing, to see that she has no drapery about her.' We, one and all, refused to comply with this request; but Harry said to me, 'Mr. —, you are going to write about these séances, and you *must* do what we want.' This was accompanied by three emphatic smart taps on my arm. In the circumstances, we had no resource but to comply; the medium was roused up, duly stripped and searched by the two ladies in question, who testified to her having nothing on but her ordinary clothing. Mrs. Titford then resumed her place in the circle, and in about two minutes went into trance again, walked into the cabinet, and the psychic phenomena came with great rapidity. Two of the male forms who came on this occasion were named by the control, who said that one of them whom he first mentioned had been drowned. This was quite accurate. Only one of these persons showed himself, and that was the one with the moustache, before referred to. The other was only able to go round and greet all his sisters, one of whom said to him, 'Do you still play where you are?' The reply came instantly by the form going to the piano and playing with great feeling and delicacy 'Ye Banks and Braes'—a song the circle had just finished singing. Other materialisations occurred at this séance, but they are too sacred for description, and it is only necessary to add that it was a complete success, giving the sitters clear and undoubted evidence that their beloved ones could come back 'from the beyond' and reveal their identity and personality by ocular demonstration.

(To be continued.)

RECEIVED.

- 'The Coming Day,' for July. (London: Williams and Norgate. 3d.)
 'Natural Food,' for July. (London: L. N. Fowler and Co., Ludgate-circus. 2d.)
 'The Humanitarian,' for July. (London: Messrs. Hutchinson and Co., Paternoster-row. 1s.)
 'The New Age,' for June. (Edinburgh: Alex. Duguid, 25, Springwell-place, Dalry-road. 4d.)

THE SOUL.

Translated from Victor Hugo.

BY NEWTON CROSLAND.

What can it matter in this chequered sphere,
 To man's or woman's state,
 That human lives break up and disappear?
 The soul has no such fate;

The soul that soon, perhaps, will fly elsewhere,
 To regions in the skies,
 Where it will have no saddening griefs to bear,
 Where murmurs cannot rise.

Be like the bird who, on a trembling limb,
 Rests tottering, yet sings;
 His frail support excites no fear in him—
 He knows that he has wings.

PALMISTRY.—We note that the enterprising management of 'Our Home' (a bright little paper devoted to the interests of the home circle) has lately introduced a column on the vexed question of 'Palmistry.' Readers are invited to fill in the lines appearing on their hands, on blank diagrams printed in the paper, and to send the same to the editress, when Miss C. M. Langridge, authoress of a very readable pamphlet on the art, will examine the said diagrams, and publish the results of her investigations in succeeding issues. Miss Langridge, in an ably-written introduction, emphatically contends that 'Palmistry' is a science, and not 'a kind of gipsy fortune-telling.' All she wishes is that the sceptic shall suspend judgment in the matter until he has tested her ability in the manner she suggests.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 2, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI,
LONDON, W.C.
SATURDAY, JULY 6th, 1895.

Light.

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.'

'LIGHT' may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

THE OCCULT IN JAPAN.

A few of our strongest thinkers have at least led the way to a field of inquiry which will one day give to the world the solution of some, perhaps of most, of its great problems, though, not necessarily, the cure for its greatest ills. The study of Comparative Religions and Comparative Mythologies has done much to reveal the unity of the human race: but it is destined to do much more. The tracing of all religions and of all mythologies to a common source will gradually unveil, on the largest scale, the process of the education of the world, and quietly inter, in a never more to be opened sepulchre, the sectarian infatuations and provincial conceits which led and lead people to talk of a final revelation and one solitary God-inspired religion; the infatuation and conceit, for instance, which has always led some Christians to assert that only in its small ark could the mercy of God be found.

Strange infatuation, indeed, when we think of what is involved in the idea of 'Our Father,' and when we remember how the great founder of the Christian Religion himself drew the outlines of a larger faith, and gave to the world that generous declaration; 'They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down together in the kingdom of heaven'!

But another step needs to be taken, and we hope the right men and women will speedily be found to take it. We want a serious study of Comparative Psychology or Comparative Spiritualism; and, in this direction, we are persuaded, the unbelieving world will find its salvation. To begin with, the Bible itself is yet to be properly understood and brought into court. The 'orthodox' do not a bit know what to do with the all-abounding 'supernatural' element in it; the 'heterodox' either sweep it away or, in a puzzled manner, ignore it: and even some Spiritualists, strange to say, are restless to cut themselves adrift from it. But the 'orthodox' must be held fast to their own 'inspired' book: the 'heterodox' must be pushed for a reasonable explanation; and Spiritualists must be taught not to let such a storehouse of first-rate evidence slip out of their hands. All that they claim to have done and to have seen done is there. Everything upon which they rely is there.

But we must go further afield, and there is plenty of material at hand, both in the ancient religious books of the world and the practices of modern men in every part of the world; an almost unworked field. Hitherto it has been lamentably true that having eyes we have seen not, and having heads we have not understood.

These reflections land us naturally at a book of singular interest just now, 'Occult Japan; or the way of the gods. An esoteric study of Japanese personality and possession.' By Percival Lowell. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston, U.S.) It comes at a moment when, of course, we are all interested in Japan, but it is of permanent interest. We hear of Mr. Lowell for the first time, and we find it a trifle difficult to assign him his personal equation. He has given

us a painstaking and somewhat elaborately worked-out book on a most serious subject, but, like Mr. Andrew Lang, he is very fond of chaff, and it is not always easy to see how far he is student and how far showman: but, in the main, he is serious enough; and perhaps his half non-committal, half humorous air, may help some people to put an even extra value upon his testimony.

The story he has to tell is a really remarkable one. He claims to be, for the Western world, almost the discoverer of occult Japan. It is about five years ago since he accidentally came upon the trail, and now he finds the game everywhere. In short, he finds that Japan is saturated through and through with what we should call Spiritualism—with what he would prefer to call the cult of possession by the gods. On one holy mountain, 'every summer, faith tells a rosary of ten thousand pilgrims.' Divination and trance-mediumship are almost the common-places of daily life. 'The gods' are consulted for tidings about the weather, for the cure of maladies, for the settlement of disputed points concerning religion and philosophy, for almost everything; and test séances are common. What we should call 'spirit-healing' is as well-known there as 'local preaching' here.

Instead of what we should call 'churches,' the Japanese revel in clubs, with a minimum of organisation and a maximum of simple flexibility. Different men different styles. They hold prayer-meetings, go on pilgrimages, and arrange for regular séances. They split off readily, or are called into existence by some active enthusiast. 'Once started, each club is a spiritual law unto itself.' 'The pilgrim clubs are great institutions in numbers as well as in other things. Indeed, they are numerous beyond belief. Collectively they are said to comprise eighty per cent. of the entire population of the empire.' But this last statement Mr. Lowell accepts 'only at a popular discount.'

It may here be useful (in more ways than one) to ask how it is that we have hitherto known so little about this occult side of Japanese life. Mr. Lowell gives us the answer. When he and a friend saw, on the Ontaké mountain, the 'god-possession' consummated by three pilgrims, 'nobody, apparently, took any cognisance of what was going on, except us and the meteorologists who came out to fraternise with us, and volunteered comments in a superior manner on the senselessness of the proceeding;' 'an imported attitude of mind not destitute of caricature,' says Mr. Lowell. Commenting on this scene and on the discovery of the cult of 'god-possession,' Mr. Lowell says: 'The revelation thus strangely vouchsafed me turned out to be as far-reaching as it was sincere. There proved to exist a regular system of divine possession, an esoteric cult imbedded in the very heart and core of the Japanese character and instinct, with all the strangeness of that, to us, enigmatical race. That other foreigners should not previously have been admitted to this company of heaven may at first seem the strangest fact of all.' The explanation we find on the next page:—The foreigner 'expects to find what does not exist, and what exists he would never dream of looking for;' or he goes away lazily or contemptuously, and says, 'There is nothing to see; and they won't let you see it;' which is precisely what is being said of us at home.

In a future article we shall give some account of what this good-humoured, sensible, and open-minded 'foreigner' saw.

MISS FLORENCE MARRYAT is announced to give addresses at the Spiritualist Camp Meeting, Lake Brady, Ohio, on August 7th and 10th.

DR. SLADE.—We learn from the 'Banner of Light' that Dr. Slade is now in New York. Partial paralysis and continued ill health have prevented him from sitting for the public demonstrations of his wonderful mediumship for some time; but his health is now much improved.

AN EARNEST APPEAL TO SPIRITUALISTS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANISED ACTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPIRITUALISTIC TRAINING COLLEGE FOR MEDIUMS.

BY EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

No. II.

In my former paper I dealt, as far as the limitations of space would allow, with the first portion of the subjects included in the above heading, and now ask permission of our esteemed Editor to devote my present article to the reasons which induce me to plead, even to the verge of urgency, for the formation of the mediumistic Training College indicated also in the headings of this and my first article.

In order to show the value, as well as necessity, of progressive and practical training in the culture and unfoldment of spirit mediumship, permit me to refer to the early experiences of the American Spiritualists, amongst whom the first initial steps in the promulgation of the great modern Spiritual cause were taken.

I arrived in America, and that without the slightest knowledge that such a cause as 'Spiritualism' had an existence at all, about the period when the tenth anniversary of its commencement was about to be celebrated.

After a series of incidents almost too incredible, and certainly too numerous, to be detailed in this paper, I became forced into the investigation, and inevitable acceptance of the truths of Spiritualism. Once enrolled in its ranks, I found that its leaders in New York City—the then place of my residence—included such men as Horace Greeley, Judge Edmonds, Professors Hare, Mapes, and other equally renowned scientists; many of the leading Physicians of the city; such writers as Washington Irving, Fennimore Cooper, and an endless array of doctors, lawyers, and editors, together with their wives and daughters. Amongst these distinguished, and anything rather than foolish or credulous, associates, the medial instruments included the three celebrated Fox Sisters, D. D. Home, A. J. Davis and Mary his wife, besides not less than some fifty powerful professional mediums, and at least twenty-five unpaid and non-professional ones, amongst the latter of whom were Miss Laura Edmonds—the Judge's daughter—and myself. Besides devoting certain hours of each day for sittings to the public, or whoever chose to call on us, we were all advised by the more experienced investigators, no less than at the request of our spirit friends, to hold each week one or two specially organised and limited circles for our own growth and development. We were also charged to attend, and watch, or take part in at times, all sorts of circles, high and low—in the humblest and highest conditions of life, both in public and private. The avowed aim of the instructions we thus received was to make us acquainted with the immense varieties, characteristics, and conditions of spirit life; to put us on our guard against the wild fanaticisms that were too often fastened on the Spiritual cause; to teach us the wonderful and varied methods of control by spirits—their failures and successes; the interferences which human imaginings would at times occasion; in a word, to make the careful student aware of the vast difficulties, both on the human and spiritual side, of the new telegraphy between the mortal and immortal worlds, and, as far as possible, to educate the close observers amongst us in something of what the word 'Spiritualism' implied, and what spirits themselves had to suffer from the folly, fanaticism, and ignorance of the human side of the movement. Nevertheless, it was in the rush and hurry of these many-sided and hastily-improvised gatherings that the early Spiritualists studied their hitherto unknown and unprecedented movement; in this way, too, that the spirits learned to control their mediums, and the

mediums were informed how to prepare for, and deal with, the influences they received.

Thus, too, we were taught when to fast, advised as to the very nature of the fabrics we were to wear, so as to favour control. We learned to classify the grades of spirits that attended us, and their various phases of power, and how to court the good and repel or seek to reform the evil ones that at times harassed our gatherings.

The trance and speaking mediums were counselled to attend every available public gathering, and practise *or be practised upon* by their spirit controls; also how to address an audience before ever they presumed to mount the rostrum to instruct others. Again and again I have been commanded by good spirits to read, study, and in every way to *prepare the instrument on which the spiritual master-mind was expected to produce divine harmonies*. 'It might create astonishment,' the teaching spirits would say, 'to hear sublime utterances poured forth from the lips of the automatic but wholly unlearned medium, but far better would it be to prepare a good and suitable instrument through which master musicians from the higher world could lift up the souls of the listeners to the divinest truths of Heaven, instead of merely exciting surprise and wonder.'

I might fill even a volume, as large as my early work on 'Modern American Spiritualism,' did time, space, and opportunity permit, in describing the initial modes by which the vast continent of America has become filled with capable, well-instructed, and well-developed mediums; and though Spiritualism—even in that land—is only in the early dawn of the day when we may expect and believe that the Kingdom of Heaven shall be established upon earth, still, when we compare the mighty fruitage of the Spiritual cause in America with that of any European land, we are constrained to look at the underlying sources of power, and acknowledge that whilst the Americans have faithfully laboured for the grand open communion they enjoy with the spirit world, the investigators of Europe, for the most part, are either satisfied to entrust their researches to bodies of scientists, whose principal aim seems to be to discover falsehood rather than truth, or to patiently sit down and let the spirits do all the work for them, rather than purchase the desired boon of spiritual intercourse by sedulous and steady personal investigation. Meantime, I am well convinced that the extreme paucity of medium power, rendering investigation in this country so rare and difficult, except in the reserve and exclusiveness of private circles, is not due to lack of the true mediumistic element by which alone spirits can commune with mortals but simply because there is not that amount of earnest devotion and patient research which marked the first unfoldment of the cause in America, and which still continues to enrich the land with medium power. When I first returned from America to this my native land, I found such admirable mediums opening the way for investigation as Miss Florrie Cook, the Marshalls, Mrs. Guppy, Miss Koeves, Herne, Williams, Miss Haughton, Mr. Eglinton, and many other no less distinguished and highly-favoured instruments, through whom the divine 'music of the spheres' lifted up the souls of the wise, the learned, and the noble. Our public gatherings, promoted by the most influential persons of the country, included writers, editors, thinkers, and persons whose rank and talents could not fail to command alike respect and impel research. Why such a mighty change has now shrouded the spirit of our great movement into little less than midnight gloom, I am not prepared to say. It is enough that it is so; and whilst reiterating as I now do, the priceless worth of the Spiritual cause, whether as a religion, a combination of all sciences and the mightiest impulse to reform in all departments of human crime and injustice, I can conceive of no better way to promote a revival of that interest which once seemed to make our

ranks impregnable, and which I still hope is only slumbering—but not in the night of mortal death—than by presenting, as I hope to do in my next paper, a sketch of what might be accomplished by the *attempting at least*, however narrow may be the preliminary scale of effort, the foundation of a Training College for spirit mediums and speakers.

(To be concluded next week.)

'THE ESOTERIC BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY.*'

(Concluded.)

Theosophy accepts the pessimism of Buddha in regard to this beautiful and wonderful world, 'where only man is vile,' and the great object of the Theosophist is to get out of it, or rather out of the necessity of re-entering it, as soon as possible. This happy consummation, which to the ordinary life-loving mortal might seem a kind of 'higher suicide,' is reached by the cultivation of *indifference*:—

It is only when that *character* becomes freed from all desire on this plane, when it has exhausted all Karma which can only have its legitimate outcome in this world, because it is connected with thought, desires, and *illusions* of sense life, that re-incarnation ceases.

To the profane intellect there seems to be something wrong here. We 'fall into matter' in order to become self-conscious, and able to distinguish evil from good; and this we learn to do through multiform experience. But all experience comes to us through our senses, emotions, and reason or intelligence: for the most enthusiastic Theosophist could hardly maintain that we could bring up an adequate knowledge of good and evil 'from the depths of our moral consciousness,' as the German philosopher is said to have acquired his idea of an elephant. To get rid of 'thoughts and desires' before we had exhausted the whole gamut thereof, on the plea that we had discovered them to be connected with illusions, looks very much like shirking our lesson instead of learning it; and, indeed, the Buddhist, with whom the Theosophist agrees on that point, fancies that the monastery affords a short cut to 'liberation,' thus confounding the ignorance of the monk with 'the knowledge that makes perfect.' We do not dispute the assertion that we are sent here to learn some great lesson from the experience of earth-life; but should we not, therefore, enter into everything human and terrestrial with interest and eagerness, and learn to appreciate our earth-life in all its fulness? Our Theosophist, like all anchorites, whether Pagan or Christian, emphatically answers 'No!' and believes that by starving his human nature, and 'crushing it out,' he will become not merely an angel, but a 'god.' We hope he will not find himself terribly disappointed!

'Re-incarnation,' we are told:—

ceases because the human has once more become the divine; because the lower personality has become one with the higher individuality; because the Christ within us, which is our own SELF, has accomplished his mission; has wrought out our salvation.

If all this be so, it is not very clear to the unaided intellect why the re-incarnating Ego need re-incarnate at all in search of experience, since it is already *divine*, and therefore presumably omniscient; for:—

The central doctrine of Theosophy, that round which all else revolves, is the doctrine of the Higher Self. Briefly stated, that doctrine teaches that our own true Self, the immortal Ego, is ONE with the universal SELF, with that which in ordinary phraseology is called 'God.'

We have seen that the re-incarnating Ego, after a turn upon earth, retires for a season to enjoy the 'bliss' of Devachan. But this life in Devachan takes place in a sphere which Theosophists recognise as subjective; and thus they find themselves entangled in the mazes of the

great philosophical problem of Subject and Object, and brought face to face with the exceedingly abstruse question of 'the nature of experience.' Theosophy adopts the fantasy of Shakespeare, that life is of the nature of a dream; which in a generalised form, as applied to all manifested existence, is the philosophical doctrine of Maya. Recent psychological research has given to this ancient doctrine a new meaning and interest for us; for if such a thing be possible as an hallucination of all the senses, at once so complete that the imaginary becomes indistinguishable from the substantial, and if many persons can be subjected to the same hallucination at the same time (the 'veridical hallucination' and the 'collective hallucination' of the Society for Psychical Research), then where is the difference between 'the real' and 'the unreal'? And if dream be thus of the nature of waking life, may not waking life be equally of the nature of a dream? To the latter question Theosophy boldly answers 'Yes.' All phenomenal existence, it tells us, whether 'objective' or 'subjective,' is Maya, illusion, of the nature of a dream; the only reality exists in the noumenal state, of which we can form no conception whatever. But if dream be for us 'reality,' and reality be for us 'dream,' the problem is not solved but doubled, for we then have two 'realities' and two 'dreams' to understand, when we had only one of each before!

It follows logically from the divine creative power of the human Ego, working with what the Germans call 'dream-stuff,' that everyone creates his own environment in Devachan, and perhaps even on earth, much as an oyster secretes its shell. But this is so striking a doctrine, and one which involves philosophical and psychological considerations of such importance, and is fraught with such far-reaching consequences, that we must let Mr. Kingsland speak to us himself, lest unintentionally we might not do him justice:—

As it is with 'man,' so it is with those other orders of intelligences which rise in 'ascending scale until we reach something practically indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.'* Each is the creator of its own universe, its own objective sphere. All is law and order here; there is no caprice, no supernaturalism in 'creation,' viewed in this light. It is a profoundest philosophy, giving the fullest scope for the exercise of our highest intelligence and intuition; giving promise of an infinite growth and extension of our own life and consciousness. For these higher powers and intelligences are not separated and isolated from each other and from man. The whole is united and blended into one harmonious unity. It is no more possible to separate man from the universe, than it is to separate 'God.' Each lower power 'creates' within the limits of law determined by higher powers. Free will is limited by law. And if we inquire in this light what are the 'laws of nature,' we find them to be the very nature and essence of these higher creative intelligences; the forces of nature are their very bodies and substance. 'Every force is an emanation from an entity,' says the 'Secret Doctrine' . . . and though now to the man of flesh these entities appear as 'forces,' 'laws of nature,' 'spirits,' 'gods,' and what not, *above and beyond him*; yet we touch the deepest truth of all, the *profoundest mystery* of our own nature, when we state that MAN in his totality, in the fulness of his seven principles, is himself *these entities*.

After all, this is but an elaboration of the idea entertained by so many great thinkers in all ages: that the soul is an emanation from a Universal Soul, 'as the body is composed of the matter of the earth. There is nothing intrinsically absurd in the conception; and if, as now put forward by Neo-Theosophy, it tends to call up a smile, it must surely be because it is taught dogmatically as a revelation, not suggested as a speculation or conjecture which is in need of proof before unquestioning acceptance as 'the Truth.' There is a great deal in Neo-Theosophy that is ingenious and plausible, much even that is possible, and a little that we may call probable; but no one can

* 'The Esoteric Basis of Christianity; or, Theosophy and Christian Doctrine.' By William Kingsland, Fellow of the Theosophical Society. London: Theosophical Publishing Society. 1895. Price, 3s. 6d.

* This is a quotation from Huxley.

read Mr. Kingsland's interesting book without perceiving how badly all those fine theories about the unknown are in want of just a little bit of what we others are wont to call 'proof.' It almost seems that for a Theosophist the proof of his doctrine lies in his believing in it, as 'the proof of a pudding is in the eating.'

Here are we, Spiritualists, rich in facts which go to disprove the only part of the Theosophical doctrine that seems susceptible of any proof at all—that which concerns the condition of those who have passed from earth-life. There are they, the Theosophists, opulent in theory of the Cosmos, but absolutely without one single fact which any one but a confirmed Theosophist would consider proof of the validity of those theories—unable even to prove the existence of the 'Mahatmas' by whom this wealth of theory is supposed to have been revealed. Is not their position very like that of St. Augustine, whom Mr. Kingsland quotes so appreciatively, and who sought to deduce a knowledge of Nature from the Bible alone, in utter contempt for the mere facts? Is not *our* position that of the philosophers whom St. Augustine so fiercely assailed and so ignorantly abused, who followed the method of close observation of Nature which Aristotle introduced, thus laying the foundation of Science, properly so called—of the 'actual knowledge' of to-day?

As we reluctantly close Mr. Kingsland's suggestive volume—which we cordially recommend to those of our readers, more especially, who are interested in Esoteric Christianity—the question obtrudes itself upon our mind: Whether, in the mental 'make up' of our latter-day Theosophists, ignorance of what less learned people know does not play as large a part as knowledge which is a monopoly of their own.

IN VINDICATION OF MRS MELLON.

A NEW PHASE IN HER MEDIUMSHIP.

BY A. O. G. STORDEUR, M.A., PH.D., SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

During the past few months our journals have been buoyant over the alleged exposure at a supposed fraudulent séance, given in her house by the well-known materialising medium, Mrs. Annie Mellon, on October 12th, 1894. Since that memorable evening strenuous efforts have been made to upset the good faith and belief in the powers of this sensitive. Whatever the motive may have been for violating the right of hospitality, and committing an outrage upon a lady whose honour and reputation had hitherto been unscathed, and who had been pronounced by many to be one of the most reliable mediums of the present day, the effect of such conduct has been very injurious to her physical and mental state of health, and damaging to the cause of Spiritual truth in general; because, since that historical evening on which she underwent the humiliating experience of being violently thrown off her seat in the cabinet by Mr. T. S. Henry's seizure of the figure of 'Cissy,' Mrs. Mellon's health has been on the decline, and people, believing the damaging statements which have been put forth, have raised an outcry, and stigmatised her a fraud, and materialisation a myth; notwithstanding the fact that, in spite of her disturbed frame of mind and physical weakness, Mrs. Mellon has since held séances under most stringent test conditions with very satisfactory results in the presence of a committee, consisting of men and women of high culture and intelligence.

To vindicate Truth as far as possible, and to disabuse the English thinking public from any erroneous ideas as regards Mrs. Mellon's mediunistic powers, her honour and integrity in general, and her genuineness on the particular evening in question, I write to you, knowing that your periodical is largely read, not only in Great Britain, but in all parts of the world; although I would think it almost impossible that the faith of England's true sons and daughters in the honour and genuineness of their sister, who has walked amongst them for a period of about twenty-three years with an unblemished character, could be shaken through the ungallant action and contradictory statements of a person who has known her for a very limited time only.

I may be allowed to state at the outset that I make no reference to Mr. Henry's erroneous statements promulgated in his pamphlet, and which statements concerning the past career of Mrs. Mellon are totally contradicted by her as false conceptions and misrepresentations on the part of Mr. Henry. My intention is to deal here only with his assertions as published in most of the daily papers in Sydney and to show their intrinsic contradictions, confining myself solely to the record of facts as I witnessed them in Mrs. Mellon's house on the eventful evening, October 12th, 1894.

Mr. Henry says that he has made a statutory declaration of the facts, as he believes them to have occurred on the evening in question. I also have made a statutory declaration, and am prepared to swear, as often as need be, to the veracity of my statements. And no one who was in the room can speak with more positiveness than I; for I was in the immediate proximity of the cabinet, and every form that appeared was within the reach of my hand, so that I was far better able to see what happened than Mr. Henry or anyone else in the room.

Before referring to Mr. Henry's statements as he published them in the Press of Sydney, I may be permitted to say that he altered these in his pamphlet when he saw them at once contradicted, and found that he was unable to refute the contradiction.

In the first place, Mr. Henry declares that someone on his 'left went over and handed to the so-called "Cissy" the usual box of chocolate.' I beg to contradict his statement. No one on his left gave that night to 'Cissy' any chocolates. It was an aged lady on his right, far away from him, and whose hand I held. And then he states that 'the chocolate box was deposited by "Cissy" inside the curtains.' Here, too, our friend is mistaken, for the chocolate box fell out of the hands of 'Cissy' about three feet away from the curtain, and was picked up from the ground and handed to the little form, who, in her turn, placed them on the mantel-piece, and not inside of the curtain. I mention these little incidents as indications of Mr. Henry's general want of accuracy.

Mr. Henry goes on to say that he seized the form of the so-called 'Cissy,' and found that he had hold of Mrs. Mellon, and that she was 'on her knees.' But I declare, on my solemn oath, that I saw the natural movements of the legs of a person as in the act of walking! And immediately this form was seized, I heard the fall of a solid body from behind the curtain. How this body, which proved afterwards to be that of Mrs. Mellon, was thrown back, as it were, into the form grasped and held by Mr. Henry, I was unable to explain at that time, being a mere student of supra-mundane phenomena. The latter being the case, I naturally came to the séance in a spirit of inquiry, and had well decided to watch and observe the movements of the forms, &c., for which very reason I requested Mrs. Mellon, before the commencement of the séance, to place me as near to her as possible, which she readily did, not knowing, of course, my intention.

'I then saw,' says Mr. Henry, 'that Mrs. Mellon had a black mask over her face and white drapery round her shoulders.' Now, at the moment when he seized the form, I was alongside him and saw him holding the figure, which I at once recognised as Mrs. Mellon, but saw no black mask, which, most emphatically, I would have taken possession of had I seen one. And it is most surprising to me that a man, strong and powerful as Mr. Henry is, coming there with the intention of detecting fraud and trickery, should not have grasped the same as an undeniable proof of deception against his victim. I, indeed, noticed the white drapery of which he speaks, and intently watching it, saw the same distinctly in front of my eyes, disappearing in smoke, as it were. Mr. Henry saw just as well as I did the drapery round Mrs. Mellon's shoulders; why, then, in the name of common-sense and truth, did he not snatch the same and become possessor of it? I certainly would have done so, but could not.

Then Mr. Henry states: 'I looked inside the cabinet and saw a beard upon the floor inside the cabinet.' Again, I ask, if a beard was seen by him, why did he not pick it up and show it to all? Furthermore, I say, how could he see inside the cabinet? Firstly, the curtains were down, and no one had entered inside the cabinet and raised or pulled aside the curtains; secondly, he was too far away from them, standing in front of the fire-place in the centre of the room, where he held Mrs. Mellon with both hands. With his left he held her left, whilst his right hand was round her waist, she lying on her knees uttering moans of

distress, and not struggling with him to be released ; I myself requested him, as a gentleman, to release her from his grasp, but to no avail, and consequently I never left Mr. Henry until he had released his hold. Hence, I saw all and everything, and am able to be positive in my statements.

'As soon as I released my hold,' says our friend, 'Mrs. Mellon tore the black mask from her face and the drapery from her shoulders, and hid them under her petticoat.' That these things should have happened under my eyes without my noticing them, when I myself feel guilty of having been at that séance as a private, but honourable, detective, is simply past all credence.

Next, and finally, Mr. Henry 'entered the cabinet, and found on the floor a black shawl, old muslin, and a small black bag,' &c. In point of fact, I followed him into the cabinet, and can vouch that the statement given above to the effect that a black shawl and old muslin were seen by him inside the cabinet is most emphatically incorrect. Furthermore, Mr. Henry saw me walking with him into the cabinet, and certainly must have seen me standing alongside him there, and if he observed these articles there and then, why did he not pick them up, or at least draw my attention to them, knowing as he did that I, too, was an investigator? But, strange to say, not a single word was uttered by him until Mrs. Mellon had re-entered the cabinet, and we all were gathered together in the drawing-room ; then only, and this to my greatest surprise, he spoke of having seen the aforesaid articles.

I do not think it worth while to contradict the erroneous assertions of two or three of Mr. Henry's colleagues, but in summing up the various statements, and comparing the one with the other, one cannot help being struck by their variance and glaring contradictions. For instance, Mr. Roydhouse declares that he found in the cabinet, on the floor, the black mask, whilst Mrs. Mellon, wearing the same, was still in the grasp of Mr. Henry, who, in turn, declared in his statutory declaration that his victim put it, together with the other things, underneath her petticoat.

Now, the question we come to is, Was fraud detected on the occasion referred to? My emphatic answer to this question is a positive 'No!' What reason have I for saying so? Because, in the first place, I can see no object whatsoever in view why Mrs. Mellon should practise trickery. She made no money, and used her mediumistic power from no motive of pecuniary emolument. Quite the contrary ; for she had much to lose, and certainly staked the position of her husband. Secondly, Mr. Henry makes contradictory statements. According to one statement, Mrs. Mellon is supposed to have torn the black mask from her face and the drapery from her shoulders as soon as he had released his hold ; then she is hiding these precious articles underneath her garments whilst 'he is still holding her firmly.' Is it not also amazingly strange that Mr. Henry and Miss St. Hill (the latter is in the employ of Mr. Roydhouse) should actually see Mr. Roydhouse picking up the beard, and handling the same, and not show it to those that were present during all that time, while Mrs. Mellon is in the firm grasp of Mr. Henry, who allows her in the first place to remove under his very eyes the white drapery, black mask, &c., and then lets her quietly go and snatch the beard out of Mr. Roydhouse's hands? Happily, there are still some who are not so foolish as to depend on these contradictions, but are demanding more reliable and substantial proof.

Well, what has been the effect of Mr. Henry's rude action and baseless charges? The effect has been a popular outcry that Mrs. Mellon is a fraud and materialisation a myth. And did she succumb under the pressure of this unmerited, adverse criticism? For a considerable time she was, indeed, heartbroken, and, as I have said, both her mental and physical strength was giving way. But, fortunately, she has been inspired with courage to rally her scattered energies ; not to allow herself to be dismayed, but to rise and be equal to the occasion, and bravely to vindicate herself and truth. And thus 'out of evil cometh good' ; for the alleged *exposé* has been the direct means of developing a new phase of Mrs. Mellon's materialising power ; a phase that will leave no shadow of doubt on the mind of an honest investigator ; a phase that will reinstate her in the estimation of the public, re-establish the reputation of her honour and integrity, and prove once and for all that materialisation is a recognised fact and reality and not a myth. Of this new phase I now proceed to give your readers some particulars.

(To be continued.)

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 Cyprian Priestess.'

SIR,—I forwarded a reply to the former letter of Mr. Matthew Forbes to the Editor of 'LIGHT,' but as it was sent during the 'Conference week,' it must have escaped attention. As he still wishes to be enlightened on the subject, I have to state, for Mr. Forbes' information, that Mr. Duguid has told me he has seen this personage often, and that she has always come to him clothed in white drapery. He has given me other details, but as it is some time since we talked on the subject, I confine myself meantime to stating that she is 'a person' on the 'other side' who, I am informed, has appeared to Mr. Duguid. It has also been stated to me that she is well known to what is denominated 'the Hafed Circle,' which meets weekly at Mr. Duguid's house in Glasgow. This circle, I am informed, has been conducted for a long period of years, and during all that time Mr. Duguid has given his services as sole medium without fee or reward of any kind. He also gives a *free* painting séance, to which everybody is welcome, once a month in his house in Glasgow, and pays for the painting materials out of his own weekly wages. And this is the man—a plain, unlettered mechanic—against whom the shafts of misrepresentation and the sneers of incredulity have been directed from far too many sources during the last two decades. His mediumship has been anything but a financial gain to him ; but he doesn't mind that, so long as his honesty is not impugned.

In conclusion let me say this : it is a matter of little importance, to me, at least, whether the 'Cyprian Priestess' is or is not like the picture entitled 'Night,' and that simply because on three occasions the photograph or likeness of the former has been got under test conditions (1) through Mr. Glendinning's agency ; (2) through my friend (as described by me) along with another photograph of a totally different and unknown person ; and (3) by two members of my family holding a plate in their hands, which were also held by Mr. Duguid for a few minutes. What more is wanted? Granted that the result is the production of a face and pose like the picture entitled 'Night,' it is still an abnormal production got under test conditions, and, as such, is entitled to be denominated a 'psychic photograph.' I really must protest against this continual theorising, nagging, and questioning. Let us deal with solid facts, which cannot be controverted ; and, with the body of evidence in my possession, I contend that psychic photography is proved, and Mr. Duguid's honesty stands unimpeached.

EDINA.

'Vir' Knows 'How it is Done!'

SIR,—I do not know how far 'Vir's' previous history may entitle him to the respectful attention of your readers, but he appears to need reminding, like the veriest novice, that we are not *required* to, and *will* not listen to explanations which can only account for a portion of the phenomena of Spiritualism. 'Vir' writes as one 'having authority,' but he fails to quote any ; and we are left to infer that his ideas are evolved from his own inner consciousness. This may be a most desirable source, but we cannot be satisfied with his mere assurance, saying, 'I know that this is so.' The vexed question of the 'Cyprian Priestess' he solves to his own satisfaction, and the most astounding phenomenon of all, materialisation, he dismisses in a single line : 'Also how it is that materialisations are produced.'

Having kindly helped us over these difficulties, will 'Vir' now proceed to explain how the various physical and other manifestations, including direct speaking, writing, and the showing of brilliant electric lights, are produced under test conditions? I presume he understands what test conditions are ; and if he doubts the fact of phenomena occurring under these conditions, he has yet much to learn, and is not in a position to discuss the matter.

'Vir's' experiences are curious, and I hope will be closely scrutinised. He says : 'As a result of experiments, I conclusively proved that sensitives see the images in our minds of imaginary persons who never had a real objective existence, *better* than they see the images in our minds of our dead or living relatives, and they can be more easily materialised.' So that which does *not* really exist is more easily described than that which does! According to this Mr. Slater should not have

pourtrayed 'Vir's' father, but rather the crossing-sweeper round the corner! Let those accept this reading to whose common-sense it appeals. I am perfectly aware that, as a rule, clairvoyance gives no *proof* of the presence or existence of spirits. It discloses usually what is in the mind or consciousness of the sitter. There are, however, other exhibitions which afford overwhelming proof of the presence and existence of spirits; therefore, when mediums of known respectability and honour tell us they see and hear our spirit friends acting and speaking in our midst, I contend that the presumption that they *really* see these friends is more likely than that they are, intentionally or unintentionally, deceiving. Why reject the explanation, supported as it is by hard facts, which is at once the most simple, the most natural, and the most desirable, for one that is neither of the three? Albeit, *we* are open to conviction, we desire to find the *true* explanation, *not* the confirmation of certain foregone conclusions. Show us a more reasonable hypothesis covering *all* the facts, and we are ready to examine it with due earnestness. But until that time we shall hold on with what is, happily, an ever-increasing strength, to our own glorious belief in the possibility and *righteousness* of spirit return and communion.

'BIDSTON.'

Cremation.

SIR,—I note in 'LIGHT,' June 29th, a letter from the Hon. Percy Wyndham, asking for reliable information on the subject of cremation.

If the following testimony is worth anything, I am happy to give it. But first permit me to say that, personally, I have no bias whatever either for or against cremation. I shall give only the initial letters of the names of the spirits, both of whom have only been gone from earth-life within the last two years, but their names would have been sufficient guarantee (when on earth) for their absolute reliability.

In October last, 1894, a lady called to see me, bringing an introduction from 'Borderland,' and asked me to give her a séance that she might try to communicate with her mother and husband, to both of whom she was greatly attached. I consented, and Lady H. and I had several séances together, at all of which both her mother and husband came, giving ample and positive proof of their identity. The bodies of Lord H. and the Duchess of A. had been cremated, and amongst other questions, Lady H. asked—

'Did I do rightly in following your wishes in regard to cremation?'

'Perfectly right,' came the reply from each spirit.

'Did the act cause you suffering in any form?'

'Absolutely none!'

'I have heard that it is thought wrong by many people to destroy the body by burning?'

Lord H. replied: 'How can it be wrong? Death means the separation of body and spirit. When the spirit has left its mortal form, the clay is without sense or feeling; it is dead. How can burning be worse than slow decay?'

The reply of the Duchess to the same question was: 'If I could die a hundred deaths, after each one I would wish my body to be cremated for many reasons. Put away from you all sentimental ideas that the burning of my dead body caused ME "suffering." If such had been the case, then I should not have been what is termed "dead." And, surely, a speedy death by cremation would have been preferable to being buried alive. My daughter, you did wisely and well. Long before my *body* was burnt my *spirit* was free and far away.'

Take these communications for what they are worth. Privately, I am ready to give the names of Lady H. and the spirits if required.

Chirk, Ruabon, North Wales.

B. RUSSELL-DAVIES.

Activities in the Spirit World.

SIR,—Mrs. Britten in her excellent replies to questions, at the late Conference, told us that: 'In the spirit world, all is activity,' and much there also is typical. And thus it is that processions, modes of activity, religious and otherwise, appear to have their origin from the other side. One of these religious processions of souls seems to have been witnessed by the nephew and great-niece of Mr. W. Espinasse, at three o'clock on the morning of May 25th last, in the neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey, of a startling character, as we read in 'LIGHT' of June 8th—witnessed and heard by these two, because they are evidently both seers and clairaudients.

There seems, however, no proof that the policeman present saw this symbolic sight. Indeed, one hopes he did not, for it appears far from desirable that our honoured guardians, who have so much rough work to undertake, should be sensitives, like the night watchman in the gardens of Hampton Court, who has been obliged to give up his situation because he was so unhinged by meeting with the grey lady apparition who haunts these well-known pleasure-grounds by night when the public are excluded; as if the ghosts who walk the palace itself are not sufficient. We learn the above from the 'Harbinger of Light,' of May 1st. And in the same number is quoted an old letter of Mr. Maske-lyne's, which will surprise many of the present day, where the alleged sceptic says: 'I am a believer in apparitions.'

It is not so long ago that 'LIGHT' informed us that a lady medium, being in Salisbury Cathedral with Lady Radnor, the former saw a procession of Grey Friars passing through the aisles; and, on afterwards searching ancient records of the cathedral, they found that Grey Friars in early days were attached to that edifice. These apparitions need not necessarily have been the souls of the actual denizens of those days, as we find in the late case recorded in 'LIGHT' of June 8th, that the seer recognised his own brother, a deceased Catholic priest, in the procession, which he describes as of ancient type. All processions imply unity of purpose and sympathy, as well as activity, and, we hope, principle and progress; and they are frequent functions in the spheres, where like consort with like, as seers of earth often witness. Whatever the procession may consist of, duty and pleasure, apparently innocent pleasure, seem two of the objects. All appear of one mind, all appear palpitating with joy, good fellowship, good feeling, and nimbleness. No hamperings of the flesh there. And how brilliant they sometimes look! How their accoutrements glisten! As the late Robert Louis Stevenson, author of 'Jekyll and Hyde,' expressed himself, when telling of his visions:—

I see the people marching by
As plain as day before my eye.
Arnies and emperors and kings,
All carrying different kinds of things,
And marching in so grand a way,
You never saw the like by day,
For every kind of beast and man
Is marching in that caravan.
And still beside them close I keep
Until I reach the town of Sleep.

Yes, 'beasts.' As good old Cruden, in his Concordance, says: 'Scripture ascribes to beasts a soul, a spirit, life, and respiration.' The prophets have much to say about visions of souls of beasts as well as of men. And how often we see beasts in processions, as depicted on Egyptian monuments. Among many visions of processions of souls viewed by a seer, have been those of riders on their horses, prancing and careering in such sympathetic movement and graceful conformity, that they seemed, as it were, but one body. and reminded the seer of how the ancients gained the idea of the Centaur. Well-organised processions may well, then, either here or there, be regarded as types of earnest, pleasant pastime, duty, harmony, good-will, and good fellowship, as well as of activity and progress.

MIRROR.

Blind Tom.

SIR,—Various are the methods adopted by the spirit-world to convince a materialistic age of its reality, and that there is something in the universe besides matter. Music, in different forms of manifestation, has formed an interesting and important feature of the spiritual phenomena of the last half century, spirits playing instruments, directly or indirectly, through the organism of suitably constituted persons known as musical mediums. We have all heard of the remarkable performances of Jesse Shepard, who recently visited this country; but I doubt whether many are familiar with Blind Tom, who came to England about thirty years ago, and gave exhibitions of his remarkable musical abilities in all the principal towns, which excited considerable surprise, and could only be accounted for on the theory that he was merely the instrument utilised by musical disembodied intelligences to give evidence of their existence, and to demonstrate powers which the poor, blind, semi-idiotic negro boy could not himself originate.

I was thinking some little time ago about him, and wondering what had become of him, when I read in the 'Banner of Light' a letter by Dr. J. M. Peebles, dated California, in

which the following passage occurred, from which it will be seen that Blind Tom is still giving exhibitions of his musical powers in much the same way as when he was a lad of sixteen:—

It is needless to say that this blind negro boy is a marvel of melody—a musical genius. It is fully thirty years since I first heard him. He is heavier, stouter now, plays with more grace and rapidity of execution; but his intellect, so far as I could discover, shows no improvement. He is a child. He has fits of childish anger, but can be quieted in a moment with a few sticks of candy. He applauds his own music. He is a psychological mystery—all imitation, all memory. He never forgets anything in the matter of music. He will not play on a poor piano, poor violin, or cornet. One of our finest San Diego musicians said to me: 'He is the mystery of mysteries—a coloured miracle.' To the Spiritualist he is no miracle, but a psychic—an inspirational medium, and his range of themes is immense. Whether it be a sonata of Beethoven, a mass of Mozart, or an African plantation hymn, Blind Tom gives to it musical utterance, expression super-human, and exaltation almost divine. When disrobed of mortality, his intellect will expand rapidly, and his earth-life seem but a dream.

On the arrival of Blind Tom in London, invitations were sent to the Press to witness his performance. I was at the time proprietor of 'The Spiritual Times,' and, accompanied by my editor, Mr. J. H. Powell, witnessed Blind Tom's first performance in London, which took place in the Hanover-square Concert Hall. From what I remember, the proceedings were of the same character as described by Dr. Peebles. On a gentleman playing a piece on the piano, Tom sat down and reproduced it. It was not a *fac-simile* but a very good imitation, and played without the slightest hesitation. On a chord being struck, whether harmonious or not, Tom stated the notes of which it was composed. He also played a tune with one hand, a different tune with the other, whilst singing a tune quite different to either. It was rather amusing to see the performer joining in the applause he elicited, in the same way as Dr. Peebles says he does now.

Sir Sterndale Bennett, who may be considered the greatest musician England has produced, went to hear Blind Tom when he came to Eastbourne, and was very much struck with his performance. It was a puzzler to him. I was on friendly terms with Sir Sterndale and managed to interest him in Spiritualism. He was in the habit of spending his vacation in the town, and it was here he composed his celebrated cantata 'The May Queen.' I began to talk to him about Spiritualism through meeting him one day, when he stopped to ask me if I had read Tyndal's Belfast address, in which I found he was much interested. I was connected with the Davenportes at the time and recommended him to pay a visit to the Hanover-square Rooms, which he did. He afterwards, as I have already said, saw Blind Tom, and was much impressed with these manifestations of spiritual power, and I have no doubt he would have become a good Spiritualist, but, unfortunately, he was taken ill and died soon afterwards.

I have been asked by readers of 'LIGHT' whether I believe in the china and egg-carrying, as stated in that journal by 'General Lorrison.' Such occurrences, of course, appear very incredible to the uninitiated, and those who have had no experience in such matters, but after the experience I have had in them I have no difficulty in accepting the statements in question, resting, as they appear to do, on good testimony. Scores of times I have been present at séances when flowers in abundance, and birds—pigeons, canaries, and linnets—have been introduced into closed rooms by mysterious agency. On one occasion I made a request for some sea shells to be brought. Very soon some half-dozen shells were found on the table. The shells were wet, and on placing them to my tongue they tasted salt. We were a hundred miles inland. And when I was in Boston a gentleman made a request for some Scotch heather to be brought, which request was readily complied with.

Eastbourne.

ROBERT COOPER.

Pension Fund.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to acknowledge, with thanks, through your valuable paper, further contributions to Pension Funds:—

For Mrs. Cogman: 'London Correspondent' (two monthly subscriptions), 5s.; 'Bob' (weekly subscriber of 1s.), 5s.; E. D., 5s.

For Mr. William Wallace: 'Bob' (weekly subscriber of 1s.), 5s.; E. D., 5s.; Mrs. Beaman, 10s.

I beg to remind your readers that still more subscriptions are needed.

(Mrs.) M. H. WALLIS,

Hon. Sec. O.P.S. Sick and Benefit Pension Funds,

SOCIETY WORK.

WELCOME HALL, 218, JUBILEE-STREET, MILE END.—On Sunday last Mrs. Weedenmeyer gave clairvoyant descriptions to most of the audience, which were recognised in nearly every instance. On Sunday next Mr. Rodger will give an address.—E. FLINT, Sec.

LECTURE HALL, NEW-ROAD, BRIGHTON.—On Tuesday, 25th ult., Mr. W. E. Long, of the Masonic Hall, Camberwell, gave an able and interesting lecture on 'How to Commune with the Spirits.' After the lecture opportunity was afforded for any question pertaining to the discourse, but owing no doubt to the masterly manner in which the subject had been treated the offer was not taken advantage of to any extent.—D.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 111, CLARENDON-ROAD, NOTTING HILL, W.—On Sunday last our service was well attended. Mrs. Whitaker's controls gave an eloquent inspirational discourse upon the 'Eternal Love of God and the Power of Prayer,' quoting many instances of answers to prayer received by the medium. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Emms; Tuesday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason; July 14th, Mr. Challis.—J. H. B., Hon. Sec.

STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS.—Mr. Butcher will occupy our platform on Sunday next, and Mr. Smith will give psychometry on Friday, at 8.30 p.m., prompt. We were all glad to welcome back our president, Dr. Reynolds, who gave a discourse on 'Christianity and Spiritualism' to a good audience, his remarks being highly appreciated throughout. We hope the friends will not forget our annual outing to Epping Forest on Saturday, August 31st. Further particulars later on.—T. R. MACCALLUM, Hon. Sec.

SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—The half-yearly general assembly will be held on Sunday, 14th inst., at 8.15 p.m. Business: Balance-sheet, officers' reports, election of officers for ensuing half-year, &c. All members are requested to attend. The new circles for the ensuing quarter will begin on the 13th inst. All desirous of taking part must give their names at once to the leader (Mr. Long). On Sunday next, the spirit circle, at 6.30 p.m.—C. M. PAYNE, Hon. Sec.

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, FINSBURY PARK.—On behalf of the open air workers we beg to acknowledge with warm thanks the following, recently received for distribution:—Per Mr. Brooks, from 'LIGHT' office, 1,000 copies 'Advice to Inquirers'; from 'Two Worlds' Publishing Co., Manchester, 680 copies of 'The Two Worlds'; from Mr. Dansing, of Framlingham, some 500 copies of 'The Truthseeker,' 'The Spiritualist,' and 'LIGHT'; per Mr. A. M. Rodger, from an unknown donor, a large parcel of 'The Medium' and 'Two Worlds.'—T. B.

CARDIFF.—At St. John's Hall, on Sunday last, we were again favoured with an excellent address from our esteemed friend and brother, Mr. Geo. Spriggs, of Melbourne, who spoke upon 'Mediums and their Work,' giving his conceptions of the nature of mediumship, its right development, and the proper scope for its exercise. It was an exceedingly interesting address, embodying some suggestions of a helpful nature, and our best thanks are due to our brother for his generous, able, and gratuitous services. For the lesson, the chairman read a selection from the very instructive articles by Mr. A. J. Smart, entitled 'Glimpses of the Borderland,' and recording numerous experiences with earth-bound spirits among the old ruins in and near Cardiff, through the mediumship of Mr. Spriggs. Speaker next Sunday, Mr. H. G. Allen.—E. A.

LONDON DISTRICT COUNCIL.—The London District Council held its third monthly delegates' meeting at Chepstow Hall, Peckham, on Friday, 28th ult. After the secretary's report and minutes had been read and passed, the state of affairs at Chepstow Hall was discussed, with the result that the Council's first missionary effort will this month be directed to Chepstow Hall. It seems a great pity that after existing for about seven years these meetings should be allowed to lapse. Our main effort will be to form a substantial working committee. Workers wanted. Speakers and mediums volunteering their assistance will be cordially welcomed. Mr. Wyndoe, Mrs. Bliss, and Mrs. Mason will assist during July. Mr. Jones, the secretary of Chepstow Hall, has now four guarantors of one shilling per week. He wants six shilling or twelve sixpenny weekly guarantors to help to defray current expenses until the hall becomes self-supporting. Who will volunteer? Up to the present time the expenses of the Council have been met by a grant of two shillings and sixpence from each affiliated society, but with the work now in hand it is deemed imperative that a regular rate of subscription should be adopted. The rate has been fixed at two shillings per month for societies with over fifty members, and one shilling and sixpence for societies with less than fifty members. To help us to meet necessary expenditure, associates, with power to vote at the Council's meetings, will be enrolled upon payment of a subscription of not less than two shillings and sixpence per annum. Subscriptions are urgently needed in order that we may carry our work further afield. Donations to the work solicited. Acknowledgments for same will be forwarded to the Spiritual Press.—H. BODDINGTON, Hon. Sec., 30, Upper Tulse Hill, S.W.