

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe

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

No. 893—VOL. XVIII.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Every reader of 'LIGHT' will be glad to read Mrs. Besant's 'Spiritualist Alliance' Address. Those who were privileged to hear it will miss the exceeding grace of its delivery; but those who did not hear it will perhaps be quite able to grasp its intrinsic value. With nearly the whole of it we, of course, entirely agree. Time out of mind, it has all been 'familiar in our mouths as household words'; but with a remainder we find considerable difficulty. Mrs. Besant's version of history, for example, is not ours. She strongly suggests that Theosophists, at all events Theosophists with authority, including, as we understand, Madame Blavatsky, have always been hospitable to Spiritualists, and that Spiritualists, on the contrary, have been unfriendly to Theosophists. 'The Spiritualist Alliance' platform, at all events, does not suggest that: nor does 'LIGHT', unless it is unfriendly to be honest and frank. Would it be thought unfriendly if we said—as indeed we honestly think—that Mrs. Besant's published reasons in favour of believing in Re-incarnation are forced and arbitrary, and without proof?

We are glad to hear that Mrs. Besant's touching plea for communion does not mean any union of Spiritualist and Theosophical Societies. Organised Theosophy in America and England has long been and is a warning, not a model. Its excessive mechanism, its love of legislation, its appetite for officials and authorities, its fondness for philosophical and other systems, have given plain people no wish to be involved in all the troubles that have followed. Spiritualists are content with their experiments and their few inferences: their freedom, their simplicity and their peace. For the rest, they wish well, with all their hearts, to their Theosophical friends and to all earnest-minded explorers. They have always done so, and we believe they always will.

We have just received a bundle of Press notices of all sorts and sizes, from an inch or so, concerning Mrs. Besant's Address, to a yard and a quarter of 'Umpire' type by Mr. J. F. Nisbet concerning Spiritualism as a Sign of the Times that is worth taking notice of. We quite agree with Mr. Nisbet, especially with this pretty little testimonial: 'It is the custom of the Press either to deride the Spiritualists as a set of fools, or to treat them as impostors; but they belong to neither category, as I can testify. They are seekers after truth—mistaken, if you like, but sincere.' But truly, Mr. Nisbet, we do not care what the Press says, except as its utterances supply us with a sort of social gasometer.

In an extremely shrewd series of 'Referee' paragraphs (written also, we believe, by Mr. Nisbet) on Mrs. Besant's Address, we find this: 'If I could accept Spiritualism, I do not see why I should stick at Mahatmas.' There is a

great deal in this remark: and the reply to it explains much. We believe in the facts of Spiritualism because we have proved them. We will believe in the Mahatmas when we prove them. We 'stick' at nothing; we only want experiments and proofs. Eloquent assertions are well enough in their way: but we prefer homely experiences.

Every Spiritualist who knows his business is a Humanitarian, a hater of every form of cruelty. This is our justification for inserting the following from 'Humanity':—

Mr. Stratton, with no other pecuniary help than the very small grants which the Humanitarian League has been able to make him from its ordinary funds, and a few special donations from a handful of private friends, has succeeded in exposing the doings of the Royal Hunt from one end of the country to the other, and has so thoroughly discredited the sport of stag-hunting that its abolition is now a certainty if the protest be maintained. The result, therefore, rests with those who feel the extreme importance of disestablishing a pastime which is not only cruel in itself, but is carried on in the Queen's name and at the expense of the nation. Mr. Stratton and the Sports Department of the Humanitarian League are giving their labour gratuitously. If our friends wish this labour to be successful, they will do well to signify their goodwill in an unmistakable manner, and address their communications to the Rev. J. Stratton, Wokingham, Berks.

We have received a circular from an energetic band of workers in Manchester, respecting a 'Jubilee Bazaar' to be held in that city early in April. The Bazaar has been decided upon in order to procure funds 'in aid of the Propaganda Mission Fund,' especially for the support of mission agents in the thronged Midlands and the North. The Bazaar has been ordered by and will be conducted under the authority of 'The Spiritualist National Federation.' The following are the names of the Chairman of the Committee, the Treasurer and the Secretary:—John Venables, Shaw-street, Walsall; Alfred Smedley, Park Mount, Belper; and J. C. Macdonald, 61, Cromwell-road, Patricroft, Eccles; to all of whom, of course, contributions of money or goods may be sent. It is a good cause, and, if all who are properly interested will help it, it will be a great success. Mr. J. Page Hopps has agreed to open the Bazaar on Saturday, April 9th.

'The Psychology of Health and Happiness,' by Dr. La Forest Potter (Boston: The Philosophical Publishing Co.), is a book of subtle suggestions concerning physical advance through pleasure, mental balance and spiritual harmony: but we confess it is somewhat difficult to follow, from a robustly practical point of view. The author appears to be over entangled in the complicated meshes of Psychical Research, but, for all that, he is quite modern in his outlook and diagnosis.

His references to spiritualist phenomena are, of course, determined by his Psychical Research point of view: thus—'Of supernatural phenomena, so called, levitation, psychometry, slate writing, message from the dead, ghosts, true presentiments of the future, the most that can be said, I think, is that they represent the highest degree of cell activity in the ejective plane.' We hope our unsophisticated friends will think that very satisfactory.

We do not, however, mean to suggest that Dr. Potter denies the reality of objective spirit-realities which in some way correspond to subjective impressions. On the contrary, he quite plainly says:—

It is entirely possible that occasional glimpses of the world are permitted and new forces attained. All thought transference which is vital, all vision and message which has distinct meaning, I believe is through overflow of current to these higher planes, in which all knowledge is, from which we receive true vision of, and message from, the dead.

Mrs. Wilmans, the very lively editor of 'Freedom,' has developed her belief in will power into belief that she can will away what we call 'death,' and be, we suppose, immortal here. It is a pity that all good things are exposed to these gross exaggerations. We observe that one of her disciples, though an elate believer, is beginning to 'hedge.' Here is the paragraph. It is as amusing as it is cute:—

That I believe in the immortality of the body, goes without saying. I can scarcely do less, since the sense of sight and feeling prove to me the existence of omnipresent energy, of incessant vitality, of life everlasting. There are few who do not believe that death is to be abolished—some time; I have talked with many who acknowledge to this belief, but add, 'It won't be in my day.' I invariably suggest, especially if talking with a theologian, that 'Now is the accepted time, and now the day of salvation.' The other day a lady said to me, 'What if Mrs. Wilmans should die—what a collapse there would be among you people!' 'Not a bit of it,' I answered; 'Mrs. Wilmans won't do anything of the kind, but, even so, there will be no invalidation of the law of life; it would simply prove Mrs. Wilmans had not gained the strength required to hold her own against the negative thought of the race, and would have to try it again.'

A Liverpool correspondent writes:—

The children of this neighbourhood play a game which shows to my mind how universal is this gift of writing. They put the twenty-six letters of the alphabet in a row or a circle on a polished table; then, on an ordinary tumbler inverted on the polished surface, they put their fingers lightly, and the glass goes, in order, to the various letters, and answers questions. This, of course is merely a variation of Planchette, but, as nearly everyone can make this glass move, I think it is only a few steps more for them to be able to get such writing as I do. The crux is to get the glass to move at all; but this is readily achieved, it appears, and the rest, I think, is a question of development, practice and a right spirit. But it is a curious game for children, I think, and an unwholesome one.

Curious certainly; but why 'unwholesome'? We should like to hear from other observers of children, whether this is as common as our correspondent thinks. Certain it is, that, in the games of children, many quaint ideas, and perhaps some occult practices, survive. It is a subject that merits study—and a book.

We have hesitated somewhat as to noticing an extraordinary paragraph in a late number of 'The Agnostic Journal': and we do so only because we want danger signals as well as guide posts. The character of this paragraph may be gathered from its concluding lines:—

As far as I am aware, 'LIGHT' is the only spiritualistic organ that has not overtly broken with Christianity and all its hackneyed platitudes of expression. Except under . . . auspices, neither in this country nor in America, does Spiritualism know anything about a 'Father above' with a big F, nor an Uncle below with a big u.

If that sort of thing pleases the readers of 'The Agnostic Journal,' we have not much to say, except that we are sorry for them. We suppose it does, as they get plenty of it. It seems to us to be extremely vulgar; and the only effect it has upon us is to bias us in favour of going just the opposite way.

In another paragraph, 'The Agnostic Journal' says:—

It is clear that if Spiritualism have anything vital and virile in it, anything of the principle of modernity in thought and feeling, it will have to cut itself entirely adrift from the festering and putrescent corpse of Christianity, that subsidised abomination of the Dark Ages.

If we add that the whole of this mud torrent was simply caused by two lines lately printed by us ('May the blessing of the Father above, and the sure guidance of all good angels, be with them both!'), our friends will be able to judge how far we have anything to learn from 'The Agnostic Journal,' or how far that Journal merits our consideration or our respect.

## MANIFESTATIONS IN A PRIVATE CIRCLE.

REPORTED BY F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

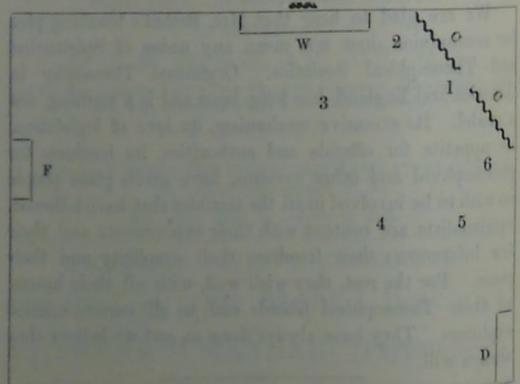
(Continued from page 80.)

Our next meeting was held at Mr. T.'s house in Hampstead on the first day of this year. The meeting was arranged in order to give our friends Mr. and Mrs. A., of Sheffield, a chance of holding converse once more with our band of unseen workers. It was on the occasion of their previous visit about a year ago that the same five of us were first favoured with the feature of materialised presences. Consequently we were very sanguine of a similar favour on this occasion and we were not disappointed.

Mrs. T.'s little daughter Rosie pleaded so hard for admission to the circle that she was allowed to join us, and the six of us sat in the usual upper room, a pair of light curtains about nine feet high having been permanently suspended across one corner to form a cabinet—or, as I would prefer to call it, a shrine.

At first we sat round a table, in the light of a lamp turned low; after a short while we sat some distance from it with all hands removed in the expectation that 'Alexander,' who seemed from his raps and tilts to be in force, would show our friends how he could raise the table under these conditions. But after waiting some minutes without any result Mrs. A., and I rested each one hand on the table while a general conversation was going on, and suddenly the table gave a vigorous jump upwards. After this a force seemed to be forming in the cabinet, for a low empty chair in front of it was three times quickly drawn backwards towards the curtains. We were now told to form a horseshoe circle in front of them, as materialisations were going to be attempted.

The position of things may be represented by the following diagram:—



- 1—Mrs. T.'s position between curtains—visible to the rest of us.
  - 2—Position occupied by me—afterwards by Mrs. A. and Rosie.
  - 3—Mrs. A.'s first position.
  - 4—Rosie's do.
  - 5—Mr. A.'s do.
  - 6—Position first occupied by Mr. T.—afterwards by Mr. A.
- W—Window—diffused light through blind—no curtains drawn.  
 CC—Curtains across corner of room.  
 D—Doorway.  
 F—Fireplace—bright fire.

We turned out the lamp and sat the rest of the evening in dim light, in which we could just distinguish one another. While we were waiting Mrs. T. was controlled by a deceased medical friend of hers, and magnetised the head of Mr. T., in order to relieve him of a headache, which Mr. T. declared was completely removed by the process.

When we were afterwards singing, 'Clare' controlled Mrs. T. and joined in the hymn, at the end of which she whispered in the direct voice to me to place my hand behind

the curtain at the opening by the wall on my side, and I found a lily of the valley leaf and flower placed in it, and soon afterwards a number of additional lilies were flung out for the rest. There were none of these flowers in the house at the time. While we sang, once more my hand, remaining behind the curtain, was fondled by 'Clare,' and a soft, gauzy, scented, white drapery was flung over my head and seen by the others on my side of the room. Then Mrs. T. felt 'Clare,' who also passed over to the other side and touched Mr. T. with her fingers and her drapery. As her power increased her voice also gained strength and *timbre*, and in a direct voice, loud but sweet, and with a mannerism of utterance noticeably distinct from that of Mrs. T., she said that if Mrs. A. and Mr. A. would change places with me and Mr. T. she would touch them. This was done, and Rosie also had her turn; and then Mr. T. and I resumed our chairs. All this while Mrs. T. was in full consciousness, but she kept exclaiming that she felt 'all hollow'; and another thing she noticed was that whenever 'Clare's' fingers touched anyone, she distinctly felt a pricking sensation in her body, very similar to her experiences when she had been placed once on an insulating stool and charged with electricity, and persons had touched her to make sparks come from her.

After this some beautiful spirit lights were seen behind the curtains, which were of a diaphanous art muslin. They floated to the top of the curtains some nine feet above the ground, Mrs. T. all the while remaining seated. Then, while my sister 'Clare' was still touching my hand and talking to me, 'Nellie's' voice was suddenly heard by her father's side saying, 'I am here,' and both father and mother were in raptures to feel the touch of the vanished hand of their little daughter caressing them. Simultaneously 'Clare' was speaking to me on a private matter and, finally asking me to bend forward my head towards her, she flung her drapery round my neck and laid her palms on my head as if to bless me. All of us agreed that the touch of the fingers felt warm and lifelike; the whole air was also filled with a subtle, strange perfume.

After this the materialising influences began to change. A roll of paper, acting as a speaking-tube, was taken up and knocked against the wall, and we were told that our Indian influences were coming on the stage. The curtains began to blow out with the strong cold breeze that generally accompanies 'Akbar's' presence, and the tinkling clinks of the sower were heard inside the cabinet, answering to the point some dozen or so questions that I put him in Hindustani. As it was getting late we soon after this concluded, although the power was still apparently strong. Appended is the corroborating evidence of our visitors. I should like to add here that at our next meeting, when two different visitors were present, similar manifestations (as I shall describe next week) occurred, with the additional corroboration that two deceased friends of the strangers manifested, and, speaking in their direct and natural voices, gave tests of their identity, and spoke at some length on private confidential matters known neither to Mr. and Mrs. T. nor to myself.

(To be continued.)

The following is the corroboration of the two visitors to our circle:—

'It is with every satisfaction we endorse the above statement of facts. The conditions under which we witnessed the manifestation precluded any possibility of deception. There are some statements which we should like to add about details which you are probably unaware we observed, as we have subsequently had no opportunity for comparing notes.

'My wife says that once, when she was holding Mrs. T.'s hands and kneeling just in front of her, she felt at the same time the touches of "Clare's" hands, and soft drapery fall over her head and neck. I also noticed the presence of more than one visitant at the same time; for while I was talking with one whose direct voice I heard, I felt several touches on my hand and knees from another simultaneously, and also noticed a spirit light moving about at the same time.'

Sheffield.

W. A.  
E. A.

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

## 'WORK IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.'

By HENRY FORBES.—NEW YORK.

(Concluded from page 77.)

I conclude with the following interesting and graphic descriptions given through our medium:—

'We had been speaking a few moments when the medium told us that a man stood near, cursing and swearing awfully. Soon she saw that he was standing at the entrance to what appeared to be a low drinking resort. Looking in through the doorway, she saw that the place was of considerable size and pretentiousness, being gaudily decorated and illuminated by arches of gas jets. It was filled with tables, at which sat a number of men and women carousing. One woman sitting near the door was particularly conspicuous. She wore a black velvet garment, the skirt short, the waist cut low in the neck, and with short sleeves. Her feet were resting on the table in front of her.

'So engrossed in their amusements were the people that they seemed to pay little heed to what we said; and the man at the entrance interrupted us by calling out: "Why do you come here and talk to us in that way—we don't want to hear any of your 'goody-goody' stuff." We answered that the duty devolved on us to deliver the message from the Higher Life, that there was a chance for them to reach a purer and better state than their present one. "Why, we don't want to go to any other place," he responded; "we're having a grand time."

'While we were holding this conversation the medium saw the "proprietor" of the place, his face flushed and swollen with anger, rush through the aisle from the rear to the doorway. Standing there, he ordered us away in a loud and angry voice: "These people don't wish to be bothered with that talk. Get out of here!"

'Another man now spoke up, addressing himself to the proprietor, "Now, John," he said, "let the man have his say. He's not going to hurt anybody—and we wish to hear him."

'"Friends," we called out in a determined voice, "the eyes of Heaven are upon you. The Higher Powers have decided that you shall no longer remain in this condition; and it behoves you to prepare to depart." Suddenly the structure began to totter. The proprietor, who had been interrupting our remarks with contemptuous sneers and frightful oaths, instantly sank out of sight, and the people were rushing about in great panic.

'Then the lights went out, the walls collapsed and crumbled away, and the wretched creatures found themselves floundering in a mass of slimy black ooze. In abject terror they shrieked for help as they were swept along by the swift current of the filthy stream until they reached a dark cavern. There they found a foothold, and there we were informed they would remain while the spark of divinity within them was being kindled into sufficient activity to afford them the light and strength to reach a higher and brighter state.

'Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigour of law: it is thus Nature is made!'

'In the course of our address we spoke of the angels labouring to reach all who were in need of their aid. Suddenly the medium was controlled by a little boy, who in a loud voice spoke out: "Angels! We have been waiting a long time for the angels to come, but haven't seen them yet." In answer to a question, he told us an angel was "somebody dressed all in white, with wings. That's the way they look in picture books."

'We had a long conversation with this little fellow. He was remarkably intelligent, but very boisterous. One of the circle suggested that if he did some kind act to one of his companions he would be an angel himself. This seemed to amuse him exceedingly. "I'm no angel," he laughingly exclaimed. "I'm only little Jimmy. I haven't got any wings—only these old ragged clothes!"

'He told us his mamma and papa were with him, and "lots of others, too." The medium could now see his parents. They were very wretched, and seemed utterly hopeless. Life on earth had been a failure, but they had expected that the next state would be a brighter one—expected the Lord to meet them upon their arrival. When, however, their expectations had not been realised, they abandoned all hope and sank into the deadly despair which was their present condition. We informed them that their very despondency was in itself a great barrier to the messengers of the Master, who were striving all the time to reach them, and that even now those who would lead them out of their plight were close at hand.

'As we spoke, little Jimmy cried out: "Mamma, mamma, look at all the ladies dressed in white coming down towards us. Why, they are angels. Can't you see them?" The little fellow was in great excitement. He said the angels were holding out their arms to him; but he said he would not go unless the others went also, and he continued to ask them if they could not see the angels. Like a little captain, he began

to marshal the crowd together. His parents were willing to follow him, but the others were so indifferent that he found it difficult to inspire them with sufficient interest to make a start; nor, indeed, did they have enough energy to resist the child's enthusiasm. As he laboured with them, one of the spirit workers remarked, "And a little child shall lead them."

I am convinced that this work of spirit liberation and upliftment by means of earthly instruments is destined to come into much greater prominence in the near future as part of the mission of Modern Spiritualism, while there are numerous facts indicating that it always has been an important office of mediumship, even when possessors of that mysterious gift or quality may not at all have suspected such to be the case. When mediums and investigators realise that this is so, very much that now appears vague or incongruous will become clear and plain.

Though Swedenborg may have only dimly understood it, there is no doubt that his wonderful psychic powers were made to do great service in this spiritual work. William White, his biographer, states that 'Shearsmith (at whose house Swedenborg lodged while in London) was frightened by Swedenborg's solitary talks. Sometimes he would stand with his back to the door of his room, and hold forth as if in discussion. As he did not speak in English, Shearsmith could not make out what was going on.' And his friend Ferelius relates that 'On one occasion when I visited him I heard him, as I was ascending the stair, speaking with great energy as if addressing a considerable company. I asked the servant that was sitting in the ante-chamber, who was with the Assessor; she replied that no one was with him, and that he had been talking in this manner for three days and nights. He greeted me very tranquilly as I entered, and requested me to be seated. He told me he had been tempted and plagued for ten days by evil spirits sent by the Lord, and had never been afflicted by such wicked ones before; but now he was again favoured with the company of good spirits.'

May not the Swedish medium have been mistaken in the belief that his spirit visitants had been sent to plague him? Is it not more probable that they were drawn to him by heavenly workers, to be roused from their spiritual torpor by means of his powerful magnetism, or that the light of heavenly love and wisdom might be reflected upon their consciousness through his instrumentality? We have been told that many spirits are unable to make any progress until they have been 'touched by the magnetism of earth.'

The 'Astral Plane,' the outgrowth of morbid spiritual conditions and unnatural death, is an abnormality—a huge fungus clinging to the vitals of the 'Grand Man'; and, until it is sloughed off, man's spiritual evolution will be slow and uncertain. Throughout the ages, the Higher Powers have been engaged in checking its extension, but they have been greatly hindered in their labours not only by the constant influx of morbid and undeveloped spirits from earth, but also because the work required the use of the forces of material man, and necessitated a conscious contact of the abnormal spirit states with earth life.

Not until the present time has mortal man been possessed of sufficient spiritual strength and enlightenment to perform his full share of the work, though the pages of history clearly show that he many times has been enlisted in the service, very likely without his knowledge, and certainly only so far as the welfare of both mortals and spirits permitted the wise operators to proceed.

The past half-century, however, has developed an army of workers capable to do their part in the spiritual task, and the signs indicate that they will be conscripted for service in the Holy War. Armed with reverence, intelligence, and power of will they need have no fear—but these are essential parts of their equipment.

#### A FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath unto the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_, to be applied to the purposes of that Society; and I direct that the said sum shall be paid free from Legacy Duty, out of such part of my personal estate as may legally be devoted by will to charitable purposes, and in preference to other legacies and bequests thereout.

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

#### ANOTHER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

(BY 'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT.')

Early in November last one of the family informed me that she was suffering under an irritating and obstinate local affection. Our ordinary medical attendant was at once sent for, and prescribed certain remedies and applications. These have been taken internally, and applied externally, but with no effect, for I have lately been informed by the patient, who had gone to the country for a month for change of air, that the malady is, if anything, getting worse, while certain of the medicines have weakened her strength greatly. In view of former satisfactory experiences of a similar kind, I accordingly have just consulted a writing medium, who, I may here state, is a 'friend' and not a 'professional,' and who is at intervals controlled by a spiritual personage who states that he was at one time a medical practitioner in Lancashire. Last night (February 5th) I told this writing medium that I wished this medical control to aid in restoring the aforesaid member of the household to health, and in reply was told that the 'Doctor' would be consulted on the earliest opportunity. To-night (February 6th) my friend the medium brought me three messages, all automatically written in the same peculiar caligraphy as were former ones emanating from the same control, and which are certainly not in the handwriting of the medium, with which I am quite familiar. One of these messages was addressed to the relative whose severe and apparently hopeless cerebral illness was detailed in a recent article, and it congratulated the patient on complete recovery; while the second and third messages were addressed to the one on whose behalf I had, on the day preceding, solicited the assistance of this former Lancashire practitioner. Number two of these productions was in the form of a letter extending to four pages of notepaper, giving most minute and careful directions as to the cooking and preparation of certain vegetable foods to be used, and also what to eat, drink, and avoid. The remaining document (of which I enclose a copy) was a prescripton of certain medicines and applications also to be used in treatment of the disease from which the patient is suffering. The ingredients and combinations are (to me), with my limited medical knowledge, so unusual and extraordinary that I cannot go to the local druggist from whom our medicines are usually purchased. Fortunately, we number among our acquaintances a chemist who is also a Spiritualist, and to whom I have, on more than one occasion before, found it necessary to apply to get prescriptions emanating from the same spiritual personage, prepared and compounded (just because I could not disclose the 'author' of the prescription to an ordinary vendor of drugs); and as I have the fullest confidence in the medical skill of this former Lancashire medical doctor—even though it comes to me through the hand of a medium—I shall to-morrow (February 7th) get the prescription made up and forwarded to the patient in the country. The results, be they good or the reverse, will be duly sent you later on. As regards the prescription, a copy of which, as I have mentioned, has been sent to the Editor of 'LIGHT,' one can only say that it contains medicines and combinations we never heard of before, while the medium, to my certain knowledge, has not the slightest acquaintance with the pharmacopœia, or, indeed, with 'remedial agents' of any kind. The Editor of 'LIGHT' is at liberty to show the prescription to anyone interested in psychic phenomena, and I may add that I have had at least twenty of such prescriptions, all in the same caligraphy; all purporting to come from the same personage, and all of which have hitherto proved completely successful in curing diseases of various kinds.

Of course, an experience of this kind would never satisfy such men as Mr. Fedmore, who would simply say that the medium evolved it out of the 'subliminal' or other consciousness. To all such persons I can only reply that the medium did not and could not 'evolve' prescriptions at various intervals extending over seven years for at least twenty different diseases, and could not and did not when in a normal condition write the same extraordinary caligraphy, so different and distinctive from that ordinarily in use. In short, my evidence is cumulative and uniform, and goes to show, by the internal details, that the mind of a medical expert has

been applied to the various problems submitted, and that the terminology and whole course of prescriptions throughout, extending as I have said over a period of years, have been from an intelligent spirit operator 'on the other side' using the human hand of a sensitive on 'this side' to give us the benefit of his high medical skill and beneficent advice.

In conclusion, I may be permitted to say that the only way in which we Spiritualists can meet the theories and doubts of sceptics, the sneers of scoffers, and the denials of persons who will not investigate psychic phenomena in a proper spirit, is to give them plain facts without theories, and in due season we may be able to drive the conviction home that after all there 'is something' in Spiritualism. To that end this contribution is now sent.

P.S.—Since this article was written, and while revising it for the press, I may add that, at my request, the chemist above referred to made up the spirit doctor's prescription, at the same time telling me that if he had not been a Spiritualist he would not have done so. The medicines and applications were thereafter despatched to the country, and my latest information is that the patient is slowly but surely recovering from her trouble.

### SPIRITUALISM IN BRITTANY.

I am inclined to think that such a work as Mrs. Whitehead's 'Dealings with the Dead' deserves a fuller notice than it has yet received from a paper like 'LIGHT,' which professes to deal with Spiritualism in all its branches. I believe that it has received more attention from the Catholics and the Catholic Press. In fact, it cannot fail to prove interesting to any class, religious or non-religious.

We talk much, and not always very wisely, of the Fox sisters and the 'advent of Modern Spiritualism.' At the date of the Rochester knockings there was already a robust Spiritualism within a few hours' steam of Southampton and Plymouth. It is there now, although we ignore it completely, and it existed when the Britons, Bretons, Bright men, embarked at Plymouth and Southampton to escape from Hengist and Horsa and the invading Saxons.

It is one of the great interests in a visit to Brittany to find that the chief saints who stand up in stone niches at the doors of the unrivalled Gothic Cathedrals are Britons, not Bretons. Like St. Pol de Léon they have come from this side of the Channel. Léon is the 'Lyonnesse,' of Tennyson. Years and years before Hengist and Horsa the Bright men sacrificed to the dead. On the evening of modern *Toussaint*, the night before the Day of the Dead, the 'ghosts come to visit the living,' says M. le Braz, the French author translated by Mrs. Whitehead:—

'The housewife places a white cloth on the kitchen table and on this puts cider and hot pancakes and curds and whey. After these preparations everybody goes to bed. An enormous log of wood blazes on the hearth. It is called the "log of the dead." About nine o'clock there is heard outside a doleful chant. This comes from the "Choristers of the Dead," who march about like our Christmas waits, but more solemn sounds often occur. The crisp leaves on the pathways crackle, being trod on by unearthly visitants.

'These pass the night which precedes their festival in warming themselves and banqueting in their old habitations. The folks in bed hear the stools moved about, and the next morning it is discovered that the plates are in different places. The dead go with the living to the Mass in the parish church which is celebrated in their honour (p. 13).'

This Mass for the Dead on All Souls' Day is a curious institution. The book of M. le Braz, '*La Légende de la Mort en Basse Bretagne*,' contains a collection of stories gleaned at first hand. M. le Braz went about getting matter from farm-maids, from old sailors, from small tradesmen, and writing down these stories as much as possible in the words of the narrator. In fact, his mode of proceeding resembled that of 'Miss X.' when investigating second sight in Scotland. A story by Marie Hostion, of Quimper, may be here cited:—

'One year when my father was going to the "Mass for the Dead," someone shouted to him from behind,

"Hé Iouenn, wait for me!"

'He turned round and saw nobody. But he distinctly recognised the voice of his mother who had died a year before.'—('Légende de la Mort,' p. 287.)

Another curious rite is the *Tantol*, which takes place on the eve of the Festival of St. John. A blazing log is allowed to burn out, and then pebbles, each marked with the name of a dead person, are thrown in it. The ghosts with this ticket can then rush in and warm themselves.

What is the object of these ghostly appearances? Chiefly religious! The ghost desires to have a Mass said in a certain church; or it announces that nothing can secure its happiness except a pilgrimage to a certain holy shrine. Or it wants some special rite performed which ought to have been performed before death.

At first sight ghosts in Brittany seem subjective, a mere shadowy reflex of the Roman Catholic religion, breviaries and catechisms furnished with legs and arms. But a closer study shows that ghosts control the religion quite as much as religion controls the ghosts. The appearing ghosts belong to a group of spirits called *Anaon*. This word is translated sometimes 'Spirits in purgatory.' But the *Anaon* know nothing of Hamlet's 'sulphurous and tormenting flames.' They know also nothing of locks and bolts. They seem able to move about at all hours of the day and night. Their punishment is mental. In point of fact, they differ little from the earth bound spirits of the Spiritualists.

Many other details of the old paganism still survive; holy springs, holy places, cromlechs and menhirs that shelter 'little folks,' and are sometimes, I believe, still used for services. At any rate, if you sleep near some of these menhirs you may be cured of a fever. The priests also control the ghosts and demons with 'L'Agrippe,' a ritual of Cornelius Agrippa.

This world-wide ancestor worship, this perpetual antagonism of ghosts and theorists, is very remarkable. One theorist, a man in a cope, tells me that my grandfather is in purgatory. A second theorist, a man in a limp, white tie, tells me that he is shut up in his coffin until the millennium. A third theorist, a lady dressed in white muslin, tells me that by the action of Karma he was reborn five days ago, and that mother and child are both doing well. Then there is a prison called 'hell' for the spirits, and another prison called 'heaven,' and a third prison called 'Devachan,' but the ghosts in Brittany, in Piccadilly, in Tibet, in Benares ignore these prisons and walk about, and the inhabitants of these places believe that they walk about. A friend of mine was employed in the Archaeological Department in India, and his duties took him to Lashkar, the ancient capital of the Scindiahs. There he saw in splendid *chattras* statues of the three last rulers. These were fed every day at the proper dining hour in the East, and they had beautiful silver-mounted 'hookahs' presented to them after the repast. Dancing girls gracefully rattled their bangles before them.

Mr. Quiller Couch in the 'Pall Mall Magazine' for October gives an amusing little sketch of the way the poor Cornishmen (the first cousins of the Bretons) were bullied by the English. Their language (the *Galic* of Brittany and the Highlands) was forbidden in the churches. 'All images found in churches for Divine Worship or otherwise should be pulled down and cast forth out of their churches; and that all preachers should persuade the people from praying to saints or for the dead, or from the use of beads, ashes, processions, Masses, dirges and praying publicly in an unknown tongue.' This 'Injunction' was issued in the reign of Edward VI. 'Dirges' and 'prayers for the dead' have been weaknesses of the ancient Bretons, and ancient Britons, for a long time.

ARTHUR LILLIE.

### LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall (entrance from Piccadilly), at 7 for 7.30, on the evening of Friday, March 4th, when

MR. J. J. MORSE

Will deliver a Lecture entitled

'MODERN SPIRITUALISM: THE STORY OF ITS ORIGIN, GROWTH, WORK, AND WORKERS.'

Illustrated by One Hundred and Thirty specially-prepared Views, shown by the aid of a powerful Oxy-Hydrogen Light.

Tickets will be forwarded to all Members and Associates, and admission will be by *Tickets only*.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,  
LONDON, W.C.  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19th, 1898.

## Light,

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.' 'LIGHT' may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

### THE SOUL OF NATURE.

'The Christian World,' once loved by Spurgeon as a trusty representative of Evangelical Dissent, is now—with a vast circulation—as keen a critic and as clean a rationalist as anyone could desire. We suppose we may, and we entirely believe we may, take it as a sign of the times, and infer that 'Evangelical Dissent' is transformed. We believe it really is.

But the 'sweet reasonableness' of 'The Christian World' is not its only altered characteristic. It can occasionally be very hopefully spiritualistic. Only occasionally, but this also tends to become an altered characteristic, and another sign of the times. We detect this, as often as anywhere, in the rather over subtle but always charming papers of 'J. B.,' whose meditations or spiritual homilies never fail to open some fruitful path for thought. This was signally the case on February 3rd in his Paper on 'Deposits from the Unseen,' which presents, in a somewhat elementary but eminently suggestive form, the main testimony with which our readers have long been familiar. The special interest of this Paper to us is, we must confess, its appearance in the place of honour in the most popular organ of English Nonconformity.

What is our testimony? The opening words of this Paper put at least the first half of it in two lines: and the second half of it is stated in its closing words. Put in our way, we should say:—The real man is not a body but a spirit; and the real man even now exists in two worlds which interblend,—the unseen and the seen. In this present visible world, he is forming character and determining a path, which will begin with him in the unseen as they left off here. All is orderly, natural, progressive.

That is how we should put it. Here then are 'J. B.'s' opening words:—'That we stand in the midst of two worlds, the visible and the invisible, is, with varying degrees of intensity, recognised by every one.' And here are the closing words:—'The future state, according to all the analogies of the spiritual life, as we find them in the Scriptures and in experience, will be a projection, on a vaster scale, of the law which works around us now and which we have been trying here to illustrate, namely, that the inner creates the outer, that, to repeat once more our formula, environment is "a deposit of the unseen."'

The inference is neither denied nor ignored: it is, on the contrary, recognised and affirmed, in the following very explicit sentences:—

That character creates environment; that the spirit's clothing in a future state will have been woven for it by its thought and deed in this, seems, indeed, the result to which all the facts of the case lead us.

We have here, in fact, the doctrine of heaven and hell, towards which the most earnest thinkers of both East and West have instinctively gravitated. The outward state represented by these terms, men of all creeds are beginning to feel, must be a creation of the inward character; in other words, is a deposit from the invisible. The place fits the state.

Shall we pause, is there any need to pause, to point out the consequences of that? It simply dismisses, with silent contempt, the whole of the Evangelical scheme of Eschatology or The Doctrine of The Last Things. But, in truth, we are already quite used to 'The Christian World's' righteous scorn for the old Evangelical Heaven and Hell, especially its Hell. And yet, if 'The Christian World's' clients will consider that, and follow it out to the logical, to the inevitable, consequence, there will be many surprising results.

But now, as to this doctrine 'that we stand in the midst of two worlds, the visible and the invisible,' we feel inclined to ask even as palpably sincere a believer as 'J. B.' whether he really means it. Is Fleet-street, for instance, in two worlds, the visible and the invisible? or 110, St. Martin's-lane, or are 'The Cavendish Rooms,' or the rooms in ten thousand homes where people say signals come from the unseen? If the spirit-world is all about us, and about us all, why should it be thought wrong to prove it, or monstrous to say it has been proved? 'J. B.' merely asserts the reality of the invisible world around us, and plenty of other people assert it, and some who assert it have never followed it up and drawn the great inevitable inference. Would it not be an enormous advantage if we could prove as well as assert—or even only try to prove?

Besides, if this invisible and most real world is all about us, like a vast ocean in which we live and move and have our being, is it possible to avoid the inference that that world is unceasingly affecting ours? But if it is affecting ours, for good or evil, or for both, would it not be well for us, is it not even an extremely urgent desirability, that we should know something about it, to help it, to be helped by it, or to guard ourselves against it? If this conclusion is not drawn, we are convinced that it is not drawn only because the belief in that unseen world is still unripe and crude. And, though this Paper is most suggestive and useful, there are signs that the writer's belief, however sincere, is only unripe and crude. The very title of the Paper suggests that. Things of the earth are not 'deposits from the unseen' in the sense which the writer never once forsakes. He uses the phrase 'secretion from the invisible' and even writes of 'the whole material universe' as 'a mass of petrified thoughts.' What, after all, is it but this? he asks. But we somehow shrink from 'secretion' and 'deposits' and petrifications. The vital connection between sense and soul, matter and spirit, is nearer and finer than that. Even Pope came nearer to the exquisite truth in that still marvellous line:

Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

The failure to grasp this is manifest again in 'J. B.'s' curious explanation of our delight in the Highlands or the Lake country. The one, we are told, is alive and beautiful for us because of Scott; the other because of Wordsworth. 'Here again,' he says, 'what we converse with is not so much the dead matter as the mind that is in it':—the mind, that is, of Scott and Wordsworth! But that is a very poor account indeed of the spiritual significance of beautiful scenery. We know the Highlands and the Lakes, and we hope we know our Scott and Wordsworth; but these writers account for only a millionth part of the magnitude of Nature's revelation and significance in the Highlands and the Lake country.

No: the revelation of Nature is the direct and living revelation of God the Spirit; and the unseen not only 'secreted' and 'deposits' petrifications which man has to vivify with spiritual beauty and significance, but it positively glows and breathes from the seen which it visibly energises and adorns with its own majestic and fascinating life. But we do not wish to be critical. We really started out with the sole desire to give one more illustration, and a rather special illustration, of the fact that our testimony is being repeated, in varying tones, on every hand.

THE CONVERSAZIONE  
OF THE  
LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.  
ADDRESS BY MRS. BESANT.

A Conversazione of the London Spiritualist Alliance was held in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, on Monday evening, 7th inst, when there was a large and brilliant gathering of Members, Associates and friends, the fact that Mrs. Besant had kindly promised to deliver an address on 'Theosophy and Spiritualism' being no doubt a feature of especial interest. Amongst those present were:—

- |                                  |                               |  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Mr. and Mrs. C. Angier           | Miss Fletcher                 | Miss Kate Philpott                     |
| Mr. and Miss Amos                | Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Godfrey    | Miss Pickersgill                       |
| Mr. Percy W. Ames                | Mr. and Mrs. A. Gay           | Miss Porter                            |
| Mr. T. H. Angerer                | Mrs. and Miss Graddon         | Mrs. Quelch                            |
| Mrs. Arnold                      | Mr. J. A. H. Gray             | Signor and Signora Della Rocca         |
| Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Browne        | Mrs. H. E. Gray               | Signorina Della Rocca                  |
| Mr. and Mrs. H. Brooks           | Mr. D. Gow                    | Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Rushton             |
| Dr. and Miss E. Bonus            | Mr. Lee Godler                | Mr. E. Dawson Rogers                   |
| Mr. T. Blyton                    | Mrs. Grace Goodall            | Mrs. Dawson Rogers                     |
| The Misses Blyton (3)            | Miss A. Godbold               | Mrs. and Miss Read                     |
| Mr. and Miss Bertram             | Miss Garnett                  | Mr. H. Rutherford                      |
| Mrs. and Miss Brinkley           | Mr. and Mrs. T. Heywood       | Mr. Frederick Rogers                   |
| Mrs. and Miss Athelstan Blaxland | Rev. and Mrs. J. Page         | Mr. George Rodway                      |
| Mr. A. T. Butcher                | Hopps                         | Mr. C. W. Ramsay                       |
| Mr. W. W. Baggally               | Mr. C. J. Harris              | Mr. A. Riles                           |
| Mr. F. Berkeley                  | Mr. Robert Hichens            | Mrs. G. W. Rowe                        |
| Mr. J. Bowkhill                  | Mr. W. Homewood               | Mrs. E. Reynolds                       |
| Mr. Blackman                     | Mr. Hummiltonberg             | Mrs. Rogers                            |
| Mr. L. Bristol                   | Mr. and Miss G. Hughes        | Miss Rutherford                        |
| Mr. J. Leith Bain                | Mrs. Jas. Horton              | Miss Rowan                             |
| Mr. A. Lloyd Burrell             | Mrs. Holmes                   | Dr. and Mrs. W. R. Washington Sullivan |
| The Hon. Mrs. Bevan              | Mrs. G. Hunt                  | Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Times         |
| Mrs. Vincent Bliss               | Miss Hibbs                    | Mr. E. and Miss M. Story               |
| Mrs. Bentall                     | Mr. Misses K. and T. Higford  | Mr. Leitore de Solla                   |
| Mrs. Brooksbank                  | Miss Harte                    | Mr. Fredk. W. South                    |
| Mrs. Blake                       | Mr. and Mrs. Jellia           | Mrs. and Miss Sanders                  |
| Mrs. E. Bird                     | Mr. Sterling Jones            | Mrs. and Miss Scatcherd                |
| Mr. Bonner                       | Mr. Harold Johnson            | Miss H. Sainsbury                      |
| Mrs. W. Barker                   | Mrs. James                    | Mrs. Stannard                          |
| Mrs. E. O. Butler                | Miss G. Judge                 | Mr. and Mrs. Southall                  |
| Mrs. E. Batho                    | The Misses Johnson            | Mrs. Sherrard                          |
| Mrs. Bressley                    | Miss Bessie Jones             | Mr. Swanton                            |
| Mrs. J. A. Butcher               | Mr. and Mrs. K. Kreuger       | Mr. Sharpe                             |
| Mrs. E. Bell                     | Mr. and Mrs. A. Pusey         | The Misses Shoults                     |
| Miss G. M. Burton                | Mr. and Mrs. C. Lacey         | Miss F. Samuel                         |
| Miss J. Maud Beckett             | Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Lock       | Miss Spilbury                          |
| Miss Amy Butterworth             | Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lucking    | Miss Smith                             |
| Miss Boatwright                  | Captain and Mrs. W. B. Lauder | Miss Sharp                             |
| Miss E. Bodenham                 | Miss Leslie                   | Miss Spencer                           |
| Sir J. J. Coghill, Bart.         | Miss Theresa Lete             | Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Theobald              |
| Col. Kendal Coghill, C.B.        | Mr. Bertram Knightley         | Mr. Bertram G. Theobald                |
| Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Cameron       | Mr. Harry Lucas               | Miss Minnie and Amy Theobald           |
| Mr. J. F. Collingwood            | Mr. Lowenthal                 | Miss F. J. Theobald                    |
| Miss Collingwood                 | Mr. and Mrs. L. Laurence      | Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Toledit             |
| Mr. and Miss Cooper              | Miss E. Levander              | Col. G. Le M. Taylor                   |
| Mr. Chad Cartisser               | Miss Lloyd                    | Mr. F. W. Thurstan, M.A.               |
| Miss Cartisser                   | Miss Lowe                     | Mr. R. Temple                          |
| Mrs. H. C. Collison              | Mrs. R. Low                   | Mrs. Townroe                           |
| Mr. H. Collison                  | Mr. Leonard                   | Miss Townsend                          |
| Mrs. E. and Miss Katie Corner    | Mrs. Kirk                     | Miss E. Tarpin                         |
| Dr. Ellen Colyer                 | Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Milas    | Miss E. E. Taylor                      |
| Mrs. Napier Campbell             | Mr. and Mrs. T. B. McCallum   | Miss Thom                              |
| Mrs. Chris. Wm. Curtis           | Mr. T. and Miss Matthews      | Miss Troutbeck                         |
| Mr. Carbery                      | Mr. J. J. Moras               | Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Vanderpump          |
| Mrs. Leuty Collins               | Mr. Ernest Meads              | Mr. J. J. Vango                        |
| Mrs. H. Damer Cape               | Mr. C. Mussett                | Mr. W. T. Vanner                       |
| Mrs. J. W. Cook                  | Dr. Marsh                     | Lady Vallentin                         |
| Miss Carter                      | Mr. J. A. P. Marshall         | Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Waite               |
| Dr. A. Colles                    | Mr. J. H. Mackay              | Mr. and Mrs. H. Withall                |
| M. A. Clarke                     | Mrs. Murray                   | Miss Withall                           |
| Mr. E. E. Crowe                  | Mrs. March                    | Miss H. Withall                        |
| Mr. Hy Carter                    | Mrs. Mingrave                 | Mr. Fred. Wigglesworth                 |
| Mr. and Mrs. Russell Davies      | Mrs. Martine                  | The Rev. David Wilson                  |
| Miss Russell Davies              | Miss Messenger                | Mr. T. Edgar Wilton                    |
| Rev. Dr. Maurice Davies          | Miss F. Minchin               | Mr. W. West                            |
| Dr. G. F. Darker                 | Miss L. E. Matthews           | Mr. W. Webb                            |
| Mr. E. Drayson                   | Miss MacCreadie               | Mr. H. F. White                        |
| Mr. E. Dottridge                 | Mr. J. F. Nisbet              | Mr. Willsher                           |
| Mrs. Denis                       | Mr. Obee                      | Mr. E. Westlake                        |
| Mrs. Doorne                      | Mrs. and Miss Orchard         | Mr. H. Wright                          |
| Mrs. Dawson                      | Mr. and Mrs. J. Pickering     | Mr. J. T. Whitaker                     |
| Mrs. Davies                      | Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Pole       | Mrs. E. W. Wells                       |
| Miss R. Darling                  | Mr. and Mrs. W. Beist-Picken  | Mrs. Wilshire                          |
| Miss H. S. A. Dallas             | Mr. G. Peddie                 | Mr. Walton                             |
| Miss Jessie Dalglish             | Mr. J. B. Parnall             | Miss E. Willson (New Zealand)          |
| Miss Dutton                      | Mr. Frank Pugh                | Miss Mack Wall                         |
| Mr. and Mrs. T. Everitt          | Mr. Peters                    | Miss Weeks                             |
| Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Edwards       | Mr. P. Peschey                | Miss Ward                              |
| Miss Lillian Edwards             | Mrs. and Miss Parsons         | Miss Wulffberg                         |
| Mr. Gilbert Elliot               | Mrs. Paulet                   | Miss Willson                           |
| Dr. and Mrs. D. M. Finlay        | Miss Parker Peels             | Miss E. M. Wilson                      |
| Mrs. and Mrs. W. S. Flint        | Miss Pritchard                | Mrs. Ambrogio Zaffaroni                |
| Mr. W. S. Faggason               |                               | Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Beist-Picken        |
| Mr. A. Fuller                    |                               | Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Beist-Picken        |
| Mrs. H. Vaughan-Friend           |                               | Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Beist-Picken        |
| The Hon. Mrs. Forbes             |                               | Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Beist-Picken        |
| Miss Faulkner                    |                               | Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Beist-Picken        |

The musical part of the proceedings was under the direction of Miss Minnie Theobald, and the following excellent programme of vocal and instrumental music was performed during the evening. Duet for violoncello and pianoforte: 'Stücke im Volkston' (Schumann), Miss Minnie Theobald (violoncello) and Miss Bessie Jones (piano); song: 'Good-bye' (Tosti), Mr. Sydney Mantering; song: 'When Twilight Comes' (Strelleski), Miss Bessie Jones; song: 'Come to Me'

(Wadhams), Mr. Sydney Mantering; duet for violoncello and piano: 'Minuet' (Becker), Miss Minnie Theobald and Mr. B. G. Theobald; song: 'My Sweetheart's Love is Mine' (Aylward), Miss Bessie Jones; song: 'The Green Isle of Erin' (Roedel), Mr. Sydney Mantering; violoncello solo: 'Morceau de Concert' (Servas), Miss Minnie Theobald; song: 'As Once in May' (Lassen), Mr. Sydney Mantering; song: 'Quando a te lieta' (Gounod), Miss Bessie Jones (with violoncello obligato by Miss Minnie Theobald). The grand piano used on the occasion had been kindly lent by Messrs. Brinsmead.

At eight o'clock Mrs. BESANT ascended the platform for the purpose of giving the address of the evening, Mr. E. DAWSON ROGERS, the President of the Alliance, occupying the chair.

THE PRESIDENT, in the course of some preliminary remarks, said: I have much pleasure in introducing to you this evening our distinguished visitor, whom you all know, most of you by sight, and many, perhaps, by hearing. It would ill become me in her presence to occupy the time which I am sure you would rather be devoted to her address; but there are one or two things I should like to say, if you will permit me. In the first place, Mrs. Besant is here at the invitation of the London Spiritualist Alliance. I know that many people are surprised that the London Spiritualist Alliance should invite the prophetess of the Theosophical body to address them, but, as a matter of fact, those who know us best know that we have invariably, as far as possible, invited the presence and help of those who to some extent differ from us, for the simple reason that we can learn more from those who differ from us than from those who say 'yes' to everything we ourselves believe. When Mrs. Besant was invited to address us she was told that she could take any subject she chose and say what she chose. That is fair play, I think, and Mrs. Besant has chosen the subject of 'Theosophy and Spiritualism.' I hope the time will come when she will turn the words about and say 'Spiritualism and Theosophy.' I sometimes hear the remark made that Mrs. Besant has changed her opinions so much. Well, I would not give a pin for a man who does not change his opinions. A man who never alters is very much in danger of standing still—certainly he makes no progress. Therefore we cannot blame people who change their opinions, provided always they change them in the right direction. Mrs. Besant will, I hope, to-night remove a little of the unpleasantness that in the past has existed between Theosophists and Spiritualists. We have sometimes felt that the Theosophists have been in the habit of rather patronising us or attempting to do so, and of treating our views with a little supercilious scorn. Now, the Theosophists may have misunderstood us; or we may have misunderstood the Theosophists; or, as is quite possible, the misunderstandings may have been mutual. In any case, I fancy that, in taking the subject she has chosen, Mrs. Besant may have in her mind some attempt to make a bridge between the two bodies. Here we have a common foe—Materialism—and it is a great pity that the powers of the two bodies should not be united in attacking the common enemy. We are supposed, no doubt, to be armed with different weapons; but it does not follow, on that account, that we should not attack the same foe together. I think the time is coming when an attempt should be made to see if it is not possible to co-operate. With all due deference to the Society for Psychological Research, I leave them out of the reckoning; for, although some of the members are my cordial friends, that society seems to be like a house divided against itself. You have in the Psychological Research Society an honest attempt on the part of some to get at the truth, and on the part of others, as it seems to me, a resolute determination to resist the truth at all hazards. If, however, Mrs. Besant can throw over a sort of bridge between the Spiritualists and the Theosophists some good will have been accomplished. Of course we cannot expect Theosophists to come all the way over the bridge to our side any more than we can expect Spiritualists to go all the way over to the position of our Theosophist friends. But surely it is not beyond all possibility that we should be able to meet safely on the middle of the bridge, and confer together and see if something cannot be done to unite our forces. I will now ask you to give Mrs. Besant not only a patient but also a sympathetic hearing. (Applause.)

## MRS. BESANT'S ADDRESS.

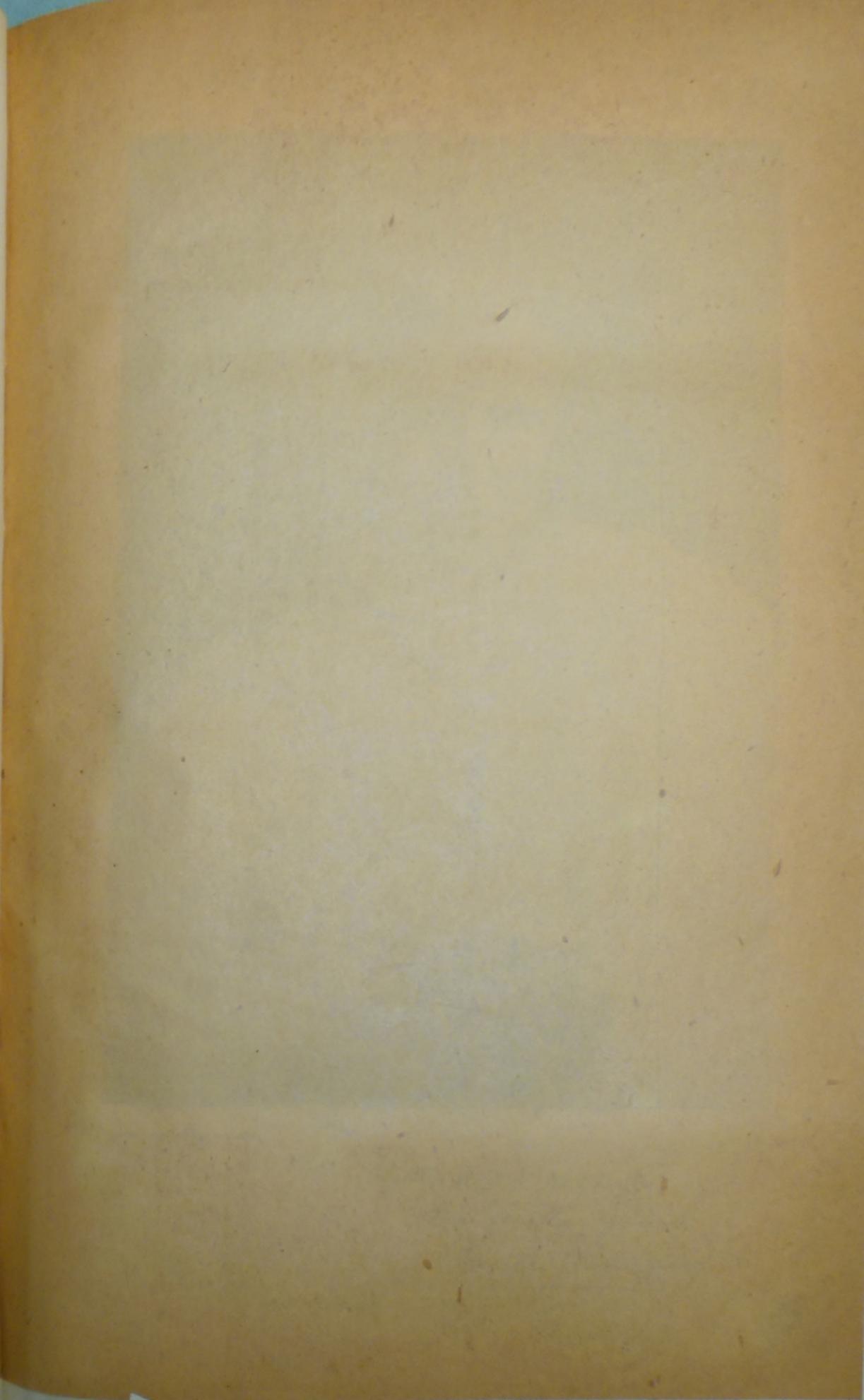
MRS. BESANT, who, on rising, was received with applause, then addressed the assembly as follows:—

Mr. Chairman and friends (if you will allow me so to address you): I came here in answer to the invitation of the Council of the London Spiritualist Alliance, because for some years past I have been doing what little I could to draw the two bodies—which for the moment I will say are respectively represented by your President and by myself—I have been trying to draw these two bodies together, by promoting a mutual understanding. I feel very strongly that much of the difficulty that has arisen between us in the past has arisen from lack of that understanding; that hasty words said by people on both sides have rendered any kind of co-operation difficult; and that there has been a certain amount of bad feeling which is thoroughly regrettable, and the more regrettable because we are in a considerable minority, and have, as your President has very rightly said, a common enemy in materialism. Now, it seemed to me possible that in coming amongst you to-night, I might put before you fairly and frankly what it appears to me we have in common, and also those points upon which we are at issue, and that in doing this—so far as the speaker is concerned, in a friendly spirit—we might promote a better and a friendlier feeling in the future. And I may say that this is not a momentary feeling on my part. If you will look back over many volumes now of the magazine which, with Mr. Mead, I edit, you will not find a single harsh word in connection with the Spiritualistic movement. In America, I found this had been thoroughly recognised, and while I was busy there on a Theosophical tour I received an invitation from one of the great Spiritualistic Camp Meetings, asking me to go and address the assembled Spiritualists on the subject of Theosophy. I did so, delivering two lectures, and entering into friendly relations with Spiritualists gathered from all parts of the United States, and I said—as I have said elsewhere—that having, as we have, so much in common, we ought at least to show friendliness towards the movements which severally we represent, and that while it is true (and I do not want to cloak the fact) that there are differences between us on certain important points, I venture to say that, so far as the instructed Theosophist, and the instructed Spiritualist likewise are concerned, we have a great deal more in common than we have of disagreement amongst us. (Applause.) I put in that word 'instructed' of set purpose, because you find exaggeration amongst the uninstructed of both camps, and it is unlikely, therefore, that any sort of attempt will be made to draw the two movements together unless that attempt begins amongst the most earnest students of both movements. It is they who, in the Theosophical movement, best know the large amount of truth put forward by the Spiritualists; it is the instructed Spiritualist, on the other hand, the careful student, who knows most thoroughly the dangers connected with his particular line of study. I have noticed in the journals that represent your movement that these dangers have been more and more definitely recognised, and I see, as I cannot help recognising with pleasure, that those prominent amongst you are laying more and more stress upon the care which is necessary when dealing with both sensitives and circles if results of a satisfactory kind are to be obtained, if teachings of a spiritual character are to be obtained, by those methods. This being so, while you may not agree with me in the comments and suggestions I may make, I yet feel that, so far at least as many of you are concerned, there will be nothing in the nature of bitter opposition; and what I earnestly desire is this—that we should be friends, discussing in a friendly spirit the differences that are between us, not antagonists and rivals, trying always to take each other at our worst, instead of at our best, as it is our duty to do.

I will first take certain points on which it seems to me are sufficiently at one to use them to draw us together. I will begin with one that, perhaps, some of you may not think will draw us together. It is a point on which differences exist; but it is a point on which the Theosophist feels that in believing that what I am going to say is true of Spiritualism he is paying it a sufficiently high compliment. It must not be looked upon as a difference that would cause antago-

nism, but a difference that would act as an attraction towards your body. I mean the question as to the forces that lie behind both our movements.

I regard the two movements as part of the same attempt to urge the world to oppose materialism and to turn the thoughts of men in the direction of spirituality. That is, I regard them both as proceeding from those who are harmoniously co-operating for the spiritual elevation and progress of mankind. Where the difference arises is this: that I believe that both movements proceed from highly developed men living in the physical environment, but able to pass and will into the invisible world in constant touch and communication with others who at the time are out of the body. We regard the physical body as an exceedingly unimportant factor, and consider that that with which we have to deal is the spirit and the soul in man, whether in or out of the body, inasmuch as we consider that the spirit and the soul are the agents that are at work in all movements for the elevation of humanity. We do not lay so much stress, as it seems to me you often do, on the exceeding importance that those who are helping on the movement should at the time be out of the body. To us that is a matter of indifference. We do not care whether in our communications we are dealing with souls that are in or out of the body at the moment. We do not consider that a matter of importance; but we do consider that there are a number of highly-evolved souls, some of which have reached the goal of human perfection, who at the present time are living in the physical body, finding that in many ways the use of the physical body comes in as an extra instrument for service in that which they are trying to do for humanity. Now with regard to the Spiritualistic movement, we regard it, on evidence that we consider satisfactory, to have been started by a Lodge of Adepts—using the word that we generally use—or occultists of high rank, men living in the body, but whose souls are evolved far, far beyond the present stage of human evolution; that they were the first lodge of occultists, which during the present century made a distinct attempt towards what we may call a public movement in favour of a more spiritual view of life; that they adopted, in order to make this movement effective, a line which for the moment I will speak of as a line of exceptional manifestations, utilising souls that had passed through death to co-operate with them in their efforts, in order to give to the world the full assurance that death did not end the life of man, but that man having passed through death was unchanged by the passing, save in so far as the loss of the physical body was concerned; that while in the early beginnings of the movement immense stress was laid on the manifestations of various kinds that occurred, the intention of these teachers was more and more, as the people became educated into a belief in the immortality of man, to give a higher and deeper philosophy to those who were willing to study it. I am now reaching a point where probably we shall come to a matter of possible friction. We consider that the Spiritualistic movement turned too thoroughly along the line of phenomena, and did not sufficiently concern itself with the philosophical side of life; that to a large extent on that point it failed to meet the hopes of its teachers, and the beginning of the philosophy which we see being given in the early days tended to be swamped with a mass of phenomena which poured forth in every direction—phenomena which would have been inestimably useful as a question of evidence and were useful both then and now, but which were very, very much overdone, an immense amount of time being wasted in continual repetition of many phenomena that were practically useless, so that the movement was blocked by the very means which were intended to forward its higher progress. Further we consider that this result was largely brought about by the lack—probably the inevitable lack—of discipline within the ranks of students themselves; that it was not understood that for the higher manifestations very strict conditions were necessary, and that it was only where such conditions were provided (as in the case of the late Mr. Stainton Moses) that it was possible for instruction of a highly philosophical character to be given by means of sensitives. That is a point to which I wish to return a little later; and I just put it to you at the moment, as a matter of serious importance in connection with the nature of the communications received.

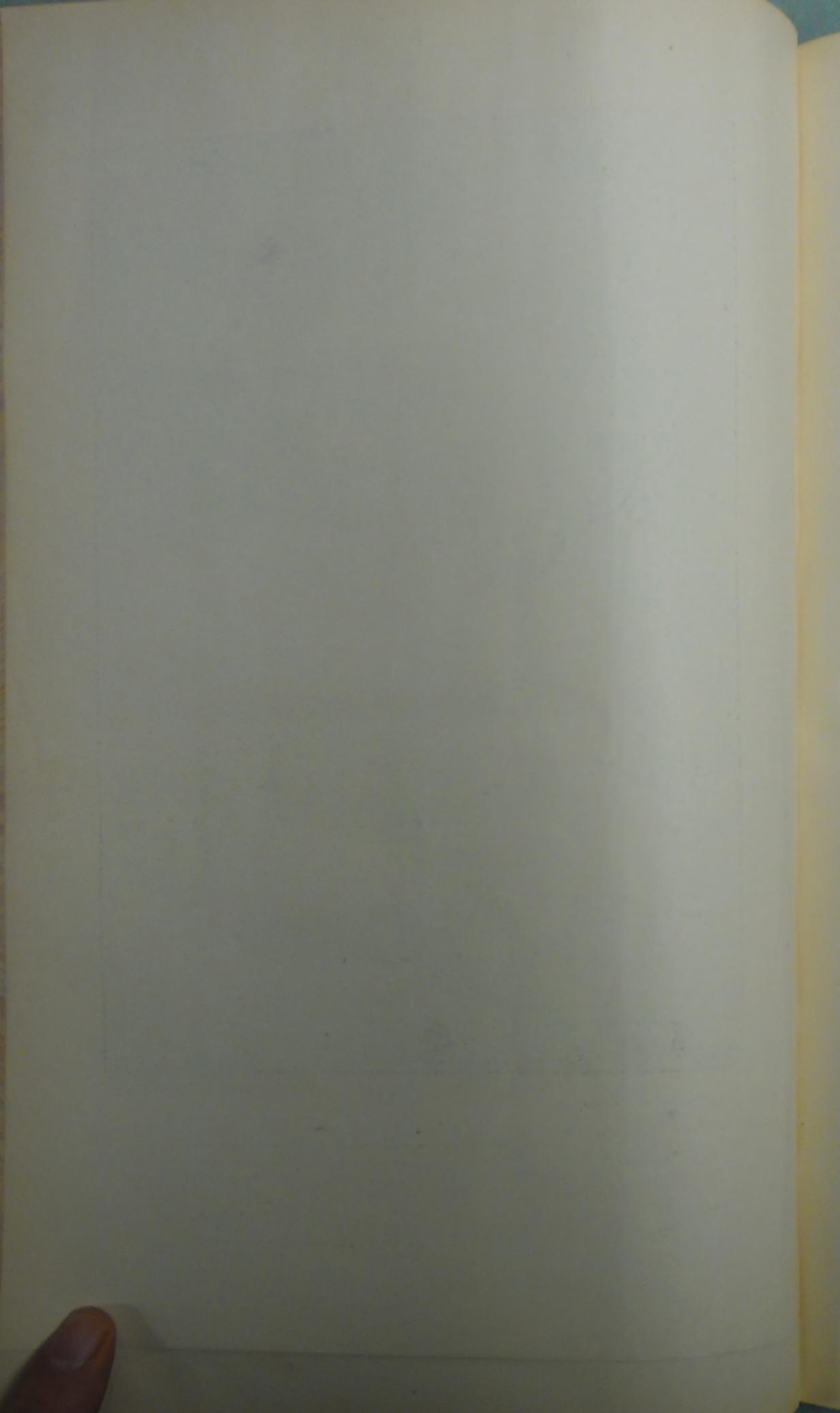






FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY SARONY.

With kind regards  
sincerely yours  
Annie Besant



Now we consider that the Theosophical movement had its impulse from a Lodge of great Occultists. We consider that these great occultists, while (like the previous Lodge to which I referred) they have always been working in the world, had not for a long period of time made any attempt to bring about a very widespread movement, but had confined themselves to helping, training, and teaching individuals here and there who started what I may call small and unconnected systems, the entrance to which was encompassed with great difficulty, much secrecy always accompanying the instruction; it was only in our own time that it was decided to make a definite public movement open to the world at large. And here again I come to a point where we shall necessarily differ. We consider that this second impulse became largely necessary because of the difficulty I have mentioned with regard to the immense number of phenomena of a trivial character which were taking up the attention of the majority of the members of the earlier movement; that, in fact, when the Theosophical Society was first projected, it was meant to work hand in hand with the Spiritualistic body; that all Madame Blavatsky's first attempts were among Spiritualists; that she desired to work with them hand in hand, if she found them willing—nay, if only *some* of them were willing—to co-operate with her in bringing in the philosophical side in addition to the heretofore; that then the movement would have gone along the single line, with the two wings showing themselves, perhaps, but as parts of a single whole. Unfortunately, as I cannot help thinking, the moment she began to speak against the excess of phenomena, and still more when she asserted that it was not necessary that the souls of the departed should be considered as bringing about the whole of the phenomena of the séance room; that they were brought about by many agencies; that many of the trifling ones were brought about by 'elementals' ('Nature spirits,' if you like to use the term)—entities belonging to the astral world who dealt in such manifestations; that only some of the communications came from departed souls; that large numbers of the phenomena could be produced by the trained human will without the help of the souls of the dead or of elementals; that she, really, when she asserted that the soul of man in the body as well as out of the body was powerful to bring about many of these conditions, that the soul did not gain that power by going through death, but held it of its own inherent royalty, and could exercise these forces as much in the physical body as after death had struck that body away from it—then it was that large numbers of the Spiritualists rose against her and refused to have any further dealings with her. And there it seems to me the initial mistake was made. Far better, as I cannot but think—far better it would have been if that inherent power in the human soul had been universally recognised; if it were realised that the soul is the active power controlling all the lower forces of Nature; that the soul is not robbed of its own nature because it happens to live in the physical body; and can exercise these powers freely in the physical body as well as when liberated from it by death. I spoke just now of the 'souls of the dead'—a stupid and tiresome phrase, which it is impossible to avoid where one desires to be understood; but as we, I suppose, will all agree, there are no such things as the dead—the soul is the real man and lives for ever whether in or out of the body. (Hear, hear.)

Then there came, of course, some questions of doctrine which rendered divergences more marked, especially the doctrine of re-incarnation. In the French school of Spiritualists re-incarnation has always been taught. The school which follows Allan Kardec has always taken the doctrine as true. It has been taught by the spirit controls who worked in that school, although not in the form in which Theosophists teach it—the return of the soul into incarnation, according to Kardec, being far more rapid than our own experience has led us to expect. We consider that rapid return to be rare—not universal; whereas the Kardec school looks upon it as far more frequent. Then, as against the French school of Spiritualists, you had the great bulk of English and American Spiritualists who were entirely opposed to the idea of re-incarnation. And again I may say, from our own standpoint, naturally so; for inasmuch as the idea of re-incarnation had not been accepted by the souls while in the body, they would not accept it after

they had passed out of the body. Few experienced Spiritualists will, I think, be found who hold that the moment a soul is free from the body it becomes all-knowing—omniscient. We know that the soul is just the same a week or a month or a year after death as it was before the body died; and if the soul held certain opinions before death it will express those opinions for some time afterwards. And inasmuch as the whole of our own investigations have led us to recognise that souls pass through many different stages of existence after leaving the body—those stages in fact which the Spiritualists speak of as spheres—passing from one sphere to another, it seems to us a natural thing that souls going out of the body with the belief of their own nation, on returning to communicate through mediums, should retain and express that belief. They continually declare that when they pass into a higher sphere they will no longer be able to communicate through their mediums. It seems to us, therefore, perfectly natural that this teaching of re-incarnation could not come through souls communicating through mediums; it does not come within the scope of their experience. It is very noticeable, that since the idea of re-incarnation has spread amongst souls in the body, it is beginning to appear in the communications from souls that have passed away from here again communicate, they retain their old beliefs, so that I have noticed in several Spiritualistic papers that such communications are now being received, making, I hope, part of that bridge to which your President alluded.

But what I want to put to you on this point—which I really think is the most important part of the bridge on this matter—is this: You agree with us that the soul evolves; you agree with us that knowledge increases as the soul grows older, if I may use the phrase; you agree that on the other side of death the soul grows, continues, and gains in knowledge; so that what divides us in opinion—taking the two 'orthodoxies' for the moment—is not the question of the development and growth of the soul, but only the comparatively subsidiary question, does the evolution go on by repeated experiences of earth life or does it go on in spheres outside the world through which the soul passes, as it increases in knowledge and develops its powers? Now if that can be recognised a great step will have been taken to draw us together. The method and place of growth only will remain, and what I think we should recognise is that this difference of opinion is small when compared with the orthodox Christian view that the soul is suddenly created with a character, comes into the world with that character fitted on it, goes through certain experiences here which determine its future, and then goes suddenly into perfect bliss or perfect misery without any possibility of getting out of the misery or improving its condition. That is the crude view which all of us should oppose. That is an idea which we need to get rid of, for it is one that cramps and thwarts all the powers of the soul. It is that which makes man impotent in the face of temptations, and robs him of his self-reliance. Let man realise that he lives in a world of law, that whatever he sows he will reap, whether in this world or in any other. Let him see that only as he works for good, will he attain good; only as he strives after perfection will he approach perfection; and if that sane and rational view of the soul be taken—thoroughly in consonance with the laws of the universe and with the orderly development we see around us on every side—if we unite on that fundamental principle of the Evolution of the Soul, we surely do not need to take clubs to each other as to whether that evolution goes on in one or many worlds. That is one point I wish to put to you as a point on which we really agree fundamentally, although the agreement is masked by difference of expression, as well as by a real difference on the subsidiary question of method. The real agreement is hidden by differences in our language; and that point of unity draws us closer together than we can ever be drawn to those who think of a miraculous creation, or miraculous perfection, or almost destruction of the soul.

I do not want to argue the question of re-incarnation. I hold it definitely and completely and I venture to say that the whole of my own investigations have deepened my conviction of this fact; for, as you know, we hold that by

training it is possible to develop the soul while living in the physical form, so that its memory—the memory of all its past—is brought into its physical consciousness; and it is not only possible for the soul to exercise its own memory while still living in the body, but also to trace back the history of the past, century after century, millennium after millennium—thus tracing the lines through which the soul has passed, and removing the whole doctrine of re-incarnation from the region of an intellectual hypothesis to that of a definite certainty.

Let me pass from that point where I suggest a possible unification on a fundamental principle, with an agreement to differ upon the planes where the evolution goes on—let me pass from that, to say a word on that orderly growth which seems to me so vital for the moral development of man. We speak of that law as *karma*, but it does not matter what name you give it—call it if you will the law by which a man reaps exactly what he sows. When that is recognised ethically, when it is seen that death makes no difference in the working of the law, when it is recognised, as it is by Theosophists and Spiritualists alike, that if a soul goes out of the body after a life which has been profligate, drunken, cruel, that soul passes into a condition of misery, sadness, and gloom, not eternal, but one out of which the soul can rise by its own efforts, being aided also by the efforts of its brethren—when that is recognised, we shall have then a lever for the moralising of society, the use of which Spiritualists and Theosophists, no matter if they disagree on other points, cannot fail to see. And that teaching is one which I venture to say should be pressed by Spiritualists as it is being pressed by Theosophists. Unless we can make people understand that death does not act as a kind of bankruptcy court where a man can be whitewashed from the debts contracted during his life, we shall always have people apt to gamble with their souls as they do with their money, trusting to the chance of escape at last—an escape impossible in worlds ruled by law.

Now I come to a point on which some of you must certainly agree with me, although I do not know how far *all* will do so. In order to make what follows clear, let me say that I acknowledge to the full the reality of the phenomena that may occur in the *séance* room; this I do not challenge for a moment. I know, as others know, that they occur. I put aside, of course, all cases of fraud; for not any number of fraudulent cases can alter the fact of the reality of the remaining phenomena; that is a point on which I always speak definitely and clearly when speaking in public, for I consider it most necessary to insist that no number of fraudulent cases can shake the truth of the genuine phenomena which every student knows to occur. (Hear, hear.) It is therefore necessary to get rid of the idea among Spiritualists that we deny the reality of their phenomena. What has been done in the past is that an exaggerated stress has been laid on the 'spook and shell theory.' You will find a writer here and there who says that nearly all the phenomena are the results of the action of 'spooks and shells'; but permit me to say that that is only the opinion of a very small minority of Theosophical students. It is true that Mr. Judge made a sweeping assertion which it is impossible for any instructed Theosophist to endorse. He makes the sweeping assertion that there is practically nothing except communications from astral corpses. That is not the view of the majority of Theosophists, and certainly, so far as I know, of none whom I may call the instructed Theosophists, certainly of no one who has the smallest pretence to a knowledge of occultism from Madame Blavatsky downwards. It has always been asserted that while some of the communications are of that nature, you have large numbers of them which have come directly from people who have only lost their physical bodies. Now, that being cleared out of the way, let me come to the objection we make against entering into this kind of communication. We object to it as now carried on partly on the ground that if it is adopted all the conditions surrounding these communications should be rigidly laid down, and as far as possible enforced by all who have the authority of knowledge and experience in either the Spiritualistic or the Theosophical body. I know, of course, that there is no authority in the sense of ordering people. I speak of the weight that comes of recognised knowledge and experience.

Now, it is our opinion, definite and clear, that the great majority of souls that communicate through what I call ordinary mediumistic channels are souls who have not reached a high degree of development; that is, they are what may be called the souls of the average humanity, and only such souls can communicate unless the conditions made are conditions of the most careful and scrupulous kind. I was reading the other day a very interesting book by Madame d'Esperance, 'Shadow Land,' and I noticed in that book a statement which every Theosophist who has studied the matter would endorse, but which certainly has not yet received the attention it deserves. It is this: That the manifestations that take place at a *séance* do not depend on the medium alone; that those manifestations are governed by the circle of sitters, and proceed largely from those who sit and take part in the meeting; that it is not fair to hold the medium alone responsible; that where fraud occurs, it occurs as often by impulses that come from the sitters as it does from anything for which the medium is responsible—(hear, hear)—the fact being that the medium is sensitive to every magnetic current in the room and every thought-impulse which comes from the minds of the sitters. If you get people sitting with the medium who are determined on fraud, and seeking for fraud, unless you have a medium of most exceptional character—an occultist, rather than a mere channel controlled by external influences—that medium will commit fraud and will be blamed for it, whereas the blame is not on the unfortunate medium whose sensitiveness made him a victim to the influences of the sitters, but rather on the lack of precautions for guarding sensitives, without which no satisfactory manifestation can occur. Nor is that all. If mediumship is to form a recognised channel of communication in future between this world and the world immediately on the other side of life, then it should be surrounded with conditions like those with which it was surrounded in the past, when occultism was better understood than it is now-days. What were the vestal virgins but mediums of a very lofty type, only they were dealt with very differently from the mediums of to-day? They were taken as young children, when they were found to be possessed of the special faculties required; they were taken from every influence that could degrade or pollute them in any way. No one was allowed to come near them whose magnetism was impure, no eater of flesh or drinker of wine or smoker of tobacco was allowed to come near these sensitive organisations, bringing the coarser elements of the astral. They were guarded strictly, and were surrounded by everything that could educate, train, and develop them—music, painting, sculpture, everything that was most harmonious and beautiful was kept around them. They were not allowed to go into the rough-and-tumble world, to take their chance among the rougher organisms, to fight for a living and make their way with the ordinary struggle of every-day life. And if you are to have communications worth having, you must make again the ancient conditions, you must treat your sensitives as they ought to be treated; then, and then only, will you bring loftier intelligences into touch with the movement and make the channels through which true spiritual teaching can flow, and not mere astral gossip as it too often is in the *séance* rooms of the present time. (Hear, hear.)

Mediumship should further be guarded against all those dangers of the approach of evil astral influences which form one of our strongest objections to what are called Spiritualistic methods. It is these methods against which so much has been said by Theosophical writers, partly perhaps, because, studying as we do the complicated nature of man, we realise so very strongly the conditions that are needed for the evolution of the higher type of sensitiveness, and the utter impossibility of having it amid the ordinary conditions of Western civilisation, beating upon sensitive and insensitive alike. Suppose then that such a plan were adopted, and I know many of the leading Spiritualists desire that some such policy were adopted in their ranks. If that were done I have not the slightest doubt that along such channels communication of the most instructive and useful character would be obtained—obtained, as I believe, from souls both in and out of the body, making no distinction between them. I believe that such mediums might make again that link which is well nigh broken, between the

Lodge of Adepts who, as we think, gave this movement its primary impulse, and the Spiritualism of the future as it is beginning to be unfolded to-day.

There is one other point of danger which I am bound to mention in connection with this subject. We consider that it is injurious to the souls on the other side to draw them back into the earth atmosphere as they are continually drawn back in the ordinary *séance* rooms. We consider that the souls passing out of the physical body are reaching a stage in the cycle of evolution in which they should progress to higher and higher spheres; that if we entangle them again with the past interests of earth, with the daily concerns of our physical existence, we are tending in the most literal sense to *materialise* them, and to delay their higher progress, their greater possibility of growth. We believe that communication can only safely be made, not by drawing them back to utilise the body of a medium by automatic writing, by possession, or in any other way, but by training our own souls to come into direct communication with them without the intervention of the physical body. We believe it to be better to spiritualise our own souls rather than get them to again use physical means of communication, which they should have passed beyond in passing through death; and we allege that it would be far better for each person to try and develop the powers of his own soul to pass into the invisible world at will, to talk with those who are there, to see them and hear them, because he is himself in the world of spirits, and not because those souls are utilising for the time the body of some other soul. There is the point upon which we disagree. But surely it is not a point upon which we should quarrel, but rather consider whether it is not a question for our own consciences.

I have tried to put to you quite frankly the differences which seem to separate us, but which ought not to separate us; and what I would ask from you is this: We have already for some years past adopted the policy of never saying an unkind or scornful word of our Spiritualistic brethren. Why cannot you adopt the same policy, and at least meet us half-way across the bridge? Why should you not in your own papers treat us as we are treating you? Why should you make it a habit always to say some harsh, unkind, or bitter thing even when you allude to one of our books or magazines? I would ask you to drop that policy, as I think I have the right to ask you, because I have dropped it so entirely for years myself; so that I am not asking you to take the first step towards reconciliation. I am not asking you first to hold out a friendly hand towards us; we have been holding our hand out for years, and we ask you no longer to treat us as rivals and enemies but as brothers whose methods may be different from your own, but whose aims are identical. For do we not both desire that the immortality of man should be believed in on evidence that everyone can accept? Do we not both desire that materialism should become impossible to the thinking and rational man? Do we not desire that man's life should be purified, that the unseen world should become a reality; that death should be seen as it is—nothing but a veil that rests on the body, and the moment the body is transcended, death is as though it were not? Do we not want to make a reality of those words, 'O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory'? Death for us has no sting, the grave for us has no victory; when a friend passes through the change of death we may accompany him into the other world and know him as intimately as, more intimately than, when the veil of flesh divided us, we were able to do. And is it not possible that from the Spiritualist, as from the Theosophical powers, blessings shall come to the souls on the earth, and men and women leaving the body when they will, shall help the souls—the bewildered souls—when they pass through the 'valley of the shadow,' knowing naught of the life that lies beyond? To make that union possible, or, if that be not possible, to get rid at least of unfriendly feelings—for that purpose I have come among you to-night, and I believe our meeting will not have been utterly in vain. (Applause.)

The REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS, in rising to propose a vote of thanks, said he supposed everybody would sympathise with him in the remark that Mrs. Besant had set a very difficult task to any speaker who might follow her, not only because of her eloquence, but because she had said so much that would

require either criticism or explanation. He supposed it was either his partial stupidity, or his inattention, or his habit of crowding very much into his life, that made him take but brief and imperfect notice of things; but he did not at all know what Mrs. Besant meant by unfriendly feeling, bitterness, friction, unkindness. Referring to the idea of a union between the two movements, he felt that, as Spiritualists, they wanted not more organisation but less. He was not tempted to go into the ways of their Theosophical friends, who were tremendously organised and tremendously defined, building up systems until their systems had become like adamant. They had, so to speak, their Psychological Research friends on the left, their Theosophical friends on the right, and they (the Spiritualists) were between the two, very simple and humble, going their own way. They did not at all find their road blocked with phenomena. They found it difficult to get as much phenomena as they needed to demonstrate these things. About three-fourths of Mrs. Besant's address had simply been pure, unadulterated Spiritualism. That splendid idea (as simple as it was splendid) that the real man is the spirit, and not the body, and the idea that the existence of that spirit after the death of the body was simply one of onwardness and continuous progress and not a supernatural state—that was about as far as they could go, if they even ventured to go as far as that in these materialistic times. They did not want organisation of a very strong and definite character. As to the philosophical side of the question, he did not believe in giving more reasons than one could help. He believed in the advice which an old judge once gave: 'State your case, give your verdict, but avoid giving reasons.' They needed facts more than reasons—their facts would always be true, but their reasons might have continually to be changed. They were all extremely grateful to Mrs. Besant for her brilliant and thoughtful address crammed full of ideas; and he begged to move the following resolution: 'That we present to Mrs. Besant our most hearty and earnest thanks for her most instructive address.'

MR. J. J. MORSE seconded the resolution. What had struck him more than anything else during the whole of Mrs. Besant's address was the statement that she was desirous of building a bridge and willing to come half-way across to meet them in friendship. He could hardly avoid the conclusion that she had builded the bridge and walked right over it, because he was inclined to agree with Mr. Hopps that three-fourths of what Mrs. Besant had said had been exactly what any intelligent, self-respecting Spiritualist would himself say. Spiritualists and Theosophists were engaged in a study common to both; they might be working on different methods, using different weapons, but their aim was the same: to combat materialism and to demonstrate the continued life of man after death. Whether what Mrs. Besant had said would bring the two bodies together was quite another question, but in this year of the Jubilee of Modern Spiritualism it was of happy augury that they had overtures of this kind coming from the other camp. He hoped the time would come when the message would be more fully received, the goodwill made more manifest, and when they would be able to join hands with each other as brothers and sisters seeking the truth. (Applause.)

The resolution was then put and carried by a show of hands.

MRS. BESANT in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said: I do not think I need delay you further except just to say that I think the object of the lecture has very largely been fulfilled in bringing us together in friendly intercourse. I was not thinking of any formal union, but rather of the cultivation of a friendly spirit which would make us both rejoice in the successes of each other and be more willing to cloak each other's faults. (Applause.)

The remainder of the proceedings were of the usual informal character. After partaking of the refreshments which had been provided in the adjoining rooms, the company returned to the large hall, where the rest of the evening was devoted to music and conversation.

The following kindly letter would have been read to the meeting had it not unfortunately come to hand too late:—

February 7th, 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am more than sorry that I cannot be at the meeting this evening, but my throat is no better,

and is not yet strong enough for the operation. Till that is over I cannot get out.

I sincerely hope that our friend Annie Besant's lecture will have the effect of drawing Spiritualist and Theosophical thought much nearer together. We have been too far apart in the past. On both sides I think mistakes have been made, and too many hard words have been said. We ought now to try and find some common ground of agreement on which we can work together for the common truth which both are trying to reach—the spiritual nature of man and his infinite progression in a spiritual universe. That is the great idea which this materialistic age needs, and it is our bounden duty to look for grounds of common action rather than to emphasise minor points of difference. With every good wish, very sincerely yours,

Mr. E. Dawson Rogers.

HERBERT BURROWS.

### 'THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.'

Apart from its attractiveness for the general reader there are many biographical details in the recently published 'Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe,' edited by Annie Fields, that will be of interest to Spiritualists. Mrs. Stowe, it will be remembered, became famous as the authoress of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' She was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, on June 14th, 1811, married to Professor Stowe in January, 1836, and died, at the age of eighty-five, on July 1st, 1896. She seems to have been of a neurotic temperament, with a marked tendency to depression and absent mindedness. In one of her earlier letters she writes of herself thus: 'You don't know how perfectly wretched I often feel—so useless, so weak, so destitute of all energy,' and later in a letter to Professor Stowe she says: 'One thing more in regard to myself. The absence and wandering of the mind and forgetfulness that so often vex you is a physical infirmity with me.' For many years her life was one long struggle with ill health, an increasing family, heavy household cares, and money difficulties. Despite these drawbacks her literary activity was very great. In all she wrote some 'thirty books, beside an incredible number of magazine papers, short stories, and letters.'

In the writing of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' the peculiar nervous or mediumistic quality of Mrs. Stowe's mind is abundantly evidenced. It was, from beginning to end, an inspirational work. Mrs. John T. Howard, an intimate friend of Mrs. Stowe's, gives the following striking account of the actual writing of this remarkable book. The two friends were travelling, and to lessen the fatigue of a long railway journey they stopped for a night in Hartford, at the home of Mrs. Stowe's sister, Mrs. Perkins. They both shared the same room. Mrs. Howard was first undressed and lay upon the bed, watching Mrs. Stowe as she sat upon the floor, with a thoughtful look upon her face, brushing out her long curls.

'At last she (Mrs. Stowe) spoke, and said, "I have just received a letter from my brother Edward . . . He is greatly disturbed lest all this praise and notoriety should induce pride and vanity and work harm to my Christian character." She dropped her brush from her hand, and earnestly exclaimed, "Dear soul, he need not be troubled. He doesn't know that I did not write that book." "What!" said I, "you did not write 'Uncle Tom's!'" "No," she said, "I only put down what I saw." "But you have never been at the South, have you?" I asked. "No," she said, "but it all came before me in visions, one after another, and I put them down in words." But being still sceptical, I said, "Still you must have arranged the events." "No," she said, "your Annie reproached me for letting Eva die. Why! I could not help it. I felt as badly as any one could. It was like a death in my own family, and it affected me so deeply that I could not write a word for two weeks after her death." "And did you know," I asked, "that Uncle Tom would die?" "Oh yes," she answered. "I knew that he must die from the first, but I did not know how. When I got to that part of the story I saw no more for some time."

We have here an experience which would be attributed by many to beneficent 'spirit control,' by others to the activities of a profoundly stirred 'subliminal consciousness.' That the former is possible no earnest Spiritualist doubts; that the latter is not altogether an impossible conception has been ably shown by Mr. F. W. H. Myers in his fascinating paper on the 'Mechanism of Genius' (see 'Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research').

Mrs. Stowe was far from being ignorant of the claims of Spiritualism. There are frequent references to the subject in the 'Life and Letters.' A year or two after the death of her eldest son Harry, who was drowned while bathing in the Connecticut River on July 9th, 1857, she wrote to her husband as follows:—

'Since I have been in Florence I have been distressed by inexpressible yearnings after him [her son], such sighings and outreachings, with a sense of utter darkness and separation not only from him, but from all spiritual communion with my God. But I have become acquainted with a friend through whom I receive consoling impressions of these things—a Mrs. E. of Boston, a very pious, accomplished, and interesting woman. Without doubt she is what the Spiritualist would regard as a very powerful medium, but being a very earnest Christian and afraid of getting led astray, she has carefully kept aloof from all circles and things of that nature . . . But I have found that when I am with her I receive very strong impressions from the spiritual world, so that I often feel sustained and comforted, as if I had been near to my Henry and other departed friends.'

Subsequently, when again visiting Boston, she expressed herself freely and with great openness upon the subject:—

'In the simplest way she affirmed her entire belief in possible manifestations of the nearness and individual life of those who had passed to the unseen world, and gave vivid illustrations of the reasons why her faith was thus assured. She never sought after such testimony unless she found herself sitting with others who were interested and who wished to try experiments, but her conclusions were definite and unvarying.'

In a letter written to Dr. Holmes, on February 23rd, 1876, she refers to Spiritualism in the following terms:—

'I would like to talk with you some time on Spiritualism, and show you a collection of very curious facts that I have acquired through mediums not professional. I have long since come to the conclusion that the marvels of Spiritualism are natural and not supernatural phenomena—an uncommon working of natural laws. I believe that the door between those in the body and those out has never, in any age, been entirely closed, and that occasional perceptions within the veil are a part of the course of Nature, and therefore not miraculous.'

Such, in brief, was Mrs. Stowe's attitude towards Spiritualism. Her testimony though not exactly a striking one is nevertheless not without value. Mrs. Stowe was a woman of considerable ability, of varied experience, and world-wide reputation. Her writings show her to have been a close observer and a capable reasoner, desiring nothing so much as to be in sympathy with and working for humanity. It is gratifying then to find that despite her strong religious convictions derived for the most part from the somewhat rigid theology of her day, she could yet see her way clear to testify to the truth and reality of spirit communication. The name of Harriet Beecher Stowe is, I venture to think, worthy of a place in the literature of Spiritualism.

ARTHUR BUTCHER.

### OBITUARY.

WE regret to have to record the decease, at the age of forty-eight years, of Caroline Johanna, wife of Dr. Berks T. Hutchinson, formerly of Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, and subsequently of Bournemouth, to which place Dr. Hutchinson and his family removed in 1895 in consequence of Mrs. Hutchinson's ill health. The Doctor's earnest devotion to the cause of Spiritualism is well known both in England and in South Africa, and it was a great satisfaction to him that in all his efforts on its behalf he had the cordial co-operation of his devoted wife. We tender our fullest sympathy to him and to the four remaining daughters on their temporary loss.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALLAN FISHER.—Your letter shall appear next week. But for the crowded state of our columns, it would have been published in the present issue. The same remark applies to several other communications.

A MEETING of the Council of the London Spiritualist Alliance was held on Monday last, when one resignation of Membership was accepted, and seven new Members and eleven new Associates were elected.

## SOCIETY WORK.

In consequence of the crowded state of our columns, we are obliged to omit the reports usually given under this heading, and to confine ourselves to announcements of future work:—

193, Bow-road, Bow.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Weedemeyer, clairvoyance.

CARDIFF SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, ST. JOHN'S HALL.—Next Sunday, at 6.30 p.m., Mr. J. Miles.—E.A.

SPIRITUALISTS' LECTURE ROOMS, 73, BECKLOW ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—Next Sunday, at 6.30 p.m., Mr. Peters.

EDMONTON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Edwards will give an address on 'The Brotherhood of Man.'

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—Next Sunday at 7 p.m., Mr. W. H. Phillips, trance address; solo, Miss Morris.—L.H.

STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MARTIN-STREET HALL, STRATFORD.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Boddington. Every Thursday, at 8 p.m., meeting.—J.R.

BELFAST.—Any information regarding the above association, its aims, objects, &c., will be given by applying to W. G. Kane, secretary, 40, Old Park-avenue, Belfast.

ISLINGTON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, WELLINGTON HALL, UPPER-STREET, ISLINGTON.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Whyte. Thursday, at 8 p.m., circle (members only), medium, Mrs. Brenchley.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—Next Sunday, at 6.45 p.m., members' experiences. Sunday, February 27th, Miss MacCreadie.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD, TEMPERANCE HALL, DODDINGTON-GROVE.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Love, Mr. Adams, Mr. Fielder, &c. Thursdays, at 7 p.m., choir practice; at 8.30 p.m., public developing class.

EAST LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' ASSOCIATION (formerly Stratford Society of Spiritualists), WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, E.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Butcher.

EAST LONDON SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION, LIBERAL HALL, FOREST GATE.—Next Sunday, at 11 a.m., open discussion; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. Walker. Tuesday and Thursday, at 8 p.m., at 19, Oakhurst-road.

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 14, STROUD GREEN-ROAD, FINSBURY PARK.—Next Sunday, at 11.30 a.m., meeting for inquirers; at 7 p.m., spiritual service. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., open meeting. Wednesday, at 8 p.m., séance (members only).—J.K.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' MISSION, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle, doors closed at 11.15 a.m.; at 3 p.m., children's Lyceum; at 6 p.m., lending library; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long, 'The Teachings of Jesus Christ'; at 8 p.m., members' circle.

CO-OPERATIVE HALL, BRAEMAR-ROAD, CANNING TOWN.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Clegg; at 10.30 a.m., Lyceum; 12 to 1 p.m., healing. Monday, at 8 p.m., public séance for inquirers. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., members' developing circle. Thursday, at 7.30 p.m., open meeting, address and clairvoyance. 'LIGHT' on sale.—G.D.

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