

Light.

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Mrs. Russell Gurney's profoundly spiritual book, 'Dante's Pilgrim's Progress' (London: Elliot Stock) appears in its second edition. We do not wonder at it: for, though its mediæval theology is not to our taste, we hope we can appreciate its spiritual beauty and deep ethical significance. On the left hand, all through, certain select Cantos are given, in Italian, chosen as giving a connecting view of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' or, to use Dante's own phrase, 'The Passage of the blessed Soul from the Slavery of the present corruption to the liberty of Eternal Glory.' Opposite to these Cantos, come the 'hints towards the spiritual meaning to be sought,' 'Sign-posts for the unaccustomed traveller through the Mystic Wood.' But 'Sign-posts,' though Mrs. Gurney's own phrase, is hardly the right one. Her Notes are more like the thoughtful utterances of a gentle guide, going by the reader's side. The intention seems to be to give a daily reading and meditation, with the help of the mighty master. Even where we do not quite agree, we feel like breathing a benediction.

From time to time we have drawn attention to the good work of 'The Humanitarian League,' and to its publications, one of which has lately reached us. It is a shilling book, containing half a dozen Lectures and an Appeal to teachers. The Lectures are by Maurice Adams, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, G. W. Foote, Harry Roberts, Joseph Collinson and Henry S. Salt. The subjects are 'The sweating system,' 'The gallows and the lash,' 'The shadow of the sword,' 'Public control of hospitals,' 'What it costs to be vaccinated,' and 'The humanities of diet.' They are all, of course, keenly humanitarian: they are also forcible presentations of facts that cannot be too widely known.

We have no particular fancy for Mr. Talmage, the notorious—or shall we say, famous?—American preacher, but he occasionally almost startles us with his ardent confirmation of our own special testimony. Here, for instance, is a reference to the late Neal Dow:—

The world never had but one Neal Dow, and may never have another. He has been an illumination to the century. The stand he took has directly and indirectly saved hundreds of thousands from drunkards' graves. Derided, belittled, caricatured, maligned for a quarter of a century as few men have been, he has lived on until at his decease universal newspaperdom speaks his praise, and the eulogisms of his career on this side of the sea have been caught up by the cathedral organ sounding his requiem on the other. His whole life has been for God and the world's betterment.

God let him live for near a century, to show what good habits and cheerfulness and faith in the final triumph of all

that is good can do for a man in this world, and to add to the number of those who would be on the other side to attend his entrance. But he will come again! 'Yes,' say some of you, with Martha, about Lazarus to Jesus, 'I know he will rise at the resurrection of the last day.' Ah! I do not mean that. Ministering spirits are all the time coming and going between earth and heaven—the Bible teaches it—and do you suppose the old hero just ascended will not come down and help us in the battle that still goes on? He will.

Dr. W. P. Howorth, late a Presbyterian clergyman, writing to 'The Progressive Thinker,' says:—

I am only a few years out of the Presbyterian Church, after a quarter of a century of earnest preaching, and I say boldly that I have learned more of spiritual truth and how to live according to the divine law of Nature since I left the Church than I learned in all the years of my earnest ministry, though I was taught by some of the greatest lights in the orthodox ranks. What I know of spiritual life now, I owe to the Quaker church, as my nursery where I learned to follow the leadings of the spirit, and to modern Spiritualism, which demonstrates that the spirit still leads, and, as Christ once said, will lead us into all truth.

There is a wonderful similarity between the primitive Quakers and real and true Spiritualists. In my boyhood days, and the early part of my ministry among the Quakers, I have often seen some of the members rise from their seats and pass to some person in the congregation and lay their hand on the head of the individual and tell them their manner of living to the most minute detail. They sometimes detected criminals in that way and brought them to confess the crime. Their prophecies were nearly always correct, and in many ways they proved that they were led by a higher power, just as modern mediums are also led.

'Freedom' has the following pretty Note on the bewilderment of 'The faculty' in the presence of Faith cures or Mind-healing:—

The other day in Topeka, Kansas, a lot of doctors met to discuss some startling cures made by Mental Scientists. The facts under discussion were too patent for even the M.D.'s to attempt to deny, and their perplexity may be imagined.

Presently Dr. McClintock—evidently the most sensible man among them—got the floor and told them that they were hopelessly floundering in the mire of their own ignorance, and that it might be well if they would get rid of a little of the rot they called their knowledge before attempting to talk on a subject beyond their reach.

'I refuse to enter into the discussion,' said Dr. McClintock, 'because to do so, I consider a waste of time. The question is discussed and re-discussed at society meetings, and absolutely no progress is made. You admit the same things to-day that were admitted fifty years ago, no more or no less. You don't admit to-day what Aunt Lucinda or any other of these so-called healers can accomplish, and you didn't admit it fifty years ago. You are hopelessly floundering because you know little about this matter. The quacks get results in their treatments that you can't get, but you will not investigate it because you are prejudiced against it. Some day some scientific organisation will investigate this matter, and tell you how these things are done. You will never do it yourselves, because you are handicapped by your knowledge.'

The last half-dozen words seem absurd, but they are not. There are hundreds of people known to us who are

obstructed in the path of knowledge by their learning, which becomes a veritable moat and wall around them, behind which they stiffly stand and—damn.

Paul knew that, when he said that God had chosen the foolish things of the world (what the world calls 'foolish') to confound the wise; and the weak things to confound the mighty, and poor nothings to bring to nought the pompous somethings.

And that is all quite natural, as anyone may see who will think it over. There is nothing more difficult in this world than for a man to turn his back upon his carefully collected formulas,—or to burn his old sermons.

Mina Sandeman's new book, 'Sir Gaspard's affinity' (London: Digby, Long and Co.), is an improvement on the blood and thunder *motif* of 'The worship of Lucifer.' It is a lively blend of homely and high-flown, of 'The time flew by as if on azure wings' and 'You can 'ope as much as you please, but that won't alter facts.' But, for all that, it is not a bad story; with plenty of shrewd insight and character sketching: and, at all events, it is all sanely probable.

In Mina Sandeman's book, we find the publishers' notification and commendation of another novel. We admit that it hits the taste of the day; but what a taste it is to pander to! The publishers say:—

Don Salazar de Balta is a new Don Quixote, who, having the good fortune to live before the Conquest of Granada, 'assists' at that historic event, and in the course of his conflicts with the Moors, goes through enough adventures to furnish episodes for half-a-dozen regulation historical romances. In one word, after the introduction of Don Salazar, killing the favourite lion of the Moorish Sultan, and so preserving the heroine from going into his jaws, there is not a pause in the long series of thrilling situations of peril and of wild adventure, that keeps the reader on the stretch from the first to the closing page.

And, for this piling up of shocks, we are to read! It is a kind of mental gin-drinking, a sort of literary debauchery, as bad for the soul as the other is bad for the body. O Thackeray, help us! George Eliot, have mercy upon us! Dear Dickens, deliver us!

The second part of Dr. Hodgson's report concerning Mrs. Piper proved to be intensely interesting. The tests, poured out by Dr. Hodgson, seem to have carried him away, and we thought they carried the thronged audience away, until, at the close, a Mr. Bevan got up with what looked like a pack of cards in his hands. These turned out to be a sheaf of questions, evidently prepared beforehand, for the purpose of creating prejudice. But the animus shown and the absurdity of the questions were too much for the audience, and the severe-looking cross-examiner retired, in compliance with what seemed a very general wish. His questions, however, were about up to the average of such inquiries and such inquirers—such as these, for instance:—

Did you pay Mrs. Piper?

How much did you pay her?

So her bread and butter depended upon it?

Don't you think it is more likely that Mrs. Piper lied than that she could do what you say she did?

What medical men were ever present?

What were their names?

Were they believers?

Did you have proper detectives at these séances?

When this severe person retired, a much more genial gentleman got up and testified that Dr. Hodgson was about the best man on this planet for such an investigation, but it was to be regretted that what he had said might well create the impression that he believed in spirits ('in unseen beings made of spirit' was his queer phrase) who went about and did things. He was sure Dr.

Hodgson did not believe in anything so unscientific. A wonderfully benighted little speech!

We can only hope that Dr. Hodgson's convincing and brilliant Address will be so published that it can be purchased, for sowing far and wide.

'In search of a soul,' by Horatio W. Dresser (Boston: The Philosophical Publishing Company), is described as 'A series of Essays in interpretation of the Higher Nature of Man.' It is a collection of Papers read before various Societies in Boston and other cities. 'The chapters naturally group themselves about one central theme,—the restless search after the soul.' Certainly, writers of Mr. Dresser's school of thought entirely understand the meaning of Paul's great phrase, 'In Him we live and move and have our being.'

Our clever and always bright friend, Dr. E. D. Babbitt, writing in 'The Progressive Thinker,' has a lively fling at Astrology. He says:—

I see that astrology is becoming more and more a fad, not not only here but elsewhere. It seems to be my duty to say something on this subject, especially as I have given more study to the fine forces than other people. That the sun and moon have a decided influence on earthly people is evident, but how can some far-off planet, perhaps millions of miles distant, rule the very destiny of the people of the world?

Let us take Neptune, for instance. The farthest reaching power of a planet is gravitation. What kind of an influence could Neptune have on a newly-born child? I will suppose that a bureau weighing 120 pounds shall stand within ten feet of the child on the one hand, while Neptune weighs about 254,898 quintillion pounds, being about twenty-one times as heavy as our earth, although its bulk is 105 times greater. Dividing this by 120, we find that Neptune has more than two septillions of times as great power as the bureau, so far as its mass is concerned, but the bureau has more than two septillions of times as great power as Neptune so far as distance is concerned, the power being inversely as the square of the distance. The bureau, then, must have fully as much influence on the newly-born infant as the planet. What would you think of a person who would tell a child that he was born under the influence of a bureau, and his destiny must be modified and partially moulded by it? No matter how much he may struggle to emerge from the influence of that bureau, he is at least partially helpless, and his Divine gifts of mind lie prostrate before a dead mass of matter. Is it not high time that we used a little reason in this matter?

That is all very well, but a bureau is a bureau and a planet is a planet. We do not profess to understand it, but a reference to size, weight and distance, however accurate and smart, still leaves something to be desired.

MRS. AND MISS READ.

As our readers will have learned from the letter of Mrs. W. P. Browne, in last week's 'LIGHT,' Mrs. and Miss Read, of Birmingham, are likely to re-visit London early in the New Year. During their last visit a few weeks ago these ladies gave a series of experimental séances at the rooms of the Alliance, and also in private. At the Alliance rooms alone about fifty persons attended. The large majority, probably prepared to understand what was done, were entirely satisfied, and many were highly pleased; but the conditions were not such as to secure perfect satisfaction on the part of some who were unable to fully see or comprehend what was going on. It is quite possible that, with more experiments, the strength of the light allowed might be increased; and it is very desirable that it should be.

THE DENTON SOCIAL CLUB.—At a meeting held at 26, Osna-burg-street, on the 9th inst., for winding up the Denton Social Club, it was found that there was a balance in hand of £4 11s. 3d., and a resolution was passed that that amount should be paid over to the Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund, of which Mrs. M. H. Wallis, 164, Broughton-road, Pendleton, Manchester, is the indefatigable secretary. Mr. J. J. Morse, who was president of the Denton Social Club, kindly undertook to deliver the money into the hands of Mrs. Wallis, and we have much pleasure in complying with the request of that lady that we should publish her acknowledgment of its receipt and the expression of her hearty thanks.

REQUISITES FOR ACCURATE INVESTIGATION.

ON THE MENTAL CONDITION REQUISITE FOR APPRECIATING THE
FACTS, AND COMPREHENDING THE TEACHING OF SPIRITUAL
PHENOMENA.

BY AN OLD INVESTIGATOR.

No. I.

It is not too much to say that nothing has ever come before the material world, about which there have been more hasty, hence unsound and silly, conclusions than in connection with Spiritual Phenomena. All the school teaching as regards how to investigate, how to collect facts, and then how to reason on what we have collected, seems to be utterly ignored, immediately Spiritual Phenomena are the subject brought forward. Take any of our more modern sciences, such as electricity, magnetism, or even photography, and it is admitted that each of these is governed by subtle and delicate laws, which must be obeyed, or a failure to obtain satisfactory results is the necessary consequence. As soon, however, as spiritual phenomena are mentioned, it is assumed that you can do anything you like, and then if no results occur, it is a proof that Spiritualism is either a delusion or is the result of trickery.

It has been assumed that the persons most competent to investigate, and judge of the truth, or otherwise, of spiritual phenomena, are tricksters, or conjurers, men crammed with the ascertained facts of some scientific subject, or imaginative theorists, who will, with all the confidence of infallibility, inform us when the world will cease to exist, or how long the sun will last. Such wonder-mongers are now very popular.

The village tomfool, or the mere savage, if he has been accustomed to observe Nature, is better qualified to appreciate the facts of spiritual phenomena, provided he is not puffed up with a conviction of his own profound wisdom and knowledge, than is the so-called scientist, who, having become familiar with text-book knowledge, imagines that what he does not know does not exist. The mental condition most fatal to the perception even, much less to the appreciation, of spiritual phenomena is the assumption of knowing all Nature's laws. Based on this assumption is the belief that anything which appears to our senses to occur, and is not in accordance with *what is known* of Nature's laws, must be the result of illusion, or collective hallucination; or that the statement that it was seen to occur is a lie. The more ignorant, or the more crammed a man is with text-book knowledge, the more self-sufficient he usually is, and the more convinced that he can pronounce offhand what is, and what is not, possible.

There are certain things which are impossible. For example :

Two sides of a plane triangle cannot be less than the third side.

Twice three cannot be more nor less than six.

The centre of a circle cannot be nearer one part of the circumference than it is to another part.

When, however, we have to deal with the possible or impossible, in wider matters, the man who will assert that this or that is impossible is little better than a self-sufficient imbecile.

Let us take a few examples : We will go back a thousand years, and reflect on the small amount of knowledge then possessed by men. Suppose some man had then said, 'Your bows and arrows are powerful weapons, but it is possible that another weapon can be constructed which will hurl an enormous projectile five miles.' 'Impossible!' would undoubtedly have been the reply of the self-sufficient scientist of that date.

'You think travelling on horseback at the rate of a mile in two minutes is the most rapid means of progression, but it is possible to construct an engine which can travel sixty miles in an hour.' 'Impossible!' would undoubtedly have been the reply of the scientific authority at that date.

'You, with your excellent sight, may be able to recognise a friend at a distance of over a quarter of a mile, but an instrument can be constructed, by looking through which you will be able to recognise a person at a distance of two or three miles.' 'Impossible!' would be again the remark.

When we realise the advance that has been made in our knowledge during even the past one hundred years, we may come to either of two conclusions. First : That we are still advancing, and will continue to advance, so that one hundred years hence we shall be as much beyond our present knowledge as we now are beyond that of a hundred years ago ;

or second, that just at present we have reached the zenith of all knowledge and that which we don't know, does not exist, or is impossible. All those laws of Nature by which the steam engine, the electric telegraph, and the photographic picture are now worked, have existed during thousands of years, but the mental condition of man in the far past was incompetent to comprehend these laws, and the baneful influence of self-sufficiency and scientific dogmatism prevented inquiry. We of the present day have been gradually taught that we must carry out carefully the laws which govern the various forces we employ. By dropping a piece of steel into certain parts of a steam engine we can prevent the engine from working. By making two or three punctures in a submarine cable, we can prevent a telegraphic message from being transmitted ; and we ought to realise that the more subtle the laws are which govern any phenomena, the more easy it is to break these laws, and hence to fail to obtain results.

We can now summarise, to some extent, the mental condition requisite to appreciate the facts.

We must fully realise that we are not acquainted with all the laws of Nature. That, in fact, we are but partially acquainted with even the effects of some of these laws. To start, therefore, on an investigation by framing our own theories as to what is, or is not possible, when the subject we purpose examining is outside of elementary arithmetic or geometry, is practically to proclaim ourselves self-sufficient dogmatists, puffed up with a belief in our own infallibility, and hence to indicate that our mental condition renders us quite incompetent to fairly investigate a subject, which must be governed by very subtle laws, of which we are entirely ignorant.

To announce that unless phenomena occurred under conditions which *we* lay down, we would not accept these as facts, would be much the same as though we refused to believe that a message could be sent by a submarine cable, unless we punctured this cable in a dozen places, and the message was then sent.

In order to be able to give to any observed phenomenon its true value, we ought to be sufficiently acquainted with the stock knowledge of so called science, and of conjuring tricks, to be able to distinguish between what can and what cannot be done by their aid. For example, when we were informed by a medium that the spirit of a friend was present, and wished to tell us that his head was cut off in China, and this was afterwards ascertained to be true ; to attribute this information to coincidence or conjuring would be a proof of a very feeble intelligence, which would disqualify the person who suggested such an explanation from being fitted as an investigator.

The capacity for observation is usually more developed, or at least practically active, in the savage than in the scientist. A savage observes everything ; he will note the peculiar movements of animals and insects, the foot prints on even hard rock ; the particular turn of a blade of grass, or of a twig ; and he draws correct conclusions therefrom, and is not likely to attribute the effects to an erroneous cause. We ought, whilst examining spiritual phenomena, to endeavour to keep our minds in this condition of active perception, and avoid at once jumping to the conclusion that what we have witnessed is to be accounted for by the hastily-formed theories of dogmatic ignorance.

Spontaneous spiritual phenomena have at various times occurred, such, for example, as that which took place at Hydesville with the Fox family in 1848. It was fortunate that in that neighbourhood there were common-sense, practical observers and reasoners. Had the Fox family been surrounded by conjurers, dogmatic scientists, and self-sufficient theorists, the manifestations which there took place would have been explained away by the assertion of trickery, impossibility, or collective hallucination.

When certain phenomena occur in what are termed haunted houses the reckless theorist explains all these by assigning them to rats, bats, a badly oiled cowl, or to the wind. Perhaps when the reporters of certain phenomena have been poor hysterical people it may turn out that these theories may be correct, but to conclude that all the phenomena which have been reported as having been witnessed are to be explained by such theories, is unsound, and is very likely to cause us to miss a chance of obtaining evidence of an important fact.

Some thirty years ago we were asked by a friend to pass Saturday and Sunday with him at a new house at Putney. His house was in a newly-built terrace, one end of which was

not completed. We mentioned to our host and his wife that there were advantages in taking a new house, as the bad atmospheres of former residents were avoided. They agreed with us. On going to bed that night we locked our door, placed our clothes on a sofa at the foot of the bed and turned in between the sheets. An unsettled feeling soon came over us which we could not understand, and after some minutes we heard our clothes fall on the floor. As we had placed these well on the sofa, where slipping of the clothes could not occur, we at once became on the alert, in the hope that some spontaneous phenomena might occur. Having concentrated our mind, we waited, and then from near the foot of the bed was whispered, 'I died in this room.' We mentally asked for further information, but the only reply was a deep sigh. Having waited several minutes, and nothing having occurred, we went to sleep.

On the following morning, when alone with our host, we said, 'I thought you told us you were the first occupants of this house.'

'Practically we were.'

'You could not have been, as someone, who we believe was a woman, died in the bedroom we occupied last night.'

Our host regarded us with astonishment, and said, 'How did you find that out?'

'Never mind ; it is true.'

'Yes, the case was this ; a friend of mine took this house as soon as it was completed, and came here with his wife. A week after his coming his wife died in her confinement in the room you occupied, and I took the lease off his hands ; they were only here three weeks. Who told you?'

'What a remarkable coincidence !' would certainly be the conclusion of the self-satisfied theorist, and the theory of coincidences by such minds would no doubt be considered proved. Now, when our clothes fell on the floor, had we lighted a candle, replaced our clothes on the sofa, examined the room, looked under the bed, and tried whether the door were locked, we should probably have broken the conditions, and should have missed this, to us, interesting experience. The mental condition, therefore, requisite to appreciate the facts is to be perpetually on the alert. We may follow fifty trails which may lead to nothing, but if the fifty-first enables us to come on a fact which proves that the next world and this are in touch, we have made a grand discovery. If we tried to send fifty messages through a submarine cable, only one of which reached its destination, the result would not prove that this one message having reached its destination was a mere coincidence, but it would prove that only once had all the conditions necessary to the successful transmission of a message been fulfilled.

In a recent number of the 'Spectator' a correspondent gave an account of a curious dream. A gentleman dreamt that a friend who resided several hundred miles from him was dead ; certain details were given. Two days afterwards the 'Scotsman' newspaper arrived, and it was therein announced that the friend had died during the night on which the dream had occurred. A certain Dr. Andrew Wilson, who has stated that when he wants to see so-called spiritual phenomena he goes to Maskelyne and Cook, made in the 'Yorkshire Weekly Post' the following remarks :—

'Now, no doubt this dream was a mere coincidence. On any other theory it is difficult to find, for instance, any sign of purpose in the dream. There was no "warning" involved in it. It merely represents the result of the brain of "R.S.S." thinking a stray thought of a person he knew, and of his brain centres constructing (for want of a better topic) a little romance about A. The romance coincided with fact. How often, besides, do we all dream about death and dying?'

The theory of coincidence is accepted because it is asserted there was no purpose in the dream ; that there was no warning involved in it. Suppose the friend who had died found the conditions favourable for letting his friend know this fact, is there no purpose in letting a friend know that it is possible to make such a communication ? Why should it be merely a coincidence because there was no 'warning' ? Such so-termed arguments may put off the ignorant, but are not likely to influence a reasoner.

When a report reached London that there were vast auriferous beds of conglomerate at Witwatersrand in South Africa, the house of Rothschild engaged the services of the best mining engineer in the world, whose experience of gold-

mining in the Western States of America was unrivalled. This expert examined the ground, and came away disgusted at the credulity of his employers ; as there could be no gold there. He would not even dismount from his horse to look at what poor deluded unscientific miners had to show him.

From those despised beds seven million pounds sterling worth of gold are now extracted annually. When Mr. D. D. Home was in power he invited the late Professor Faraday to come and witness the phenomena which occurred in his presence. Mr. Faraday refused to examine ; he asserted that the phenomena stated to occur were impossible ; that it would be a condescension on his part to pay attention to the subject, and that those who stated they had seen such phenomena occur were not competent witnesses of facts. Professor John Tyndall imitated Faraday in his proceedings.

The three gentlemen referred to above suffered from the same delusion. Each was convinced that he knew everything, and that eye-witnesses, who stated they had seen certain phenomena occur, were credulous idiots.

There are a multitude of men in the present day who are suffering from the same delusion, and who do not even suspect that it is not that there is no gold, or no phenomena, but that it is their want of keenness of perception, and their arrogant cocksureness of knowing everything, that prevent them from even examining.

It will be evident to the reader, that it is not every person who is competent to appreciate the facts, even, of spiritual phenomena. The mere text-book man of science ; the great scientific authority who has made up his mind that it is all trickery ; the person so deficient in perception, as not to be able to distinguish between conjuring and spiritual phenomena, are all in such a condition as to render them incompetent to appreciate the facts. To realise that we know very little, and hence have much to learn ; to cultivate in every way our perceptive powers ; to avoid putting forward hasty theories to explain away facts which we have witnessed ; and to cling to these facts in spite of their being pronounced 'impossible' by self-sufficient dogmatists, constitute the mental condition requisite for a sound practical investigator. *Good*

T. L. HARRIS AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE NEW LIFE.

I have been the recipient of an unsought favour from an unknown—I suppose—friend. This favour is entitled, 'The Man, the Seer, the Adept, the Avatar—Mr. T. L. Harris' ; and an extract from a letter of mine is introduced.

In my young innocent days I was a devoted admirer of the hero of this production, and spent my money and time for the advancement of the cause which I supposed he represented. But alas ! life is a delusion, or say an illusion, for my dream turned into an opposite, and the spell was broken.

For years past I have had no relation or connection with Mr. Harris, and so far as this pamphlet reveals the present status of this 'Avatar of the present cycle' I have no desire to renew my acquaintance. I certainly do not endorse what is contained in this publication as claimed by 'Respiro,' for it is all at variance with that which I imbibed under Mr. Harris' tutelage now over twenty-five years ago. Then he was the broadest interpreter of the grand thoughts of Emanuel Swedenborg. Now, what is he ? I know not, and probably never shall know. We certainly have come to the parting of ways. I trust that in the ceaseless changes of his mind he may at last see the folly of his pretensions and settle down to a more rational perception of life and its manifestations. In that case I shall be more than happy to help to lead him out of his thralldom into the pleasant paths of peace, and thus renew again the old heart love which has never left me.

I suppose now, after this failure to endorse the claims of 'the messenger of the cycle,' I, too, shall receive a hint to prepare myself for the coming woes. Well, so be it. I am prepared for all such, and it will not be the first time that I have met these influences on the inner plane of conscious life. Heretofore they have failed of their purposes, and I have no fear of the ultimate outcome of this society. It is one which is being slowly but surely raised until the full state is accomplished. That state arrived at, its true spirit will be known, and its overthrow is certain. And when thus unclothed it will begin to re-clothe itself with the reality of life in contradistinction to that habilitation which heretofore had prevented it discerning the distinction between truth and appearances of truth.

This is all I have to say for the present in response to the incautious use of my name in this booklet by 'Respiro.' As one of the readers of 'LIGHT' (which is regularly supplied to me from England) I request the favour of your inserting this brief epistle.

Parkersburg, West Va., U.S.A.

M. C. C. CHURCH.

AFTER DEATH STATES.

BY QUÆSTOR VITÆ.

THE FIRST STATE.

As Mr. Stevens stated in 'LIGHT' of July 24th (p. 359), 'the majority of Spiritualists hold the view that the spiritual body which leaves the physical organism at the death of the latter passes into a truly spiritual state, there to enter upon a career of indefinitely prolonged spiritual activity.' Though this view is presented by the 'average Spiritualist lecturer and medium,' it is nevertheless only an appearance and not the reality. It may be added that it is similarly maintained that the spirit world is constituted of seven progressive spheres, surrounding the earth in concentric zones. This also is a fallacy. It is self-evident that spiritual states are not dependent on, and subservient to, a physical globe whirling through space and dragging them with it.

The psychical form that leaves the physical body at death is constituted of elements brought from the physical world. These cannot enter into truly spiritual states, but have to be thrown off. That form is consequently impermanent. It stands to the future self-conscious spiritual being as the ovum stands to physically-constituted man.

The state which the psychical form enters after physical death is equivalent on the ascending circuit to what the elemental and embryonic stage represents on the descending circuit. It is only an intermediary condition, and not a truly spiritual state. Man has to return, on his ascent, through the same sphere as that through which he descended unconsciously to this plane, to develop his self-consciousness by action and reaction within the contrasts of opposites. In planetary life, or macrocosmically, this sphere corresponds to what the sub-conscious involuntary psychic soul represents in man. Consequently it is an involuntary state in which the experiences of the past earth-life emerge in somnambulant representation. Such representations are involuntary, like our dreams, and cannot be controlled by the selves. They necessarily represent the past experiences of the self, and will be pleasant, unpleasant, or purgatorial accordingly. As in our sleep and in somnambulism, the self is self-centred, immersed in subjective reflections. As in sleep and in somnambulism, volitional relations are indrawn.* The selves cannot commune with earth consequently.

This somnambulant state lasts as long as the self is connected by a magnetic cord (to which the umbilical cord corresponds) to the remains of his earthly organism. When all the vitality has been indrawn therefrom that magnetic cord is dissolved. From that moment the self falls into a state to which gestation corresponds. The psychic form commences to disintegrate and a new form in spiritual mode begins to evolve from within it, as the physical form evolved from within the ovum.† The self

* Mr. Henry Forbes, while stating on p. 393 that the deductions referred to verify his own conclusions, based on his observations of after death states, objects to the definition of these states as sleep, yet agrees that they are dream states; states of waking dreams. The definition of somnambulant is no doubt preferable, and will probably meet his objections and cover the ground. Somnambulism is a state of waking dreams.

† This law applies in every plane or mode of being through which the self passes in its becoming. We have evidence of it in physical conception. The elemental self sheds its prior form ere entering into the conditions so supplied. The disintegration of the physical shell is its outermost representation. 'J. W. E.' has attractively expressed this truth on p. 436. We accrete and lose our psychic forms or souls in every plane into which we ingress and egress by birth and death (or transmutation). But, as he suggests, this 'loss' or replacing occurs not only at death but continuously. Our soul is in a continuous state of flux. The flux of experience, the manifold of which is held in identity in the self, has its parallel in the flux of vitality flowing through the soul. These processes have not yet been identified, but they are one and the same.

Though we lose our psychic forms and the memories involved in every state from which we egress in the regenerative reconstruction of a higher form, entailed by the ingress of the indwelling nucleus of the self into a higher mode of being, yet nothing is lost. The memories are all gathered up again, as will be shown further on. It is in this nucleus of the selves, in the heart, that the immortal Divinity is immanent. It is through it that the vital process of the Solar-Self, and consequently of the Universal, flows, determining the 'becoming' and attaining or fulfilling of each and every finited 'appearing' of the Infinite and Eternal. These finited appearances are never separated from the Infinite, whose process

then becomes as unconscious as is the human embryo. It loses all recollection of its past earth life, as the human embryonic self does of its antecedent states. It sheds all the ethereal, psychic elements extracted from the physical body. Consequently it sheds its earthly mind body, or soul body, which are identical (psychè). Its self-consciousness then evolves in ratio to the development of its new spiritual form, which at first is but infantile. The new state into which it awakens is discreted from the earth by the fact of this regenerative process.

Some selves in past periods remained in this unconscious gestative stage for ages (but duration is non-existent to their perception). Now the process occurs much more rapidly.

It will be noticed that this intermediary stage of somnolence, or chrysalis state, as Mr. Stevens calls it, constitutes an intervening gulf which discretizes our external self-conscious states from the first truly spiritual self-conscious state into which the regenerated selves subsequently awake with entire loss of earthly memories.

Spiritualists know full well that their departed friends lapse into silence after periods which vary in individual cases, and must be prepared to face the fact to find the explanation of it. In a few exceptional cases, some of the silent ones speak again after a long interval, on rare occasions. But the sum of these experiences shows that their interest in earthly things gradually diminishes in all but a few exceptional instances, and the process must be judged as it is illustrated by the millions and not by a few exceptions (which will be explained further on).

It will be replied to this that recently departed selves have communicated through mediums with their friends still remaining on earth, thus showing their recollection of and continued interest in those associations. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of such instances have occurred. That is so. But nevertheless, the fact remains that beings in the somnambulant involuntary, sub-conscious, gestative states that follow after physical death, cannot effect volitional relations, cannot communicate of themselves. Further, the regenerative process accompanying the growth of the new spiritually self-conscious form entails the shedding of the earthly mind and memories, and consequently sweeps away any desire to communicate with a state of which the recollections are transiently obliterated. How, then, can these apparent contradictions be reconciled?

The reconciliation involves a different explanation of spiritual phenomena from that currently accepted. But in order to understand the process of communion, some preliminary explanations must be presented with regard to the subsequent states through which selves evolve before reaching that state whence the stimulus emanates that renders thought-transference possible.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

- 'The Journal of Practical Metaphysics,' for December. London Agents: Gay & Bird, 22, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C. Price 10c.
- 'Star Lore and Future Events,' for December. Contains a horoscope of H.R.H. the Princess of Wales. London: Glen & Co., 328, Strand, W.C. Price 3d.
- 'The Assistant Génies and Irreconcilable Gnomes; or, Continuation of the Comte de Gabalis.' Translated by JOHN YARKER. Part III. Bath: Robert H. Fryar.
- 'Our Invisible Companions.' Being No. 48 of 'The Pulpit.' Sermons by J. M. GIBBON, preached at Stamford Hill Congregational Church, October 31st, 1897. London Agent: H.R. Allenson, 30, Paternoster-row, E.C. Price 1d.
- 'Intelligence,' for December. Oriental holiday number. Among the contents are: Portrait of Alexander Wilder, M.D.; The Origin of Symbolism, Illustrated; Medical Science and Medical Art, by FRANZ HARTMANN; Mental Science and Homœopathy; Practical Value of Philosophy, by ALEXANDER WILDER; Psychic Vision of an Accident; Physical Science versus Occult Science, &c. London Agents: Gay & Bird, 22, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C. Price 1s.

flows through and interconnects them in oneness. They necessarily cannot frustrate the 'becoming' determined by this mediated process. Besides, the finitude is only on the surface; in the appearance; in reality, in their basis and foundation, they are the Infinite and Eternal, and consequently immortal. It is this internal mediation or process which relates all selves in oneness in the Self, in the indwelling Father-Mother; in the 'whole of relation.' But man's perception of this indissoluble solidarity can only be in the form of a logical apprehension while here. In higher states his consciousness actually extends along this inner circuit, so that he consciously shares in the cognition of the whole of the Solar-Self, which then becomes an actuality to him.

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AGAIN, THE DEVIL.

If our readers are not tired of hearing about the devil, as the father of Spiritualism, we are tired of the arbitrary nonsense talked and written by our opponents on the subject. But we feel bound to return to the dead horse when so notable a personage as The right reverend Monsignor John S. Vaughan goes out of his way on purpose to whip it. This he did a Sunday or two ago at 'The Church of the Sacred Heart' in London. 'The Universe' gives us a very full report which we shall use in our review of his preposterous sermon.

We use the word 'preposterous' deliberately, but in a perfectly friendly way. We have no desire to see a notable opponent make himself ridiculous. We should prefer a thoughtful argument meriting a thoughtful reply. But what does Monsignor Vaughan give us? Simply a regiment of wanton assertions, about as arbitrary and impudent as anything could be. Here is a specimen:—

You are present, we will suppose, at some séance, where table-turning and table-rapping is going on. You ask a number of questions, the table replies. It raps three times for 'Yes' and twice for 'No,' and follows a regular code of signals. Now, either the whole thing is a delusion and a snare—a piece of trickery and humbug—and then, if it professes to be anything else, no one should encourage it—or else the answers are sensible, true and according to fact, and then we cannot attribute them to a lifeless object such as a table, which has no sense nor intelligence; but must put it down to spirits, to disembodied and invisible intelligences—in a word, to the agency of Satan.

Notice the monstrous assumption in the last eight words, that 'spirits, disembodied, and invisible intelligences' must mean 'Satan.' But this is the trick of it all the way through.

The right reverend gentleman must have a very wide and wonderful experience in regard to this matter, although we confess we never came across any traces of him as an inquirer. But he has made a calculation,—or, may we venture to whisper that perhaps he has risked a guess?—that 'more than 99 per cent. of what we hear and read about, regarding spiritual and supernatural or preternatural manifestations, are pure and simple imposition and trickery.' 'More than 99 per cent.'! How much more? This wonderful student and observer might just as well have been exact while he was about it. Shall we say 99 15-16ths per cent.? That will give us a 16th per cent. of genuine phenomena, say 1 in 1,600. It is not a very liberal allowance but it will do: and, after all, our right reverend actuary is very obliging, for he says: 'But, after we have made allowance for what is according to nature, and for what is traceable to imposture and cunning, a residue still remains which cannot be explained on either

hypothesis, and which is evidently downright and certain devilry.'

But here again we note the same rough tendency to sheer arbitrariness; and our poor little 'residue' is of course 'evidently' devilry. Why? We look in vain for an answer, good or bad, reasonable or unreasonable. The gentleman seems to have devil on the brain. He is stricken with horror at the growing disbelief in the devil or devils. Let us assure him at once that we are not among the unbelievers. Our difficulty is that we know not where to stop. We agree with the preacher that their name is Legion, and we should perhaps find some where he would never think of looking for them; for we should not confine our gaze to the spirit-world. But, on the other hand, we should not look in directions that seem familiar to him. His devils, he says, 'are made up of those rebel angels who were hurled out of heaven for refusing to obey God. It is the opinion of the greatest theologians that some fell from each of the nine choirs, so that we now find among the demons, not only fallen angels, but fallen archangels, &c.' What a vast deal these theologians know! Less than one per cent. of genuine spirit phenomena on earth, and nine choirs in heaven! How did these people get to know all this?

By the way, it puzzles us to reconcile two statements made by this great authority. These rebels, he says, were 'hurled out of heaven,' we presume into hell, 'prepared for the devil and his angels,' we are told. And yet these 'malicious spirits' seem to be always here. 'They retain their spiritual form: they are still clever, intelligent, subtle, and by nature more than a match for the wisest and cleverest man': moreover, 'they are ever seeking, by every means in their power, to gain an influence over us, to drag us into sin, and to plunge us finally into hell.' This is all very difficult. Have these fallen angels escaped from hell? If so, why does not God capture and confine them? It all seems amazingly chaotic. In truth, we are driven to ask; And what is our Heavenly Father doing all this while? Why does He permit only devils to get at us? Why does He expose us to such a horribly unfair conflict with unseen antagonists?

But here we come upon a gleam of light, and none the less welcome because it comes as another inconsistency: for, imbedded in these trenchant assertions that it is all of the devil, there is this little lucid interval: 'Now, as good angels may sometimes have dealings with men, so may bad angels.' But, in this brief sentence, our denouncer suddenly gives himself away. He allows us, let us say, 1 genuine spirit manifestation to 1,599 frauds, and now it is admitted that somewhere the 'good angels' come in. *Where?* Does the right reverend gentleman know exactly when and where? Can he affirm that not one of our spirit-manifestations has ever had a good angel for its source? He may affirm it if he likes, but it would palpably be a mere assertion, meaning no more than the nagging of an ill-natured woman in the market,—or, what is often about the same thing,—the presumptuous assertion of an unreasonable priest, in the pulpit.

The real truth is that beneath all this belief in the omnipresence and activity of the devil there is a latent unbelief in God. This priest sees the devil everywhere: we see God. We see, indeed, also a perilous array of evil forces and evil beings; but it is rank infidelity to say that they are dominant, that they press upon us to the exclusion of the forces of God. It may seem strange to this preacher to tell him that his unbelief in God shocks us: but it is true.

On Sunday next, December 19th, at Queen's (Small) Hall, Langham-place, Mr. Herbert Burrows will deliver a lecture on 'Life, Death, and After'; and on Sunday, December 26th, Mrs. Besant will speak, in the same hall, on 'The Christ: Historic and Mystic.' The lectures will commence at 7 o'clock. Admission free; Reserved seats, 1s.

PHENOMENA IN A PRIVATE CIRCLE.

FURTHER REPORT BY F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

(Continued from p. 602.)

Our next meeting was on Saturday, November 20th, at Mr. T.'s house in Hampstead. There were present: Mr. and Mrs. T., their daughter Rosie, Mr. Westlake (a neighbour), and myself. This occasion was chiefly memorable on account of the appearance of the recently-deceased religious character.

Here I must give a short preface, which is relevant. Some few weeks before this meeting, shortly after the death of this person, a lady friend of his, one of the members of my Delphic Lyceum, called on me in order to make a special request that I would, at these meetings of ours, try to open up communications with her deceased friend, as she wished to get some directions regarding the republication of some of his works which on his deathbed he had entrusted to her. I replied that the best way to achieve this result would be that she herself, in her thoughts, living as she did in the house where he passed away, should tell her friend that, so far as I was concerned, he had my full permission to use our circle for any purpose of this sort, but that, of course, it was subject also to his obtaining permission from our directors on the other side. I also arranged with this lady that neither of us should mention the matter to Mrs. T. or her husband, for fear that the idea implanted in Mrs. T.'s mind should work itself into her automatic nature. On the Sunday previous to this meeting, when Mr. and Mrs. T. had been visiting Mr. Dawson Rogers, the strange control who had come at our last meeting, muttering about having been dead these forty-two years, came on her again, and from indications in his words, and from the apparition which 'Nellie' afterwards described of a radiant lady helping him and calling him 'Ned,' the company had concluded that the communicator was this recently-deceased gentleman of note.

Before the sitting on this Saturday we talked over this experience, which may have had the effect of causing the tide of influences which afterwards set in. We arranged the screen across one corner of the room, as on the last occasion, and darkened the room to a light in which we could only just distinguish one another, our chief object being to give the new band the easiest conditions for practising. 'Nellie' soon controlled, and described a scene of Mr. Westlake talking with a certain gentleman, which scene he could hardly say had happened as yet; but 'Nellie' had just triumphed in a prediction she had made to him. The previous week, just before he started for Ireland, intending to stay there for two or three weeks, she told him she saw him back in Hampstead by a certain day, much sooner than he expected. It had come true, as she had predicted, Mr. Westlake having been summoned home by an urgent telegram.

We were also told about the unseen workings which had caused a strange episode to happen to Mrs. T. that afternoon. She had been sitting alone in her room, and had become conscious of a presence near her. She asked her visitor to tell her name; when suddenly the photograph of a dead sister, from whom she once had been estranged, fell at her feet. It had been taken from the secret drawer in her desk upstairs and passed through floors or walls. We were now told that this little surprise had been carried out with the help of several others, among them an old friend of Mrs. T.—whose name was elicited by means of raps.

Just as we were getting harmonised in this way and beginning to expect further physical manifestations, the conditions were suddenly altered by Mrs. T. being controlled by the strange visitor above alluded to. His utterances seemed incoherent, as of someone who had passed away in a delirium, or with a decay of reason. However, I carefully jotted down his words in a note-book, in case they might help to prove his identity and turn out to be the expressions of his dying hours. The following are specimens of the phrases he kept using:—

- 'Where is my head?'
- 'This is not my head.'
- 'I am dead already.'
- 'I have been dead these forty years or more.'
- 'Why am I here, then?'
- 'This is nothing.'
- 'My spirit is somewhere else.'

'This is not my head; whose is it?'

'I do not know her.'

We told him it was the head of one whom he might have called a prophetess. When we asked him his name, all we could get him to say was: 'Tonbridge is my name.'

I asked him to use his force of mind to collect himself. Then he seemed to wake more to his earthly position. I told him of his friend's dilemma regarding his book. But he only answered: 'I must collect myself more before I can answer; my spirit is not here.' After a pause he said: 'Must I humble myself and learn afresh?' Then for the time he withdrew from control; but Mrs. T. woke to find such fiery shooting pains going through her head, that I suggested, in order to change the conditions and shake this painful influence off, that we should sing something light-hearted and frivolous. So we sang a negro melody, and that had the desired effect of bringing 'Toto' into control. The little Burmese girl tried her best to make us as light-hearted as herself, and promised Mr. Westlake, with 'Nellie's' co-operation, to try and do for him a certain test of abstracting some chocolates and other sweets out of the little test tubes, the ends of which had been fused, leaving very small apertures—the exact form of which had been taken on sealing wax. For Mr. Westlake had heard that these two little spirit girls were constantly absorbing chocolates out of boxes which Mr. T. had bought for their edification and his own. This idea of Mr. Westlake's was to put their practice to a severer test.

Some physical manifestations now began. While we were singing again, a tambourine on a chair behind the screen (Mrs. T. was seated at the table with us on this side of it) began to rattle to indicate an unseen power and presence. We were told afterwards that it was done by Mr. T.'s sister 'Emily,' who seems to have taken upon herself the part of tambourine player. 'Clare' also whispered a few words, and rapped on the table with a pencil under the raised table-cover.

'Nellie' now asked my leave to take her mother behind the screen in order that the new band might practise spirit lights and magnetise the plaster-of-Paris waiting for an impression. While we sang, a number of twinkling lights were seen dancing about and also a small tongue of fire, and a low direct voice muttered a few syllables. Everything seemed progressing favourably towards some good physical manifestations, when suddenly 'Nellie's' voice was heard in distress, calling her father to come behind the screen to help her mother. Mrs. T. was found lying on the floor with her fingers clenched into the palms of her hands so tightly that we could not force them open. We were told that the deceased gentleman had got hold of her body again, despite all the guides could do to keep him off. Mr. T. and I had to make passes for a considerable time before we could get the fists unclenched.

After that, a new phase of mediumship seemed beginning in Mrs. T. Seated at the table with us she saw letters of fire-making sentences on the wall opposite. But as we did not discover whose intelligence was impressing her in this way, it is impossible to say whether there is any value to be attached to the words she read, which seemed to be in the nature of predictions. They were, 'What is this fire? It is nothing to what will come soon. In 1900, winter, London's chief loss will be ecclesiastical. This will be followed by minute details.' Here a picture was shown of doves or birds falling as if shot from a high flight in the air, and crowds in the streets below watching them. Also written up, 'India's losses will break the Queen's heart.'

A very noteworthy fact was that while this was being shown raps were heard at the foot of the wall which was the furthest from Mrs. T., at the back of Mr. Westlake. After this we closed proceedings.

I wrote at once to my lady friend and sent her the particulars of the manifestation of her friend, and asked her to tell us how far they were indicative of his identity. She replied: 'I have already received other messages from four different sources purporting to come from our friend, but yours is the only communication which has impressed me with its genuineness. The remarks you give are very similar to those he so often made during the last year of his life, particularly that reference to "having been dead these forty years or more," and "being dead already," also that incoherent "Tonbridge is my name." Then, too, the action you mention is singularly significant of him. All during his last illness, particularly towards the end, he had a way of clenching his poor hands in a grip of iron so that we often found great difficulty in opening them. Both my husband and I consider his identity established.'

SHADOW LAND.*

(Concluded from page 596.)

After the long series of extraordinary séances in London, Madame d'Esperance found her powers much exhausted, and she went for a 'long holiday' to Norway. Her own ignorance of the cause and conditions of the manifestations now began to torment her, and she made up her mind to investigate more fully in order to find out what part she unconsciously played in the production of the phenomena; and for this purpose she determined in future to sit on the outside of the cabinet. It was slow work at first, for the new arrangement made it much more difficult to obtain striking results; but soon the 'forms' began to come with freedom, and Madame d'Esperance was able to combine the observation of a sitter with attention to her own sensations as a medium. Soon an incident happened which filled her with perplexity. A female figure emerged from the cabinet, and brushing past her, was greeted by a lady with a cry of 'Anna! oh, Anna! my child! my loved one!'

'Then somebody else gets up and puts her arms round the figure; then sobs, cries, and blessings get mixed up. I feel my body swayed to and fro, and all gets dark before my eyes. I feel somebody's arms round me although I sit on my chair alone. I feel somebody's heart beating against my breast. . . . It must be my own heart I feel beating so distinctly. Yet those arms round me! Surely never did I feel a touch so plainly. I begin to wonder which is I. Am I the white figure, or am I the one on the chair? . . . Certainly they are my lips that are being kissed. It is my face that is wet with the tears which these good women are shedding so plentifully. Yet how can it be? It is a horrible feeling, thus losing hold of one's identity. . . . How long will there be two of us? Which will it be in the end? Shall I be "Anna" or "Anna" be I?'

She is brought to herself again by being touched by a child who sat next to her; but this experience, and others which she now recalled, filled her with doubt and terror; she asked herself whether these materialised forms were her 'subliminal consciousness' acting independently of her will, or were they the devil seeking to delude her and her friends? One day she had a very strange dream or vision, which explained everything to her. She had lain down on the sofa with a book in her hand, when presently she grew faint; then she found herself outside her body:—

'I had moved away from the sofa, but somebody else was there and held the book! Who could it be? How wonderfully light and strong I felt. The faintness had gone, and in its place had come a marvellous sense of health, strength, and power, which I had never before known.'

She passed through the walls and found herself in a narrow road, and 'not a pleasant one,' while by her side was a friend who held her by the hand—a friend whom she seemed to know quite well, but did not recognise:—

'All I knew was, he was my friend and had been my friend through ages—a friend, better, wiser, stronger than myself.'

This narrow road was full of pitfalls, rocks, and morasses, and it seemed to typify the path that led to truth. Her companion told her that she knew the truth in her heart, but wilfully rejected it. Suddenly a great change took place. 'A sense of motion, bewilderment, increasing light, intense living radiance'; and then time and space ceased to have any significance, and she knew that, small as she was, she was part of an undying, infinite, indestructible whole. 'The light of this great life penetrated me,' she says, 'I understood—*understood that thoughts were the only real tangible substances.*' Then, she continues:—

'I saw other beings, living radiant creatures, and felt humbled and ashamed of my own inferiority; yet my soul went out to them in love, friendship, and adoration. I longed for their friendship and their love. . . . There were others for whom I felt an intense compassion and an irresistible desire to draw them nearer to me.'

Thereupon her whole consciousness resolved itself into the prayer: 'Help me that I may help others.' After which the mystery was solved for her:—

'I saw that this life which animates all things is undying, immortal; that there is no death, no annihilation; that it is the same life which, circling for ever and ever through form after form, dwelling in the rocks, the sand, the sea, in each blade of

grass, each tree, each flower, in all forms of animal existence, culminates in Man's intelligence and perception. Through it I saw that all events, all progress, movements, revolutions are but the expression of obedience to the laws which govern the universe, and that the movements which had seemingly been organised and carried out by men of their own free-will, had in fact been brought about by natural laws from which there is no escape; the individual whose intelligence most quickly perceived and appreciated the necessity of action becoming for the time a leader of his fellows.

'I could understand that, for the development of intelligence and perception, the spirit must pass through all organisms, gathering qualifications and properties incident to and peculiar to each; that the spirit and intelligence of man were the outcome and accumulation of all knowledge gathered during an infinitude of existences in different forms and conditions which must go on and on for ever. I could see that the fact of the spirit first taking on itself the form of man did not bring it to its utmost earthly perfection, for there are many degrees of men. In the savage it widens its experience, and finds a new field for education, which being exhausted, another step is taken; and so, step by step, in an ever onward, progressive, expansive direction, the spirit develops, the decay of the forms which the spirit employs being only the evidence that they have fulfilled their mission and served the purpose for which they were used. They return to their original elements to be used again and again as a means whereby the spirit can manifest itself and obtain the development it requires.'

Other remarkable things she learned while in this state of consciousness, for an account of which we must refer our readers to the book itself. During this vision (if it may be so called) things of earth seemed shadow things, and the people of earth shadow people; but presently she found herself again in her prison-house of the body, lying on the sofa with her book in her hand. Then shadow and reality had changed places; it was the dull earth life that now seemed real, and it was the bright world she had left that seemed the dream. But 'the treasure she had found' was still in her grasp—she *knew*, and would never again forget, that this mortal life is in reality the shadow, and the other glorious life the reality. This, after all, is the burden of the song sung by seers, poets, and philosophers in all ages; and it strikes us that no criticism we could make upon Madame d'Esperance's conclusions would be so great a compliment to her as that obvious and simple statement.

In the last chapter Madame d'Esperance gives her conclusions in another and more practical matter; and these are also of much value. In 'Investigators I Have Known,' the authoress speaks strongly and we think very sensibly about the study of spiritualistic phenomena. She says:—

'I have come in contact with several classes of investigators, working with a view to establishing some pet theory or other of their own. Those phenomena which would give colour to, or fall in with, their preconceived theories, are eagerly seized upon to the disregard of all others that have no such bearing, or are contradictory to their ideas. These investigators are generally satisfied with theory, their imagination supplying all the rest. Hence the origin of "Spooks," "Shells," "Thought-forms," "Elementary Spirits," and similar absurdities. But even these abortive productions of a too superficial investigation are to be preferred to the conclusions arrived at by another class of wise or scientific researchers, who begin their inquiry with the assumption that all persons except themselves are dishonest, all opinions except their own biased or without legitimate foundation, all observation except their own unreliable, all recorded phenomena unfounded unless they have witnessed them; all phenomena obtained under other conditions than those laid down by themselves unworthy of credence.'

There is also another class of investigators, she says, who act upon the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief; who pretend the most fervent interest in Spiritualism in order to gain admittance to séances, to which they go with but one idea in their minds, to expose the fraud which they assume the whole thing to be. There are the 'scientific' investigators, who strip and search the medium, then tie, and padlock, and seal, and nail him or her up; and are triumphant if no trustworthy manifestations follow. She says:—

'Knowing what I know—and that is little enough—of the conditions necessary for successful manifestations, I cannot but wonder greatly that success ever attends on such experiments. When the material supplied by the investigators is chiefly made up of suspicion, intrigue, and doubt, supplemented in most cases by the noxious fumes of alcohol and nicotine, what wonder that the results produced are such as bring disgrace and shame on the name of the truths they profess to advocate, and ruin to the medium, who is the victim on whom the onus of the scandal is laid?'

* 'Shadow Land; or, Light from the Other Side.' By E. D'ESPERANCE. London: Geo. Redway. Price 6s.

Considering that none of us present at that meeting knew of these facts at the time, and that Mrs. T. had never met the deceased gentleman, or read his writings, I think the manifestation was certainly a remarkable one. It may be another proof that our personality must be picked up again where we left it. Or is it that our brother is suffering for a mistaken conduct of life in trying to kill out the personal feelings and emotions instead of the egotistical spirit animating the personality—in trying to consider the personality as dead, instead of cultivating it into a more and more ideal representation of God working on the earth plane and creating an Adam out of chaos? Be this as it may, the sequel is rather painful. The ordeal was rather hard for Mrs. T. to bear. By the same post as I received this confirmation I received a letter from Mrs. T., in which she said: 'Not for all the tests or glory possible do I want this control to come again, and I am telling our invisible friends so. My feelings this morning are indescribable. My head feels bursting, and last night my dreams were horrible. In my bathroom this morning I found myself, after a fit of unconsciousness, stretched on the floor with my hands clenched so that I could not open them. I had to crawl to the hot water tap and turn it with my two fists and pour hot water on them before I could recover. Our other experiences of controls before have always been so happy.'

However, I am glad to report that the next day Mrs. T. got over this painful after-effect.

Since then some of the new band have been practising the phenomenon of *apports* assiduously. To give some instances: One day Mrs. T. was seated with her children at dinner when the servant mentioned what a strange smell of cucumber had pervaded the room the last two days, especially when she first entered the room of a morning. One of the children exclaimed that she wished they could have cucumber for dinner. Scarcely were the words out of her mouth when a cucumber, a foot and a-half long, appeared, high up on a shelf, as if a fairy had brought it. It was not like those sold in shops, as it had a fresh flower still on the top and fresh juice oozing out of its broken stalk.

Again, when Mr. and Mrs. T. were spending the day with me at Eton last Sunday, and we were seated chatting round the fire, about 3 p.m., suddenly Mr. T. noticed a banana lying on the floor between my chair and that of Mrs. T., who objected to its having been found so suspiciously close to her. Presently when Mrs. T. had her purse in her hand, counting her money in case it should be spirited away, and Mr. T. was bending over her helping her, and I was at the piano in the far end of the room, down fell two pistachio nuts with considerable force just past me, as if they had fallen from the ceiling straight above me. While my two Indian charges, in another corner of the room, were laughing at this incident, down came another shower of three more pistachio nuts and two walnuts, at their feet. We were then told that if we sat at the table and raised the table cover, by placing a cardboard box under it, we should get some white grapes brought. So we five sat as directed in full light, with our hands on the cloth, and after half an hour, during which 'Mr. Giles' manifested by raps and gave Mr. T. an important direction relating to his business, we were told that the grapes had come. I raised the cloth and found them in the centre of the dining-table, five of them in a bunch, fresh and uncrushed. I asked 'Nellie,' who came to explain matters, how it was that they knew that, while I had most other kinds of fruit in the house, I had no pistachios or walnuts, bananas or white grapes. She said the friends had come the day before, when I was buying fruit, to impress me not to buy those particular kinds. This little detail I mention, as well as the circumstance of the servant having noticed the smell of cucumber, as showing that the phenomenon apparently occurring so *extempore*, was really the result of careful rehearsing and pre-arrangement. Our invisible friends seem also, when all is prepared, to impress us to ask for the things. Mr. T. tells me that when he was going home in the train he expressed a wish to his wife that the invisibles had brought more pistachio nuts so that he could have brought some home for his children. Immediately after these words he put his hand in his overcoat pocket and found it full of these nuts.

Our last meeting was held at Hampstead, on Saturday, December 4th; we three being the only sitters. Pursuant to the idea that the new band were getting their hand in, this sitting was, at my special request, devoted to trying whether they could raise the table in the air while we kept away at a

distance, in the same way that the old band had done occasionally. I told 'Alexander' that, whenever we invited strangers, in order to convince them of the genuineness of the phenomena, and to rid their mind of the first and natural suspicious, critical attitude, it was very advisable to have a striking proof of invisible power at work, made easy and ready at hand by dint of rehearsal. For this purpose I considered no performance of his predecessor, 'Peter Wharton,' so convincing as the upheaval and moving of furniture in the light, when all contact of our hands was far removed. 'Alexander' and all the others promised to try. Accordingly, we directed all arrangements for this sole end. We dispensed with all forms of a cabinet, and sat at a smaller octagon table. At first, with the idea of helping the beginners as much as possible, we sat in dim light, but finding there were indications, by the tight clenching of Mrs. T.'s palms, of the return of our visitor of the previous meeting, we were ordered to make the light bright. Accordingly, we stirred the dulled fire into a bright blaze, and in its strong light soon had the satisfaction of seeing the table vigorously rise. We sat away, at a yard distant, and it several times repeated its vigorous rising to a foot above the floor. Then we stood over the table, holding our hands grasped a yard above it, and it rose straight up a foot towards them, and then fell over on its side. I observed that none of our six feet stirred from the ground during its levitation.

We congratulated 'Alexander,' and he seemed so pleased that his raps were heard louder than before, all about the floor. I asked him to arrange with me a signal to give me information whenever he thought this phenomenon was possible of achievement. He sent 'Nellie' to say that four raps three times repeated, with a pause between each four, would be the code signal.

Another of the new band, whom we are to call 'Anne,' came by control to introduce herself. She gave us her surname, age, address, and profession. As she came from Birmingham she is probably another friend of 'Peter's,' and a substitute kindly sent by him. She said she was going to practise the special work of making raps in distant parts of the room, as the medium had specially begged for someone to do this. Several of our old friends and guides also conversed with us, each by special mannerisms of raps, and 'Anne's' raps were given as three peculiar scratching sounds on the table. Occasionally, also, we heard a rap on the window-sill; and so proceedings were concluded.

I understand from Mr. Westlake that 'Nellie' and 'Toto' have succeeded in getting some sweets out of his closed test tubes to his satisfaction, but probably he himself will report on this experiment.

I have been requested by Mrs. T. to take this opportunity to thank some anonymous donor for a handsomely bound volume of Longfellow's poems, sent mysteriously addressed to Mrs. T. to my care at my rooms in town.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

[I have read the above account of Mr. Thurstan, as prepared for the press, and have found all his statements correct.—E.T.]

DECEASE OF DR. CARTER BLAKE.

Dr. Charles Carter Blake, who was many years ago a familiar figure at Spiritualist meetings, passed away from earth on Monday, December 13th. In his early years he was a co-worker with Sir Richard Owen in the Osteological Department of the British Museum, and with Sir Samuel Birch in the Egyptian Gallery. Later on he became one of the founders of the Anthropological Society, where he worked with Cardinal Wiseman, Sir Richard Burton, and others who remained his friends through life.

During the last five or six years Dr. Blake had been gradually losing the use of his limbs, and for two years had not left his bed; but his mind was clear and active to the last, and his patience and cheerfulness under his affliction were the admiration of the many kind friends who visited him and tried to cheer the tediousness of his death in life, for such was his existence for many months, especially since he lost the use of the last hand with which he had been able to turn the leaves of his book. *Requiescat in pace.*

BLOOMSBURY AND VICINITY.—'LIGHT' may always be obtained of Mackenzie and Co., 81, Endell-street, Shaftesbury-avenue.

'I have heard it said that there are but few good mediums left to work for the cause. I am not surprised. They have suffered so much at the hands of ignorant investigators, who pride themselves on their qualifications as inquirers, that they have withdrawn from the work heartsick and discouraged, weary to death of even the very name of the truths for which they have given the very best they had—time, health, reputation.'

We now leave this interesting and valuable book in the hands of our readers, hoping that what we have said about it may have given them an appetite for the book itself. They will no doubt read M. Aksakof's Preface with pleasure, remembering the extraordinary phenomenon of the partial dematerialisation of the medium's body which that distinguished man recorded a year or two ago in a valuable monograph that we noticed at the time. M. Aksakof, in his Preface, vouches for the perfect honesty and good faith of the medium, and his endorsement ought to be quite good enough, one would think.

ASTROLOGY.

I read with interest Mr. A. Butcher's letter on 'Astrology' in your issue of December 4th, and would draw his attention to the following facts:—

1. There are many disheartened students of this science, whose failure may be due to either of several causes, among which are the following: Lack of the peculiar cast of mind necessary for the study of a unique subject; the study of the science under 'directions' which tend to cloud the judgment; the possession of one of those unhappy horoscopes in which almost every good 'direction' is negated by an evil one; want of sufficiently extended knowledge and experience.

2. The superiority of astrology as a means of divining lies not merely in its inherent accuracy, as proved by the correspondence between any event and the inter-relation of certain planets; but also, and chiefly, upon its ability to indicate the influences under which a person will exist at any time (year, month or day) in the future, or under which he has existed at any period in the past.

3. While cards, dice, tea leaves, &c., may, in the hands of an intuitive person, serve as the means of divining more or less accurately, these things are but insignificant atoms in the microcosm, whereas the planets and fixed stars are part of the macrocosm, representing and exerting powerful (magnetic and other) influences.

4. Students of astrology often commit the error, pointed out many years ago by 'Raphael,' of attempting to judge of the minutiae of life from planetary positions. This, except in rare cases, is beyond the very limited power of the human mind. The planets represent the *great principles* of mental and material affairs; and exactly how any given individual will act, or be affected, under certain directions, is not always clear when the moral training, education, and general environment are unknown. The essential principles involved in the moral and other conditions under which he will exist at any given time may, however, be foreseen; and some of the actual circumstances may be fairly inferred therefrom.

I venture to offer Mr. Butcher, or any other person, the friendly challenge to produce a horoscope of any victim of the Maidstone epidemic, in which there exists no evil planetary combination corresponding with the illness. The date and time of the birth must, of course, be known with some approach to certainty.

I absolutely deny that intuition is the 'great central fact of astrology.' Astrology is a science with definite laws and rules. Intuition is of great service—is, indeed, often indispensable; but it is by no means the principal requisite. Thorough knowledge, applied with intelligence, is the 'central fact.'

One could fill page after page with testimonials to the value of predictions for given periods, and with evidence of the salvation of many from imprudent courses and terrible moral disaster by the foreknowledge astrology supplies. But this is not the advertisement column.

G. H. LOCK.

44, Wright-street, Hull.

There is much force in the argument with which your contributor, Mr. Arthur Butcher, seeks to damage astrology. In every horoscope (he says) the possible combinations are so numerous that by a process of selecting those which suit our purpose we can prove anything we wish. The trees in the pine-forest will fall into straight lines in any direction! Every

careful investigator will, I am sure, admit that the 'personal error,' the preconceptions of the investigator, is a real obstacle to true insight. I might emphasise this by pointing out the two horoscopes of the Princess of Wales, published this month by two rival astrological magazines—'Star Lore' and 'Coming Events.' Although birth-times are taken which differ by several hours, both profess to account for all the principal events in a plausible way.

Admitting all this, I think the argument used by Mr. Butcher may be pushed too far. Because we are apt to find what we seek if we are determined to find it, is there no such thing as objective truth? Are the laws and analogies we think we discover 'of imagination all compact'? Let us hope not! There are means known to every science of eliminating the 'personal error.' In astrology one may experiment with the natiivities of strangers. One may make due allowance for 'chance coincidence.' After all is done a residuum of truth will be found by the patient inquirer. If Mr. Butcher will send me his birth-time, I will try to convince him that *something* may be gleaned from it without any previous knowledge. The attempt may fail, of course, but if it succeed there could be no reason to attribute the result to intuition, since any conclusions arrived at would obviously be based upon rules derived from observation and experience.

GEORGE FRANCIS GREEN.

Your correspondent, Mr. Butcher, writes of judicial astrology as if it were purely symbolical. True, horary astrology deals with the heavenly bodies as *causes*, in the hands of the Almighty; and no 'divination' or 'intuition' is necessary, if the rules given in the standard text-books be followed. If divination and intuition were all-sufficient, *bonâ fide* astrologers would not expend hours of labour on carefully computing the horoscope, speculum, and a series of primary directions for future years; and the anxious work of rectifying a nativity, when the moment of birth is not exactly known, would be unnecessary. A very rough sketch of the figure of the heavens would serve for the purpose, if divination and intuition were alone sufficient to form a judgment. It is this mistaken mixing of divination with genethliology and natural astrology that has done so much harm to the science, and brought about its downfall in Puritan times.

Mr. Butcher says that he is willing to allow 'that the great central fact of astrology may be intuition.' As a student of the science for the space of thirty-seven years, I am *not* willing to allow that the central fact of astrology is intuition. The great central fact I conceive to be the law of Nature that every celestial body in the solar system operates on this earth, its inhabitants, and its atmosphere.

It was by *observation*, and not by either divination or intuition, that the ancient Egyptians discovered that a great solar eclipse taking place close to the summer solstice 'impedes the rising of the Nile,' as declared in the 'Tetrabiblos,' eighteen centuries ago. This fact in Nature is proved by the rising of the Nile being impeded in 1842, and again in 1890, as foretold in 'Zadkiel's Almanac' for those years, when a great solar eclipse fell close to the summer solstice. The gravest anxiety was felt in Egypt in those years, as reference to the newspapers will prove.

In regard to the Maidstone epidemic, Mr. Butcher should remember that the great masters of astrology have always declared that general causes take precedence of natal influences. Zadkiel foretold that in the last quarter of this year, in England, 'the public health will not be good, eruptive fever being likely to prevail.' The general causative influence is to be found in the planetary positions at the autumnal equinox. Every horoscope of the thousand inhabitants of Maidstone who were stricken down by typhoid, might not show indications of dangerous illness this autumn. In the absence of instances of this, astrologers will be inclined to believe that every horoscope would show some affliction by Mars or Saturn to account for the suffering. Even if not, such a fact would not militate against natural astrology, but would emphasise the necessity for studying mundane as well as natal astrology. People who only have a cheap book on natal astrology, and do not pursue the study any further, must not consider themselves thoroughly acquainted with the deep and wide-reaching science, nor entitled to condemn it.

Too much has been claimed by some professional astrologers for natal and horary astrology. The science is far from perfect, but it is based on truth, and it should be studied and improved, and not despised and neglected. Many of the greatest minds

have been fascinated by its charms and penetrated by a conviction of its truth—that is to say, *astrologia sana*, and not a mere mixture of divination and astronomical calculations.

A. J. P.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT IN CLAIRVOYANCE.

The 'Daily News' has received the following interesting communication from its Paris correspondent, and strangely enough, has printed it without the customary sneer. We wish we could feel confident that the omission was designed, and not simply a matter of oversight:—

An extraordinary piece of news from the Borderland has been communicated to the Academy of Sciences and Letters of Montpellier by Dr. Grasset, Professor at the medical university of that city. A friend and colleague of Professor Grasset—Dr. Ferroul, of Narbonne, sometime Deputy for that town—is acquainted with a clairvoyante. It was agreed to try her upon reading through opaque bodies. Professor Grasset returned from Narbonne to Montpellier, and without telling Dr. Ferroul anything about his proposed test, he wrote on half a sheet of paper the following couplet:—

'Le ciel profond reflète en étoiles nos larmes
Car nous pleurons ce soir de nous sentir trop vivre.'
'Montpellier, Oct. 28, 1897.'

and underneath a Russian word in big printed letters, a German word written small, and a Greek word. The paper was doubled up with the writing inside, and was wrapped up in a sheet of tinfoil, the edges of which were folded over. This was enclosed in a mourning envelope. Professor Grasset having been told that twine sometimes interfered with the subject's vision, secured the envelope, after gumming the edges, with a paper-fastener, which he ran through the envelope, doubling over the ends, and embedding them in sealing-wax, on which he affixed his seal. He wrote a note on a visiting card to his Narbonne colleague, and enclosing the whole in a big envelope he posted it on October 28th. On October 30th Professor Grasset received the following reply:—

'MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—When your envelope reached me this morning, I had not my subject at the house. I opened the outer envelope, and found your card, and the sealed envelope. As I was compelled to pay my round of visits to my patients, I proposed to call on the subject at 4 p.m. and immediately called on her to make an appointment. She suggested that the letter be read at once. Your sealed envelope was lying (enclosed in the bigger one) on my desk at home, where I had left it, my house and that of the subject being over five hundred yards' distance. We both sat near the edge of a table. I laid my hand in front of the subject's eyes, and this is what she said without seeing your envelope: "You have torn the envelope?" "Yes; but the letter to be read is inside in another closed envelope." "What; with a big black seal?" "Yes, read!" "There is silver paper. Here is what is written: 'Le ciel profond reflète en étoiles nos larmes, car nous pleurons le soir de nous sentir vivre.' Then there are letters like that"—and the subject imitated them with her finger—"then a name I cannot read, then Montpellier and the date." There, dear Professor, is the account of the experiment I promised. It lasted a minute and a-half. Enclosed I return you the sealed envelope.—I am, &c., DR. FERROUL.'

Professor Grasset describes his amazement at finding the seal intact. The subject had seen the tinfoil, a precaution Professor Grasset had not mentioned to Dr. Ferroul. She had read the two lines without recognising the versification, reading 'le soir,' instead of 'ce soir,' and overlooking the word 'trop,' mistakes which were insignificant. Professor Grasset considers that the success of this experiment is complete, and the demonstration overwhelming. In fact, the subject not only read through an opaque body, but at a distance. The latter part of the experiment, however, he thinks, is not established scientifically, because it only rests on the word of Dr. Ferroul, whom, however, he personally trusts implicitly. But, at any rate, Dr. Ferroul was unaware of the contents of the note, so that (letting alone bad faith), he could not even mentally suggest the subject. The envelope was examined and opened last week at the sitting of the Academy of Sciences and Letters of Montpellier. The Academy has appointed a Commission to repeat this experiment at Narbonne.

LONDON (ELEPHANT AND CASTLE).—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by Mr. Wirbatz, 18, New Kent-road, S.E.

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.]

A Word of Gratitude.

SIR,—Will you allow me to express a word of gratitude through your columns to Isabel de Steiger, F.T.S., for her most readable and philosophic article in 'LIGHT' of November 13th? Her views, both spiritualistic and theosophic, appeal to one, not only for their comprehensive scope, but for the unanswerable logic and the reasonableness thereof. Her words struck an answering chord in my own heart.

It is because you publish such articles as these; it is because 'LIGHT,' in the seventeen years of its existence, has had so many valuable articles on the occult side of life; because it has not, like many spiritualistic papers, confined itself to mere phenomena, and to the upholding of mediums, good and bad, that 'LIGHT' has stood, and stands, without a peer in the so-called spiritualistic field of literature. Surely 'there is no religion higher than truth.' Let us accept that for authority, not authority for truth.

FRANCES ELLEN BURR, F.T.S.
788, Main-street, Hartford, Conn., U.S.A.

Perplexities with Planchette.

SIR,—In the course of some Planchette writing under my own hand on Sunday evening last, the following explanation was obtained of the discrepancy between the actual poisoning and alleged shooting of the dog, as referred to in the incident reported in your columns of last week: 'It was an actual fact that the dog was present, but the story was not literally true, only in the sense of an allegory. A spirit friend seeing him here made an object lesson of him, without any intention of deceiving you, the important factor being the lesson to be conveyed as regards the indestructibility of all sentient life. This is all the explanation needed.'

With reference to the writing purporting to originate from a spirit signing as 'William Blakeley,' and of which I have had some little experience for a considerable time back, the following is a portion of some further writing on Sunday last: 'The spirit who has so recently come over from your side with my name is a son of mine, and he is with me at the present time, and will be useful in aiding our work. He is not altogether a stranger to the subject, and you will find him a very genial, good-natured soul. Like myself, he is a born actor, and has strutted his little time upon the earth's stage. At some future time he and I will jointly influence you and before very long we hope to be more successful than we have hitherto been. You may rest content that in the spirit spheres there are ample opportunities for all kinds and conditions of souls, with their varied needs for useful employment.'

December 13th, 1897.

THOMAS BLYTON.

'Christian Scientists.'

SIR,—I have received letters in reference to a recent communication to 'LIGHT.' Unfortunately, I cannot get the paper here, hence I have not seen the issue in question. One patient writes, withdrawing his case, thus: 'I am sorry to say that I have seen a letter in "LIGHT," signed "G. Osbond," from which I infer that you are not yet (!!) qualified to perform all that you claim.' Of course, without the article before me, it is not easy to answer it; still, I may say that lately I have possessed in a marvellous manner, and demonstrated before thousands of people, this marvellous power to heal all diseases; and I have done it *free*, never having accepted one penny for my services, although I have been instrumental in giving health to hundreds, and I know of no one in England who possesses a similar gift. And I will state, moreover, that I am prepared to demonstrate before any audience this power to instantly heal diseases simply by laying on of hands; I care not what the disease is, nor of how long standing, for it cannot be past the power of God to remove. I propose that you adopt one or both courses as follows:—

1. That you arrange for a public demonstration—I care not how large the audience—and I shall undertake to heal, simply by laying on of hands, like the Gentle Nazarene of old, any disease of any one *instantly*, who will undertake, honestly and truthfully, to say after my treatment how he or she feels.

2. That you write, as I have before urged you to do, to Mr. Lindley, president of the Spiritualists' Society, at Ripley Villas, 20, Sloane-street, Bradford, for proofs whether or not I am 'qualified to heal'! I attended there three Sunday nights in succession, and healed all who presented themselves for healing, and I think that nearly every disease was represented. I appeal to your sense of right, of justice, and of fairness to publish this short statement

3, Strawberrydale-terrace, Harrogate. ALLAN FISHER.

P.S.—May I add in reference to the foregoing, that I have *always* possessed this marvellous healing power, although it was not until I looked into Spiritualism that I quite understood it. Even as to the medical profession, I am not altogether a stranger, having graduated under the late Dr. Steele, of Liverpool, and have always considered myself competent to deal with any case. As with the Nazarene, so even now, when one tries to do good, for the good of humanity, there are always kind friends ready to help him along!

Lately I have had to give up my time entirely to this work, as the spirits urge me to do so continually, and will not let me attend to anything else; in fact, I do not make a living by it, and up to the present have lost fully £100 through undertaking this work.—ALLAN FISHER.

What is a Spiritualist?

SIR,—During an investigation of Spiritualism, extending over a period of five years, I have often endeavoured to arrive at a satisfactory definition of the above question, but without success.

When conversing with persons who are fully convinced of the phenomena, and the fact of spirit communion *from experience*, I have known them turn round and remark: 'But we are not Spiritualists, you know.'

Surely persons who are convinced of the truth of spirit communion, even apart from any physical manifestations, are in reality Spiritualists, no matter what they may term themselves; if not, what do they think they are, and what does their newly-acquired knowledge mean to them?

Is it the word itself they object to as conveying the idea of 'bad form,' or is it the teaching as opposed to some religious doctrine to which they have been attached?

I think a little light thrown on the subject by way of correspondence would prove instructive to some and interesting to many.

A. T.

Decease of Mr. John S. Ancrum.

SIR,—I regret to have to report the passing to the higher life of Mr. John S. Ancrum, of Hartington-street, Gateshead, Durham, on Sunday, December 6th, at the age of sixty-four. Our departed friend was an ardent Spiritualist, and one of the first to help at the inauguration of the movement in this district. He attended the circles at Weirs Court, Newcastle, together with Messrs. W. Armstrong, Ashton, Hunter, Miller, Mould and others, for the development of Miss K. Wood, Miss Fairlamb, Mrs. Hall and other mediums. He was highly esteemed by us all, and we cherish the kindest memories of him. He was intelligent, faithful, quiet and brave. His influence was ever used on the side of goodness, purity and love. As I sat by his side on the night of the Friday before his departure, I said, 'Have you any fear of entering the other world?' He replied, 'Oh, no, Mr. Eliot; all the years I have been a Spiritualist I never thought that the other life could be so real as it is. I know I shall soon be there. I wish you to write to the papers and give my testimony to the world, for I have been in the company of angels; I have conversed with the celestials. Oh, how beautiful! they are coming now; some in white, others with gold and silver symbols and most brilliant lights. One form is near you with a golden band round his head; he is dark-skinned, with very large head; the forehead is very high, and he has large long hands. How kind they are! They come with my "Lena" also.' He called his grand-daughter, Miss Lamb, to the bedside and presently said, 'How beautiful! he is covering you both with a white substance. Some of them are speaking, but I cannot quite make out what is said; I am impressed that it is German. I know Spiritualism is true. I know our loved ones come back to cheer, comfort and bless us; in the hour of trial, sickness and death they are at our side, ready to give to us a helping hand as we enter the immortal state. Give my testimony to the world, for I know it is true.'

Our deepest sympathy is with the bereaved ones, and we pray that the angels of Light, Love, Wisdom and Knowledge may be near to strengthen and protect them through this world of shadows.

The mortal remains of our friend were interred in Gateshead Cemetery on the 8th inst.

40, Wandsworth-road, Newcastle. THOMAS C. ELIOT
(Assistant Harbour Master, River Tyne).

SOCIETY WORK.

BRISTOL, 24, UPPER MAUDLIN-STREET.—On Thursday and Sunday last we had very good meetings. The interest in the subject of spirit communication increases. We hope to get some good mediums soon.—W. WEBBER, Sec.

STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MARTIN-STREET HALL, STRATFORD.—On Sunday last Mr. Emms, of Hackney, addressed a large audience on 'Transition.' Mr. Landridge presided. On Sunday morning, at 11 a.m., Lyceum; in the evening, Mr. J. Adams, of Clapham.—WM. A. RENFREE.

193, BOW-ROAD, E.—We had a splendid meeting on Sunday last, when Mr. Harris read a poem entitled 'Sunbeam,' dedicated to Miss Findlay's guide; after which Miss Findlay, through her guide, gave an earnest address on 'The Prodigal's Return.' Mr. Sloane also gave a short address, and Miss Findlay and Mr. Sloane both gave psychometry.—H. H.

72, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—On Sunday last Mr. Peters' guides, in their usual interesting manner, answered questions put by the audience. Mr. Peters also gave good normal clairvoyance. We hope to announce full particulars next week of our new meeting place, which is now in preparation. Next Sunday, December 19th, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Mason.

ISLINGTON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, WELLINGTON HALL, N.—On Sunday last Mr. Brenchley delivered an address on 'Sown in a natural body, raised in the spiritual body.' Mrs. Brenchley related some of her experiences, and spoke on 'The Guardianship of Mediums.' Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., 'Evangel.' Thursday, at 8 p.m., circle (for members only), medium, Mrs. Brenchley.—C.D.C.

MERTHYR TYDVIL.—On Sunday afternoon last Mr. Billingsley gave an excellent paper on 'The True God.' Reviewing the various conceptions of God from the earliest times to the present day, he claimed the highest to be that held by Spiritualists in the Over-soul, All Father, who is the supreme essence of love, wisdom, and justice. An animated discussion followed. In the evening, Mr. Scott in the chair, Mr. Hemmings' guides discoursed on 'The Presence of God.'—W.B.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, CLIFTON HOUSE, 155, RICHMOND-ROAD, MAKE-STREET, N.E.—Last Sunday evening Mrs. H. Boddington, of Battersea, gave an able and interesting address, and Mrs. Hillier gave some good clairvoyant descriptions and psychometry. Next Sunday the President will deliver an address, and Miss L. Gambrill will give clairvoyance. We have succeeded in getting a hall at the Manor Rooms, Kenmare-road, Mare-street, Hackney, which will be opened on January 2nd, at 7 p.m., when we hope to welcome Spiritualists from all parts.—J. NEANDER, President.

CARDIFF PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, ST. JOHN'S HALL.—On Sunday last a much esteemed lady member conducted the morning service, giving an excellent paper upon 'The Greatest of these is Love,' which was full of thought and spiritual helpfulness. In the evening Mrs. M. A. Sadler conducted, giving an address, in her usual thoughtful and lucid manner, upon 'Immortality and Modern Thought.' On Thursday, 9th inst., at the Mutual Improvement Class, Mr. Stanley A. Meacock read an able digest of a portion of Professor Drummond's book, 'The Ascent of Man,' an interesting discussion following. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. J. Miles; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. George Harris.—E.A.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—The fact that the surroundings of the meeting at these rooms on Sunday evening last seemed scarcely favourable to the giving of clairvoyance from the platform makes it all the more gratifying to be able to record the uniform success attending the efforts of 'Sunshine,' Miss MacCreadie's Indian spirit-attendant. Twenty-one descriptions were given, and only one was left unrecognized at the conclusion of the meeting. One amongst the many vivid descriptions was especially noteworthy: A gentleman was described as having met physical death by being shot whilst riding, 'and,' said 'Sunshine,' 'he fell off his horse and was dragged along for some distance, the horse meanwhile kicking his rider's head.' This account was corroborated by a lady present, who recognised the spirit person by the clear description given. The firmness and tact displayed by 'Sunshine' met with warm support. The singing of a solo by Miss Samuel was greatly enjoyed. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. W. H. Phillips, of Bridgwater, trance address. A warm welcome awaits Mr. Phillips, and we hope all friends will be present to greet him.—L.H.