

# Light:

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

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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## CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way .....	1	'The Tail of the Earth' .....	7
The Last Deluge .....	2	Proposed Psychological Institute .....	7
Psychical and Healing Science ....	3	Luciferian Freemasonry .....	9
Hell, or Hades .....	4	Fire-treading at Benares .....	9
The S. P. R. and Mrs. D'Esperance..	4	Repressive Laws .....	10
'A Political Medium in St. Petersburg' .....	5	Mental Science and Drunkenness..	11
Spiritual Significance of Work ....	6	The Ascension of Jesus .....	11

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

The 'Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,' to which we referred last week, reminds us of some puzzling problems. Referring to certain experiments, Professor Newbold is astonished and possibly chagrined to find that instead of someone he cared to hear from, an old-time 'faded' and 'forgotten' maiden aunt claimed him, and in the oddest kind of way. 'She was a teacher, lived in Philadelphia, died in a hospital in New York, and was buried near Philadelphia. . . . Probably few persons beside her immediate relatives know that such a person ever existed, and even her relatives seldom think of her. Why were these dim memories so clearly neglected, while others, far stronger, produced no effect?' (This to those who say it is only telepathy.)

Again, equally puzzling is the ignorance of matters which those who communicate should be well acquainted with, and 'their almost total inability to observe and report the phenomena of the material world,' although they assert that they can and will. An attempt to get a very small scrap of Greek translated by 'Stainton Moses' admirably illustrates this confusion, and incidentally accounts for it. Now Mr. Stainton Moses was an admirable and ready Greek scholar; but here is what occurred at the séance: 'At our suggestion, G. P. calls the alleged Mr. Moses to help translate it. The result is confusion worse confounded. Apparently the writers cannot hear what we say. *θάνατος* is at first written *funois*. In this confusion, words and sentences occur which appear to emanate from Moses, such as "I could in time recall all the Greek I ever taught and why should I not?" "It seems like awaking from a dream to recall this to mind." When the writer finally gets the word *ὄχι* he translates it "light," apparently from association with the Latin word "lux." On June 26th and 27th, further unsuccessful attempts at translation were made. G. P. said that he (Stainton Moses) remembered his Greek well enough when he was away from the "light," but the effort of communicating confused him and drove it out of his head.' At a later sitting, 'Moses' re-appears, gets some Greek and says, 'I'll go now and translate it and return, sir.' But the recorder adds: 'This promise was never kept and we heard no more of Greek.'

The wonder is that anyone would care at all for Greek beyond the veil, or try to bother with it, though it might be useful for tests. That remark of 'G. P.'s,' that the 'light' made all the difference, and that the effort to communicate drove out of his head what he really knew, has far-reaching value in it.

We are deeply gratified to hear that the Psychical Research Society is, in all probability, about to give in to the opinion often urged upon it, that no medium should be given up because of apparent or even obvious acting. The remarks of 'Quæstor Vitæ' in last week's 'LIGHT' are the result of wide and ripe experience. Similar remarks were made a long time ago, by one of our members, at a meeting of the Psychical Research Society, *apropos* of the case of Eusapia Paladino, but there was a very chilly response. 'We shall see what we shall see.'

We, of course, take a living interest in this most hopeful impulse and crusade in the interests of Peace. The wonder is that such a country as ours should ever be a culprit in this matter. Perhaps, after all, the Bishop of London has said the smartest thing on the subject:—

Let other and less powerful nations bluster. We are strong enough and great enough to show them a more excellent way. We are too old established a firm to be perpetually greedy of small gains. We need not be always anxious to carry fresh acquisitions to our Imperial account. We can afford to trust to the inherent capacity of the British race always to hold a foremost place in the business of the world, whatever that business may be, and, therefore, I think we are in a position to set an example by cultivating a little more sympathy with other peoples than we always venture to express, and a little more generosity in our criticism of their undoubted errors and their obvious deficiency in wisdom as compared with ourselves.

There may be a touch of the egotist, the satirist or the pharisee in the last few words; but they have some truths in them.

Messrs. Gay and Bird have sent us a deeply thoughtful book by Mr. Horatio W. Dresser, 'Voices of hope, and other messages from the hills.' It is essentially a book of pure spiritual optimism, with a veiled basis of science, and perhaps of Spiritualism. The writer is nothing if not hopeful, but he is hopeful mainly because he believes that man is a progressive being, and is destined, by the very make of him, to the fuller life which is promised by the seers and Christs of all the ages.

The book contains eleven separate Essays, on such subjects as these: 'The problem of life,' 'The basis of optimism,' 'The omnipresent spirit,' 'The problem of evil,' 'The escape from subjectivity,' 'The Christ,' 'The progressing God.' The last of these is an original contribution to the new thinking, and is valuable though not free enough from the old anthropomorphism. Another step or two would take this bright writer into a region of thought where there are precious treasures. 'The progressing God' is half way to the truth. The idea of *The becoming God* will take us farther some day.

Dr. T. W. Davies' new work on 'Magic, Divination and Demonology among the Hebrews and their neighbours' (London: J. Clarke and Co.), deserves careful attention although it reads more like a very learned common-place book on the subject than a finished work. But it abounds with knowledge and sound

scholarship, and throws much light upon the Old Testament. The connection between Magic and Religion is a singularly close one; so also is the connection between charms and sacraments, incense and herbs of incantation, sorcerers and priests.

Incidentally, we get a good deal of white light thrown upon the Old Testament denunciations of 'witchcraft,' &c. As we ourselves have often pointed out, it was very much a question of rival spirits, or rival gods. Dr. Davies says: 'One great reason which induced the Hebrews to condemn magic and the like was that it was so closely connected with idolatry. In 2 Kings ix. 22 it seems identified with it. To the Hebrews, deities worshiped by other peoples were evil spirits or demons with which magicians and diviners were supposed to traffic.' We commend this fact to those who are so fond of quoting the Old Testament against us. In reality, the Old Testament is simply saturated with Spiritualism in all its forms,—evil and good.

Mr. Girdlestone, writing in 'The Literary Guide,' has a very useful fling at the over-resolute Agnostic, and, incidentally at Mr. Huxley as anti-spiritualist. He says:—

The vital question is whether an Agnostic means a man who, on certain subjects, has closed for ever the door of inquiry. If so, the position seems hardly compatible with the love of truth.

As to Huxley, so great is my confidence in at once his candour, his sagacity, and his courage that his judgment against the spiritual hypothesis would, I admit, in my opinion, more than counterpoise the judgments *con* of the four authorities I named, but for the fatal fact that he never thoroughly studied the subject.

Surely the value of a given person's judgment upon any knotty point depends upon two factors in his personal equipment—namely (1) his faculty and training as a judge, and (2) his knowledge of the facts and allegations bearing on the case. Now, while I readily acknowledge that in the first point Huxley was unequalled, I submit that in the second he was simply nowhere. He never did at any time, so far as I can learn, give to the subject anything like the earnest and prolonged attention that the other four men have given; and, in the next place, it is since his death that what is probably the most convincing portion of the evidence *pro* has been published.

The shortness of his connection with the committee appointed to investigate the subject by the London Dialectical Society, and his refusal to co-operate in any way with such men as Sidgwick, Myers and Wallace in the inquiry, are enough to show that his judgment in this matter is not of equal rank with theirs.

The history of science proves nothing more clearly than that men of science are themselves apt at times to reject new truths on *à priori* grounds. Lavoisier, *e.g.*, argued against the belief that meteorites fall to the earth, on the ground that there are no stones up in the sky. Comte said, as late as 1842, that all study of the fixed stars was waste of time, owing to their great distance! And Sir J. Herschell, later still, spoke against Darwin's theory of development as 'a great heresy'! 'In knowledge,' said Faraday, 'that man only is to be condemned who is not in a state of transition. . . Nor is there anything more adverse to accuracy than fixity of opinion.'

If a bit of breezy truth has to be told, by all means get 'H.W.' of 'Freedom' to do it. This, concerning a familiar subject, is well said, though perhaps a trifle indiscreet ('H.W.' will like it all the better for that!):—

See what a big name will do! Here Sir William Crookes comes to the front with an idea supposed to be original with him.

Why this same thing is the foundation idea of mental healing; and thousands have been healed by it, and are being healed by it every day.

It is now about fifteen years since our literature—our publications—started out to announce this same thing and to find support for the belief. And yet we were not the first who taught it. There were plenty of thinkers ahead of us in the field; . . . 'it was the sing-song of the Hyde Park lecturers; droned forth by long-haired orators, in a hundred halls of science,' but attracting no attention; which by the way is not saying anything against the long-haired orators, though it is an accusation against the stupidity of

those who will not use their own brains in forming a judgment of something new, but must wait until some bell-wether takes the lead, after which they all whoop it up and follow.

Well, better this than not to come at all. And so I am glad that Sir William Crookes has not permitted his scientific education of former years to stand in the way of announcing the discovery of what so many believe to be a new truth. The world does move; but oh! if the people would only do their own thinking and not wait for individuals with 'Sir' before their names and seven capitals after them to tell them when they ought to accept an opinion!

'We must build upon the all-round integrity of the universe,' said President Jordan the other day, at a meeting of rather advanced religious thinkers. By all means. The cure for all the old horrors of theology is firm belief in the sanity and integrity of Nature and of all the Powers beyond, above and within Nature. This is eminently the Spiritualist's trust; and this is why he refuses to take any effective notice of those who warn him off with cries of 'Devil' or 'Moses' or 'Angry God.' He trusts the Universe and its God, and goes calmly and hopefully on.

'The Better Way' says wisely:—

It is somewhat tiresome to hear some Spiritualists continually telling about being directed by their 'guides' in everything they do. It is 'My guides will not allow me to make such or such a move,' &c., *ad nauseam*. Even the editor of a Spiritualist exchange gravely announces, 'We can do nothing without the consent of our spirit guides,' and says he gets directions from them through mediums. In the cases of some mediums who are extremely sensitive it may be that unseen intelligences direct their general course more or less, but for those who are not sensitive enough to communicate directly with their spirit friends, to rely implicitly and blindly upon the advice or orders of alleged spirit guides, coming through this or that medium, looks to us not only unwise, but very risky. Our intelligence and reasoning powers are given us for use, and should not be entirely subordinated to any outside or unknown dictation.

This, from 'The Temple,' by Lucy L. S. Dowd, is as spiritually thoughtful as it is artistically beautiful. It is entitled 'Magdalen':—

Albeit she was a sinner, yet she knew  
Through all her sensuous frame a cleansing life,  
As, heedless of the murmurs and the strife  
Among His followers, she let the dew  
Of love and sorrow o'er His feet to flow.  
Ah, who has dried the tears that overbrim  
The eyes of wounded womanhood like Him,  
The gentle Jew, who lived so long ago?

#### THE DATE OF THE LAST DELUGE: A CORRECTION.

In a former number of 'LIGHT' I quoted A. R. Parsons extract from Cuvier. I have since been able to refer to the original, and I find that his extract is inexact.

In his 'Essay on the Theory of the Earth,' translated in 1827, he says: 'I agree, therefore, with MM. Deluc and Dolomieu in thinking that, if anything in geology be established, it is that the surface of our globe has undergone a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot be referred to a much earlier period than five or six thousand years ago' (p. 239). In the 'Approaching End of the Age,' 1878, H. Grattan Guinness quotes him (p. 300) as saying: 'One of the most certain, though least expected results, of sound geological pursuits, is the opinion that the last revolution which disturbed the surface of the globe is not very ancient; and the date cannot go back much further than five or six thousand years'; but I cannot find the original of this quotation. Parsons quoted it as 'less than five thousand years ago.'

This illustrates the value of the maxim, 'Verify your references'—an advice which I invariably follow when possible.

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## PSYCHICAL AND HEALING SCIENCE.

DR. BABBITT'S 'HUMAN CULTURE AND CURE.' THE PIONEERS  
OF MESMERISM AND SPIRITUALISM. RATIONALE OF  
TRUE CLAIRVOYANCE.

BY JOHN RUTHERFORD, ROKER-BY-THE-SEA, SUNDERLAND.

'The man who cannot wonder,' says Thomas Carlyle, who does not habitually wonder (and worship), were he President of innumerable Royal Societies, and carried the whole *Mécanique Céleste* and Hegel's philosophy, and the epitome of all laboratories and observatories with their results in his single head, let those who have eyes look to him, then he may be useful.' Mental philosophers have not, I think, sufficiently appraised the value of 'Wonder' in the sphere of discovery. Astronomy began in wonder. The Chaldean shepherds first gazed with awe and admiration upon the starry heavens, contemplating their 'solemn paces and well-ordered movements,' and appreciating, in their humble way, the sublimity and harmony of the scene. As the mind advanced—especially amongst the more widely cultivated races of mankind—the heavenly bodies were represented under the then ruling conceptions of human life, and assumed the names of gods, or heroes, transferred from the labours of earth to a position of eternal glory amongst the constellations above.

In the heads of the great seers—Behmen, Swedenborg, A. J. Davis, and others—the organ of what the old phrenologists called 'Wonder' is of great size. In the discoverers of continents, and new principles in Nature, it is equally striking: Columbus, Galileo, Hahnemann, Gall, Socrates, Van Helmont were distinguished for the power and manifestation of this important centre of the brain. It seems that it is chiefly through this faculty, which modern phrenologists term 'Spirituality,' that mankind appreciates the new and the marvellous. The late Mr. L. N. Fowler—an authority on mental science—defined the office of this faculty as 'perception and feeling of the spiritual—interior perception of truth,' &c.

It is held by scientists and logicians that causes stand in no other relation to effects than as antecedents. It is asserted that at first they receive no other title, and that it is only after cause has preceded effect, and effect has followed cause invariably, that it is assumed from the constancy of past sequence that the same uniformity will occur in the future, and the investigator is induced to change the name of antecedent into cause. It is by the organ of 'Causality' that we trace the dependences of phenomena, and have the power to grasp causes; but it is by 'Wonder' we endow the antecedent with a spirit and a life—an efficient vital power—to produce the consequent. The original idea of all causation seems to be that of some inherent ethereal energy dwelling in all existences calculated to produce certain defined results.

And this belief is based on objective, as well as on subjective, grounds. The mind that is unable to believe in a Supreme Power, and in the unending career of the personal soul, lacks the necessary subjective element. The organ of appreciation of these great truths is Spirituality or Wonder. Where this faculty is deficient in individuals spirit manifestations will appeal to them in vain. Again, where Wonder is in excess, and not balanced by Reason, as in the Spiritist, Theosophist, and faith-healer, there is, in the first, a wild chase after external phenomena, without ever getting any wiser, and in the others a building up of extravagant theories. Very funny is the belief in 'Re-potting' or 'Reincarnation, and in 'Re-embodiment.' Observation and analysis constitute the great means of investigation, and accurate generalisation is the true index by which the extent of our knowledge is measured. The intellectual and moral faculties should always be a republic, that is, consist of neither kings nor subjects. When the love of the marvellous becomes king in a person, his philosophy will not be distinguished by wisdom.

Dr. E. D. Babbitt, M.D., LL.D., of California, is an instance in which the faculty of Spirituality is powerful, but united with a harmonious development of other gifts, particularly of a comprehensive intellect. He is therefore capable

of penetrating to basic principles with singular depth and clearness. He stands at the head of the scientific teachers of healing; in fact, he is the Dr. Elliotson of the United States. Probably very many readers of 'LIGHT' will remember his 'Health Manual,' one of the finest and simplest works on magnetic healing ever published, and based on physiological lines. After this he issued 'Light and Colour,' which brought him fame both as a thinker and discoverer. While staying, this summer, at Harrogate—the finest watering-place, I think, in England—I found this great work in its free library. It was introduced by Alderman Ward, a philosophic Spiritualist, who read the review of it in 'LIGHT.' Next came 'Religion as Revealed by the Natural and Spiritual Universe,' imparting glorious ideas as to human destiny, &c. Dr. Babbitt's latest production, issued in parts, is entitled 'Human Culture and Cure.' When completed this will be a magnificent work, and will have a wonderful influence in helping on the development of the 'ideal man.' Without doubt, Dr. Babbitt is the true successor to Dr. Elliotson, our pioneer philosopher in mesmerism. This famous physician established a mesmeric hospital in London, where the poor could receive treatment free of charge, and he willingly gave his knowledge of healing mesmerism to all suitable persons who desired it. What a mighty contrast his life and work are to the 'professors' in these latter days! Mrs. Eddy, who is at the head of the mental or faith-healing school in America, has obtained as much as 300 dollars for only twelve lessons! And I read that 'for some time her disciples charged exorbitant prices; one of whom in Michigan required 250 dollars for a short course, and the infatuation for the "cause" was so great that a poor widow mortgaged her little home to pay it.' This 'school,' it seems, deny the existence of matter, but appear to make an exception in regard to gold, silver, and precious stones! There is thus a 'method in their madness.'

Another of our great healers was Dr. Ashburner, whose 'Philosophy of Mesmerism and Spiritualism' is a monument to his genius. And the last great English healer I have time and space to mention is the late Dr. J. Esdaile. He performed an immense mission in Calcutta about the year 1846, by establishing a mesmeric hospital there. Some of the diseases prevalent in India, it may be mentioned, require operations longer and more painful than almost any that are endured in Europe. Lord Dalhousie, on behalf of the Government, appointed a Commission, consisting of seven gentlemen, four of whom were medical practitioners, to report on the practice. The following is an extract from the Commissioners' report:—

'This sleep in its most perfect state differed from ordinary natural sleep as follows: The individual could not be aroused by loud noises, the pupils were insensible to light, and heat, and in some cases apparently perfect insensibility to pain was witnessed on burning, pinching, and cutting the skin and other sensitive organs. In seven cases surgical operations were performed in the state of sleep above described. In the case of Nilmony Dutt there was not the slightest indication of the operation having been felt by the patient. It consisted in the removal of a tumour. It lasted four minutes. The patient's hands or legs were not held. He did not move or groan, or his countenance change. And when awoke after the operation, he declared he had no recollection of what had occurred. In another case, Hyder Khan, an emaciated man, suffering from mortification of the leg, amputation of the thigh was performed, and no sign of its causing pain was evinced. In a third case, Murali Doss—the operation performed being very severe—he moved his body and arms, breathing in gasps, but his countenance underwent little change, and the features expressed no suffering; and on awaking he declared he knew of nothing having been done to him during his sleep. There were several other cases, and the patients on awakening complained of no pain till their attention was directed to the place where the operation had been performed.'

Many state that the Governor-General, on receiving this report, placed Dr. Esdaile in charge of another magnetic experimental hospital, where he produced many marvellous cures. One would have thought that such testimony and evidence as this would have had a powerful effect on the medical fraternity in the British Isles at that time; but they

refused, with very few exceptions, either to inquire into mesmerism as a curative agent or even believe in the reality of the phenomena.

Dr. Babbitt's new work, as already stated, is in parts. They are published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. Part III., just out, deals with philosophy in its past developments; the chemistry of mental action; phrenopsychology; psychology in its general features; psychometry or the clear feeling of mental forces; psychomic or hypnotic phenomena: and clairvoyance, or vision by higher-grade lights. Part IV. gives advanced knowledge of the nervous system, and the means of curing most nervous diseases, including insanity. He thus covers a wide field.

On the subject of 'matter' Dr. Babbitt does not follow those metaphysicians who believe it has no existence outside the human consciousness, on the contrary, he contends that matter is the atomic and formulating part of the universe. It is, as we know, the nature and force of the atoms that give its shape to the crystal, its quality to the acid or alkali, their colour, odour, softness or hardness to substances. It is the atoms that build up every individual body from a drop of water to a whirling sun. It is even the atoms of a spiritual grade which constitute a fine form of human bodies after death, while pure spirit—the life of the infinite—interpenetrates these bodies. 'Spirit and matter'—to use Dr. Babbitt's own words—'thus working intimately together, it is evident that the highest spirituality itself demands good material conditions. While material conditions can so act upon and penetrate spiritual conditions, on the other hand mental and spiritual influences can perfect physical conditions.' There is thus a complete correlation between spirit and matter. This forms the central principle of Dr. Babbitt's philosophy.

It is quite possible that an uninitiated reader, picking up the author's book and glancing at the pictures of his visions of the forms of the atom, might hastily conclude that his organ of 'Wonder' had been allowed to run riot, but I believe a careful study would reveal to him the trustworthiness and validity of the Doctor's views. These visions of the form of the atom are no mere fancies; on the contrary, I believe they rest on perfectly philosophic grounds and thus have a root of endurance; consequently it must dawn on the reader's understanding that Dr. Babbitt possesses real genius and high spiritual insight.

(To be continued.)

#### WHAT IS HELL, OR HADES?

A discussion on this subject has begun in 'The Church Gazette.' One contributor, referring to the statement in the New Testament that Jesus, during the period between giving up the ghost and his ascent into Heaven, 'preached to the spirits in prison,' says: 'What is meant by "spirits in prison"? And why were they preached to? If they were suffering eternal punishment without hope of remission, it would have been as cruel as useless to preach to them. Hence, we may deduce two things: (1) That these spirits were undergoing discipline; (2) that that discipline was not everlasting—that it was reformatory, and not penal. All this implies a condition which may be described as "hell" or "purgatory."

'Is hell a place, or is it merely a condition irrespective of place? As some people are born into a material state of existence blind or deaf and mute, it is conceivable that persons who have subordinated the spiritual to the animal instincts in this life, are born into an immaterial state of existence with spiritual disabilities. If, therefore, the spiritual faculties be obscured, the imperfectly-developed spiritual man may perceive a scene of beauty as a scene of horror.

'It may reasonably be assumed, however, that hell, or purgatory, is both a condition and a place. Where is that place? As the spiritually foul and undeveloped are still unfit to live in pure ethereal spheres, and are likely to be magnetically chained to earthly associations, their abode, probably, is a borderland between the two states of existence. That being the nethermost sphere of the ethereal world is conceivably dark, gross and horrible.'

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#### THE S.P.R. AND MRS. D'ESPERANCE.

BY CHARLES DAWBARN.

'LIGHT,' of November 19th, has but just reached this benighted post-office, which must be my apology for so late a reply to the interesting but too brief letter of Mr. Bennett, assistant-secretary to the Society for Psychical Research.

It seems that Mr. Myers had three sittings with Mrs. D'Esperance in October, 1895, and came to the conclusion that there was no evidence 'of the guidance of a scientific spirit.' The writer now asks the privilege of analysing this remarkable analysis, which leaves every important point urged in the 'Open Letter' entirely unnoticed.

The question involved is of vital importance to Spiritualism. Certain well-known members of the Society for Psychical Research have satisfied themselves that 'human immortality and spirit return' may now be accepted as reasonably proved. It is at the next step that the scientist now cries 'Halt'! He denies that knowledge equal to that of a fairly educated mortal has so far been manifested through 'spirit return.' He has subjected a certain asserted spirit, claiming superior knowledge, to a severe cross-examination, which has proved that he knows much less of acoustics than a Senior Wrangler and Professor of Mathematics.

This is a question of fact, which I accept as stated, and bow respectfully before the learned mortal. But his insinuated suggestion that the medium, having 'limited education but good verbal memory,' had read an old-fashioned treatise on acoustics, and added 'a hasty glance or two at some more modern text-book,' I, with equal respect, pass by as 'absurd,' since it would have involved a similar process for every other subject, treated in the same semi-scientific manner, by this medium of 'limited education.' I accept the manifestation of knowledge by the asserted spirit as below that of the educated mortal. Still we are left face to face with a fact that demands explanation.

Here is a mortal testing the claim of an immortal to be a brother scientist. The immortal necessarily has certain experiences gained by and after the process called 'death.' He must have had such experiences. So much is certain. The question is whether he can impart them in mortal language. The most of us neither hear, see, nor feel him. He must, therefore, answer our questions by passing his thoughts down into earth-life as best he can. He has found an instrument, such as it is, and is ready to do his best. By will power he compels certain material organs to vibrate in harmony with his thought. On our side the life-line we have a circle of perhaps a dozen or twenty mortals, each hurling at him *thoughts* of approval or disapproval, and exercising more power upon the medium than is possible to the spirit under such circumstances. If the desired thought can only be expressed by vibrations acting upon the mortal brain, then the result will be—must be—that the thought expressed will have little of the spirit and much of the mortal gathering. Such is as certainly a fact as spirit return itself, although it is apparently ignored by the learned members of the Society for Psychical Research. And under such circumstances it logically follows that we are getting nine-tenths of mortal mind to one-tenth of spirit intelligence.

The object of my 'Open Letter,' ignored by the assistant-secretary of the society, was to show that such investigations are necessarily without value. 'Humnur Stafford'—if such a spirit was present—was unfairly treated. And I took the liberty of pointing out the way, the only way, in which mortals may hope to gain by experiences which inhere to the very fact of immortality. Had Mr. Myers continued his investigations through this medium with the care and patience exercised with Mrs. Piper, I think we have a right to assume that, like Dr. Hodgson, he would sooner or later have attracted intelligences who could have given him as striking proofs of spirit knowledge as Dr. Hodgson gained of spirit life after bodily death.

As to how far the knowledge gained by a spirit in his new home can be made practical to mortals is quite another question. The spirit who is simply trying to go on living

the earth-life is easily approached. Give him but a chance and he will board and lodge with you. Few investigators, of even a month's experience, but have made his acquaintance. My complaint is that the conditions under which Mr. Myers made his investigations through Mrs. D'Esperance favoured just this class of 'spirit return.' An exhausted medium, with her powers wrenched and distorted by a dozen different phases, and haunted by the ghosts of living mortals, was but a poor instrument through which a scientific spirit could hope to calculate an eclipse, or solve a problem in acoustics. Mr. Myers declares that the Society has ever been ready for a 'thorough investigation of any spiritualist phenomena which may be accessible.' Then, I venture to ask, Why did he not make as thorough an investigation into the sphere of spirit knowledge as has been made through Mrs. Piper into the fact of spirit return?

I now make the further claim that these three sittings with Mrs. D'Esperance were a marked success. In spite of the adverse conditions above alluded to, the result was an exhibition of knowledge beyond that possessed by the medium, and on a subject of little interest to the average mind. It may have been knowledge inferior to that possessed by a talented Senior Wrangler who is also a Professor of Mathematics. But that is not the question. I suggest that Mr. Myers would have thought down to the level of everyday experience if he had re-stated the case somewhat as follows:—

'I have made investigation into an asserted manifestation of scientific knowledge through a medium of limited knowledge. The medium's powers had been abused, wasted, and almost exhausted before I met her. Yet under these conditions certain answers were received which exhibited a knowledge of some "old-fashioned treatise on acoustics, with a glance or two at some more modern text-book." There being no reasonable suspicion that the medium had memorised such treatise or text-books, I had an interesting exhibition of a knowledge impossible to the medium in her present normal condition. Whether such abnormal or spiritual knowledge on scientific subjects can be raised to the level of that of the trained mortal, can only be demonstrated by prolonged experiments with a sensitive placed and held under the most favourable conditions for the development of her powers.'

So much is all that my 'Open Letter' asked or suggested. If it has taken the Society ten years, more or less, to prove 'spirit return,' I presume we must not murmur if it be left to our grandchildren to demonstrate that spirit return can also include a manifestation of scientific knowledge equal to, and perchance even superior to, that of the mortal.

San Leandro, Cal., U.S.A.

#### 'A POLITICAL MEDIUM IN ST. PETERSBURG.'

As our readers will remember, Dr. G. von Langsdorff, of Freiburg, Baden, gave an address to the International Congress in June last under the above title. As that address was reported in full in 'LIGHT' of June 25th, it is but fair that we should give the same publicity to the following translation of a criticism which has appeared in 'Psychische Studien' from the pen of the Hon. Alexander Aksakow, who is specially competent to speak with authority on the subject:—

BY ALEXANDER AKSAKOW.

During the International Spiritualist Congress held in London in June, 1898, to which the 'Psychische Studien' referred at the time, Dr. George von Langsdorff, who was then personally present, presented an address which was read for him by Mr. J. J. Morse and which was published in 'LIGHT,' No. 911, under the title 'A Political Medium in St. Petersburg.'

In this address Dr. von Langsdorff remarks that he had published (through Oswald Mutze, Leipzig) a work entitled 'Die Schutzgeister' ('Guardian Spirits'), with an appendix, containing a full description of the mediumistic gifts of his son, Henry von Langsdorff, and of the remarkable mediumistic performances of the latter during his stay in St. Petersburg. The address read in London is purely a translation of that appendix.

Quite naturally I have been asked from different quarters, 'Is it true that Henry performed all the remarkable things his father relates of him?' and I was astonished to find even in this appendix the necessary basis on which to form an opinion, but I nevertheless refrained from speaking thereon until my return from Dorpat to St. Petersburg, where I should be able to find confirmation in regard to anything that might yet remain doubtful.

It would be unnecessary to follow up sentence by sentence what Dr. von Langsdorff relates of his son, the more so as he omits to name the witnesses for his assertions. But to a native Russian it is sufficient to read the account in order to see at once how little the recorder is acquainted with the customs that govern in Russia the demeanour of the Czar as well as of his counsellors and Court followers, and to laugh heartily at the manner in which Dr. von Langsdorff gives his story of his son's wonderful deeds.

In order not to contradict his story without giving proofs, I confine myself to the chief assertion, the report concerning the explosion in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg, which Henry von Langsdorff is said to have predicted to the Emperor Alexander II. half an hour before its occurrence.

1. This explosion did not occur in November, 1880, as Dr. von Langsdorff relates, but in February, 1880.

2. The Imperial dinner, which was to be served in the dining-hall under which the explosion took place, was not delayed by a conversation on account of the prediction of Langsdorff's son, but by the late arrival of the train by which Prince Alexander of Hesse was expected, and by the desire of the Empress Marie Alexandrowna to wait for the Prince. After his arrival the company entered the dining-hall.

3. The dynamite bomb was exploded by a clockwork arrangement, the remaining parts of which were found among the ruins. There was no subterranean wire to the house opposite, the site of which wire Langsdorff's son pretended to know so well as to lead him to say to the Emperor, 'Your Majesty, I will draw a line across the street, under which the wire from the house opposite is to be found.' If Langsdorff's son was so well informed of the impending catastrophe, why did he not help the Czar to secure the capture of the malefactor, at that time actually engaged in fixing the explosive machine in the interior of the Palace?

4. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria at that time was not present at all, as Dr. von Langsdorff states in his book and in London, by reason of the fact that no Ferdinand of Bulgaria existed in 1880—he did not arise on the political horizon till 1886.

[In 'LIGHT' of July 9th, p. 311, appeared a correction supplied by Dr. von Langsdorff himself, to the effect that the name 'Prince Ferdinand' had been written in error—that the name should have been given as 'Alexander,' not 'Ferdinand.'—ED. 'LIGHT.']

5. Of Count Loris Melikoff, Dr. von Langsdorff says: 'At that time Russia was ruled by the Grand Dictator Melikoff. He, like the Emperor, did not believe the prediction of Langsdorff's son. This likewise is not true, because at the time named Count Loris Melikoff was Governor-General at Charkow. It was not till a week after the explosion in the Winter Palace that he was called to his position in St. Petersburg.'

I shall not enter into any further details of the history of Dr. von Langsdorff, in which truth plays the smallest part; and I think it rather out of place to dwell on the other high achievements of Langsdorff's son. I will only add that here, at the Imperial Court, there is *nobody* who knows the name 'Von Langsdorff,' at least in the rôle he pretends to have played; I beg to be clearly understood when I say, 'Nobody!'

The question arises now, how to explain the appendix and the address in London. I think Dr. von Langsdorff gives the key to it himself when he asserts that his son is subject to an incurable insanity, and in an asylum. When did this insanity begin? All the foregoing makes it probable that it began long ago, and that the assertions made by Langsdorff's son, and promulgated by Dr. G. von Langsdorff *bonâ fide*, were the outcome of his son's diseased mental condition.

We shall be interested in learning what Dr. von Langsdorff has to say in reply to these criticisms by M. Aksakow.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 7th, 1899.

EDITOR ... .. E. DAWSON ROGERS.

*Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.*

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## Light,

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### THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK.

As the years go by, with such tedious but pathetic monotony, we cannot help sometimes feeling that one of the sorrows of life is the drudgery of it. But what is the secret of drudgery? and wherein does drudgery differ from work? Ruskin says: 'Labour without joy is base.' Why? Because the worker is not only an animal, but a living soul; and, if the soul does not participate in the work, the worker is degraded—degraded, at least, to the level of the machine or the mere 'brute'—and lower, if he is conscious of the degradation, or if he knows no more than this—that he is forced to work only as part of a general scramble or as in a social war. But if the worker's 'heart is in it,' as we say; if love glows, or art charms, or the sense of service uplifts, or the perception of utility impels, the work done is honourable, whatever it may be. A great statesman may be degraded in passing a Reform Bill. A washerwoman may be uplifted at her tub.

It is, of course, a mere commonplace to say that all kinds of workers are needed. True, we want clever heads and strong hands to keep the community in good condition for the world's daily needs. We want men of mind and men of muscle; housewives in the nursery or the kitchen, the little lassie to carry father his dinner, and the errand boy with his homely but necessary help. All that is recognised; but what is not recognised is that all service may be sacred, and all work divine—that all capacities and duties are from God, and that there is a spiritual significance in every, even the very poorest, piece of work. We still go on talking about the inspiration of the poet, but hear nothing as to the inspiration of the collier. We hear ever so much about the divineness of the priest, but not a word about the divineness of the world's corn-growers and bread-makers, bridge builders and seamen. We talk about an inspired book, but would laugh if anyone talked about the inspired expert who prints it. Why?

It would make all the difference in the world if we saw and recognised the simple truth—which is so very true—that the real quality of an action did not reside in the action, but in the spirit and intention of it. And it is just here that an enlightened Spiritualism could do so much for the world. It is not necessary that we should accept the late William Morris's fantastic suggestion that all of us should take our turn at the lower tasks. That would be both wasteful and silly. 'Everyone to what he can do best,' ought to be the rule: and then let everyone be honoured or respected in it. Take the very temple itself. He who cleans the pew, in the right spirit, is as much a worker for God as he who occupies the pulpit. He who

makes comely the altar, and loves his humble task, serves at God's altar as truly as the ministering priest. And wherever men and women work with interest and zeal as well as for money, praise to God is offered, and the spirit of God inspires.

The old distinction between secular and sacred must be revised—or abolished. We must distinguish, not between secular and sacred, but between honest and dishonest, reality and sham. Building a church is not more sacred than building a town hall. The sacredness comes in in relation to efficiency of ventilation, the honesty of the mortar, the soundness of the drains; for the God in everything is the good in everything; therefore, what matters it whether the world's willing and honest workman rules a province or quarries stone, administers the sacraments or weighs out an ounce of tea? Well said that fine thinker, T. T. Lynch, in one of his breezy hymns:—

Call me unto Thy service, Lord,  
And train me for Thy will;  
For even I, in fields so broad,  
Some duty may fulfil:  
And I will ask for no reward  
Except to serve Thee still.

How many serve! How many more  
May to the service come!  
To tend the vines, the grapes to store,  
Thou dost appoint for some.  
Thou hast Thy young men at the war,  
Thy little ones at home.

All works are good, and each is best  
As most it pleases Thee.  
Each worker pleases when the rest  
He serves in charity.  
And neither man nor work unblest  
Wilt Thou permit to be.

This suggests to the spiritual observer a new and deeper relation between the server and the served. Wages can never really cover all. Even if wages cover all financially, as a matter of profit and loss, the personal element comes in, or may, or ought: and this can never be included in the bond. If this personal element does not come in; if there is no sense of gratitude on the part of him who is served, no sympathy, no pride in one's work for its own sake, no desire to be useful and to help lift the general burden, the whole transaction is merely mechanical, animal, degraded and unspiritual, totally unworthy of us, and rightly punishing us, if we get, in the end, only a fight of selfishnesses, and perhaps a struggle between cunning and force.

There is a very deep and solemn sense in which we are God's stewards. Paul was absolutely right, socially right, and economically as well as religiously right, when he said:—

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ: not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

There we have the profound value of the religious view of so-called 'secular' things. The whole matter is carried, as we say, 'to a higher court.' The servant is to do his work on the Christ plane, with singleness of heart, and with good will, as to God and not to men—as though the work were God's work (which, in truth, it is); and the master is not to be masterful, but mindful of the fact that he is only a servant also, with his 'Master in heaven.' It

is wonderfully beautiful, and it presents us with an ideal which would make a new world of it, if we would let it. These bricklayers, printers, bakers, carmen, typewriters, housemaids, are all God's servants, in the first instance, and ours only in the second instance; and this is not mere sentiment, but the fundamental fact of religion and work; just as it is with the nations and all who are in it. The nation is supreme above all; just as God is supreme above all who come and go upon His planet. In the nation, it is the splendid duty of everyone to share the general burden for the general good (and that also is on the Christ plane): and the people in high places should remember that they are only the nation's servants, and have no right to rule except for the general good. Men come and go, but the nation remains; just as men come and go, and God remains. The great business goes on, and banking and building, weaving and cooking, writing and road-sweeping, are all parts of the world's life. Every one, then, who does any bit of the world's necessary work may feel he is a patriot; and the highest amongst us should most solemnly say, 'My master is the nation.'

So, in whatever sense God is Creator and Providence, the planet is His, and we are only His stewards, and hold our servitudes or masterships from Him. There is no greater, no higher, no more elevating and consoling thought. It has in it 'the promise and potency' of all that Jesus intended by the coming of the kingdom of heaven upon earth; for we have only to connect all life and duty, all types of personality, all service and all authority, with God, to secure the reverence and the pitifulness which would make all classes and kinds of human beings what the great Artist-God intended them to be.

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#### 'THE TAIL OF THE EARTH.'\*

This is a most distressing pamphlet. There is not a new fact in it. The old generalities of Spiritualism are used as the raw material for a vague system of eccentric doctrine, concerning the visible and invisible worlds, which is nothing but a series of assertions and assumptions couched in an outlandish vocabulary of the author's invention. The author gives us a glossary, which is a veritable maze for the innocent reader. Open the pamphlet anywhere, and a new word meets you like a bayonet, and brings you up short. For instance, a new subject is broached on p. 15, in these words:—

'The principal physiometrical factum, that, *in galomature, materity and paterity are contravariant*, is established by proving the contravariantism of every analogue of galomature.' (The italics are the author's.)

Mr. Danmar's theory seems to be that the earth has a tail which is not a trail, but stands out on the dark or 'night' side of the earth, like the tail of a comet; this tail is a 'mass' composed of 'galom,' which is something (or nothing) in vibration, and it is the habitat of 'Zeroids.' Zeroids are 'the final products of organic life, which means bodies on the Zero of nature: there are, consequently, vegetable, animal, and human Zeroids, of which the human are identical with the spirits and angels of religious and modern Spiritualism.' The Zeroid, when full grown, attains equilibrium, and equilibrium—the state in which nothing is desired—is happiness. But it is happiness without enjoyment, for the Zeroids are to human beings in the flesh ('protoids') very much what the empty eggshell is to the egg.

'The Tail of the Earth' is a fearful and wonderful production. It ought to make the champion word-coiner of the S.P.R. turn green with jealousy!

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NEW YORK, U.S.A.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Messrs. Brentano, 31, Union-square.

\* 'The Tail of the Earth; or, The Location and Condition of the "Spirit World."' By WILLIAM DANMAR, Brooklyn, 1887. Published by William Danmar, 5, McAuley-place, Jamaica, New York, U.S.A. Price 25 cents.

## A PSYCHICAL INSTITUTE

### ITS BEARING ON 'OUR PUBLIC MEDIUMS.'

With regard to the issue raised by your correspondent, Mrs. Stannard, I have observed that the attention of your readers has not yet been called to a new departure that has occurred in America recently, which will have an important bearing on the psychical research of the future, and which presents the very conditions the urgency of which is claimed by Mrs. Stannard.

It appears that a scientist, 'at the head of a scientific institute' in America, has placed a laboratory comprising a valuable set of instruments and the services of a competent experimentalist familiar with laboratory work in physiology, biology and medicine, at the disposal of the 'National Association of Spiritualists' in America, with the intention of facilitating psychical research, and securing the carrying out of such research with scientific exactness.

All sections of psychical phenomena are to be investigated; especially those produced through mediums. The mediums who present themselves for experimentation will be boarded during the investigations at the expense of the donator. A certificate will then be presented to the mediums, recording the results achieved, and a report will be published in a psychic quarterly, the special organ of the Institute. As the donator does not wish to be known at present, he has placed the Institute under the direction of the committee of the Association referred to.

There is every reason to expect that this Institute will place psychical research on a higher level than it has hitherto occupied. While mediums through whom astonishing phenomena occur, abound in America, the conditions of experimentation obtaining in public séances there are highly unsatisfactory. Nor has any effort been made by the spiritualistic press generally to unite in supporting the 'Banner of Light' in its effort towards enforcing more rigorous conditions. Careful accounts of phenomena, confirmed by reliable witnesses, are rarely reported, and scientific men have till recently been afraid of associating their names with the question. The prospective psychic quarterly will be a boon to investigators in Europe who are interested in these questions, and who apparently will have reliable reports of phenomena placed before them in the future.

But especially is it the intention of the Institute to give certificates to the mediums experimented with, recording the phenomena of value obtained through them. *Bonâ fide* mediums will now have the opportunity of having their peculiar, special gifts endorsed by competent authorities, and will be protected thereby from the prejudice entailed by accusations made by rash, incompetent sceptics, ignorant of the laws governing psychical conditions.

It may be hoped that mediums who refuse to seek this official endorsement will fail to receive public support; while on the other hand the mediums who obtain this recognition of the validity of their faculties, may at last be acknowledged by the public as useful members of society, contributing valuable opportunities for knowledge.

Another influence which may be expected from this Institute is that it will probably educate the public in correct methods of investigation. This, again, reacting on mediums will accustom them to better methods and bring the consideration which is their due, and apart from which self-respect and dignity are not to be expected. Public opinion will then probably censure such of us who, from protected social positions, flippantly speak in slighting terms of those whom higher powers have delegated to the function of serving as intermediaries, at the disposal of all who may wish to obtain evidence as to the reality of an after life. We may expect to see the whole question of Spiritualism raised on to a higher level.

That some analogous authoritative body should be constituted here, as Mrs. Stannard urges, is most desirable. If it could be realised, then no medium should receive public support who had not submitted his or her psychic faculties for examination and endorsement by certificate. But England is so small as regards travelling distances, that one central committee should suffice, if the candidate's travelling expenses were paid, in the case of satisfactory results being obtained. Her proposal that cases of charges of fraud

should be investigated by that committee is valuable, as only experts are fitted to estimate the validity of such charges.

Is it not time for the London Spiritualist Alliance to undertake positive, active, constructive work? Surely it could constitute from among its members such a committee as is suggested by Mrs. Stannard. Yet, if I may be permitted a few remarks on that subject, I would urge that such a committee should include an expert in hypnotic suggestion; in mesmeric suggestion; a telepathist; an occultist or practical magician; and some Spiritualists experienced in subjective and objective phenomena. None of these branches, taken by themselves, suffice to explain the phenomena occurring within their own special fields. A knowledge of all of these several sections of psychical science is necessary to understand their mutual inter-relation and bearing, in the production of the phenomena occurring in any one of these sections.

The result of study having been till now pursued separately in each of these several schools, without interchange of the knowledge acquired, has been unfortunate. It has led to the application of different terms in the several schools, to the same energies, &c., thus obscuring the underlying unity. It has led to an *esprit de corps* being generated in the several schools, with consequent unfriendliness to the other schools, and the ignoring of the results achieved by them.

Thus hypnotists look askance at mesmerists, and pretend that suggestion is the only reality in the phenomena obtained by the latter school. Some mesmerists speak slightly in return of hypnotism, thereby only exhibiting their own ignorance, or prejudice. Yet Professor Boirac has shown that these two agents may replace, condition, or supplement each other, thus proving their unity of nature. Other hypnotists affirm that mediumistic subjective phenomena and automatic writing are produced by the auto-suggestion of the subject's sub-consciousness, which is as inexact as it would be to affirm that all hypnotic phenomena are so produced. Had their studies comprised comparative observation of mediumistic phenomena, they would soon have realised the distinction present in the unity of nature.

Some telepathists maintain that mediumistic trance communications are produced by the telepathic influence (mental suggestion would be more correct) of the experimenter. This is as inexact as to pretend that all mediumistic objective, exteriorised phenomena are so produced. They also pretend that these personations are produced by the sub-consciousness of the medium, as artificially-provoked personations are produced by suggestion in a hypnotised subject. Comparative observation of *both* these phenomena would soon lead them to alter their position.

Most occultists I have met, including a fair number practising magic, are ignorant of the variety, and of the true nature of mediumistic phenomena, and consequently speak patronisingly of Spiritualism, showing that they are not aware that their own science is a subordinate representation, based upon the same laws, and thereby ignoring the very strongest argument they could bring forward in their own support. Here, again, it is knowledge of comparative data that is lacking.

An example having an important bearing on these considerations is presented to us from France. The leaders of the several schools studying psychic science in France have set a high example of mutual consideration, worthy of the principles they study. They have risen above the mutual personal jealousies which held them apart in the past, and united in constituting an independent association, in which they meet on equal footing and organise associative movements for their mutual advantage. I refer to the 'Syndicat de la Presse Spiritualiste,' constituted by the co-operation of the Hermetic Occultists, the Magnetists (whose school is recognised by the State, and carries the power of granting diplomas for therapeutic treatment), and the Spiritualists. The outcome of this union has been the institution of the society for lecturing on spiritual science, already noticed in this journal. The society will also co-operate in organising the coming Congress of 1900. They now have under consideration the establishment of a psychical institute.

Is England to remain behind France and America in this respect? Can we not also effect a similar union, constituting thereby a psychical Institute in which each school would be represented by an autonomous section, while retaining entire independence as regards their own beliefs, their own organisations, &c., yet uniting to present their special knowledge to students of the Institute with regard to their respective sections?

In Drs. Milne-Bramwell and Lloyd Tuckey able exponents of hypnotic suggestion might, perhaps, be obtainable. Dr. G. Wyld might perhaps consent to give illustrations of mesmeric suggestion, and no doubt some of the French mesmerists could be invited to contribute demonstrations and lectures occasionally. The Psychical Research Society might be requested to contribute an instructor in the practice of telepathy. The Theosophists might be invited to contribute lectures on the Eastern system of Yoga, &c. There are several Hermetic and Kabbalistic schools of magic in England. Surely their chiefs might be induced to break their restrictive rule of silence to the extent of authorising some member to lecture on the bearing of magical processes on psychical science in general, as the French chiefs have delegated 'Papus' for that purpose. It may be presumed that English occultists will not be behind their French colleagues in altruism. A lecturer on electro-magnetism would be necessary, dealing with the analogies between neuric circulation and that of electro-magnetism, demonstrated by Dr. Durand de Gros, Dr. E. Branly, Dr. Foveau de Courmelles, Dr. Tisson, Dr. Baréty, Dr. Ch. Pupin, Professors Boirac and Grasset. The psychophysiological correlations of alternating active and passive states, should be dealt with by a biologist or neurologist.

The Institute might be delegated to carry out the functions suggested by Mrs. Stannard, and issue reports of the phenomena obtained, which already form a part of the programme adopted by the American Institute.

Surely it may be hoped that the leaders of spirituo-psychical science will rise to the level of the principles they represent, transcend competitive considerations, &c., and unite in rendering disinterested scientific study of man's psychic faculties possible, by presenting combinedly to students the knowledge they severally possess in their respective sections. If such a Psychical Institute could be established, then it might interchange its records with its sister institutes in America and France, and unite in associative effort to constitute an international psychical science.

'QUESTOR VITÆ.\*'

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#### 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 p.m., on Friday next, January 13th, when

MR. J. LAMONT,

of Liverpool, will give a narrative of some of the remarkable incidents which have come within his own personal experience during the many years which he has devoted to the observation and study of spiritualistic phenomena.

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#### 'LIGHT' AND THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

We beg to remind the Subscribers to 'Light,' and the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, who have not already renewed their Subscriptions for 1899, which are payable *in advance*, that they should forward remittances at once to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W. C. Their kind attention to this matter will save much trouble in sending out accounts, booking, postage, &c.

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NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by W. H. Robinson, 4, Nelson-street, and Book Market.

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\* It must not be supposed that the writer seeks for any position whatever in connection with this proposal. He merely wishes to call attention to the tendencies which are converging in this direction at present, and to the advantages which would accrue if accomplished.

## MORE LUCIFERIAN FREEMASONRY.\*

The remarkable discussion to which we opened our columns in 1896, on the subject of Satanism in France, and the charges made in that country against the Masonic fraternity, will be remembered by most of our readers. In a pamphlet of the period, Dr. 'Papus,' President of the Supreme Council of the Martinist Order, acknowledged that the investigations of our correspondents led up to the ultimate exposure of Leo Taxil. There is no doubt, in any case, that it created much interest, both in England and abroad. The enforced confession of imposture on the part of the 'fumist' in chief had, we thought, closed the subject, except for the historian; but it appears that the same accusation is being made in the same interest at the present moment. M. L. Floquet, whom we take to be an ecclesiastic of the Catholic Church and an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, has determined to reply formally to Mr. A. E. Waite's book on 'Devil Worship in France,' and to publish, so he tells us, a small part of the information he has collected concerning 'Devil Worship in England,' as a counter blast to that work (p. 3). The English variety is, of course, a Masonic growth, and it flourishes in a field which has been left, to some extent, neglected by the Continental anti-Masons (p. 4). In his general thesis M. Floquet betrays, as might be expected, very little novelty of invention; it is simply the old accusation that there is an outer and inner side of English Masonry, and the nature of the secret doctrines which he discerns is substantially identical with the findings in solemn conclave of the Trent Anti-Masonic Congress; that is to say, they are Pantheism, Gnosticism, Phallicism, Nature-worship, and so on. After what manner M. Floquet establishes his thesis we are unable to give a clear notion, for though he devotes several chapters to the subject and draws evidence ostensibly from rituals, manuals, monitors, craft periodicals and other sources, he has not digested his materials, and he seems to read into them much of the construction which he requires.

On the other hand, the impeachment of Mr. A. E. Waite is much clearer, and, to be frank, is more entertaining; it is he apparently who is at the bottom of much of the mischief which is recognised in English Masonry by M. Floquet. 'It is perfectly apparent that during the last thirty years the English leading Masonic Knights, whether in Europe or in America, have imbibed more or less of the magical teachings of the French Magician (Eliphas Lévi), and we do not know anyone who contributed to this result more than Mr. A. E. Waite did in England' (p. 104). Again: 'No one has contributed as he did to the propagation of Mystico-Magic among the English occultists in or out of Freemasonry.' As M. Floquet has been at pains to possess himself of all or nearly all the works which have appeared during the past twelve years from the pen of our occasional contributor, he cannot be said to have neglected any source of information. Nor could it be expected that they should provide him with merely a single accusation. If we understand the critic rightly, they offer evidence to demonstration of Mr. Waite's Luciferian tendencies, after which it seems trivial to mention that he has been guilty of extreme bad faith in his defence of Masonry. In this respect M. Floquet sees nothing to choose between Leo Taxil and the author of 'Devil Worship in France' (p. 55), on the ground, as we gather, that Mr. Waite has mis-stated the Masonic position of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia in order to misdirect the inquiry as to the real character of both, and because his purely literary writings, such as 'The Golden Stairs,' make inventions like 'Le Diable au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle,' appear 'pale and insipid plagiaries' (p. 96). On the literary question we make no pretence to adjudicate, but it is easy to see that M. Floquet has very slight acquaintance with the complex history of Rosicrucianism. So far as reasonable people are concerned, the spectre of Luciferian Freemasonry has been laid forever; it is to be regretted that the Catholic Church has still unwise defenders who seek to recall it; they are making their cause ridiculous, but they are beyond the pale of argument.

\* 'Luciferianism or Satanism in English Freemasonry.' By L. FLOQUET, O.M.I. Montreal: Cadieux and Derome, 1603, Rue Notre Dame. 1898.

## THE FIRE-TREADING AT BENARES.

A correspondent of the 'Pioneer,' Mr. Hira Lall Banerjee, writes as follows:—

Will you kindly allow me to make the following statement regarding an extraordinary event, which happened during the Theosophical Society's Convention at Benares, on the night of the 26th October, 1898? On that date it was announced, at the conclusion of Mrs. Besant's address, in Maharajah Sir C. K. Tagore's villa, that a *Sannyási* (a Hindu fakir) would walk bare-footed over an *agni-kund* (a tana of fire), and any one desiring to do the same might follow him safely. Everyone was anxious to witness this strange event, and all went to see the place where the above performance was going to take place. We saw there that an excavation, about 14ft. by 5ft. by 3½ft., had been made, the two sides of which were sloping inwards, for facilitating the running over the fire, and in it some hundred maunds of logs, most probably of the tamarind tree (*Tamarindus Indica*) were burning fiercely from 4.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m., when some unburned parts of them were thrown out of the pit, and the surface of the fire levelled. The heat was so intense that we could scarcely sit at a distance of three yards away from the pit of fire. Now the expectant moment arrived. At first a crowd of Coorgs, men and women with babies in their arms, came, frantically shouting, while some men carried swords and baskets or plates filled with religious offerings. Some of the plates contained large *chirags* (open mud lamps) which were surrounded with small paper flags, and the wonder was that these did not catch fire, as the flames often reached them. The men thrice carried an idol placed on a small palanquin round the fire and performed certain religious ceremonies which consisted in breaking coconuts, &c. All the while these men were making a horrible noise and were dancing as if they were drunk. At first some thought that these men were drugged with *bhang* (Indian hemp) or having a sort of chemical applied under the feet would pass over the fire, no matter whether their feet burned or not. But we were totally mistaken. The lunatic affairs (*sic*) suddenly ceased, and it was announced that the fire had been subdued by the power of *mantras* (incantations) and that any one could go over it. At first none dared and one or two of the above men ran over the fire, the total area of which was about 11ft. by 5ft. by 1ft. = 55 cubic feet. Everyone was filled with awe, and streams of men and boys began to go over it. Caught by the enthusiasm of the moment, I threw away my shoes and socks (*sic*), and tucking up my cloth I ran over the fire and came out of it safely. My feet sank in the fire, and the sensation felt was as if one was running over a hot sandy place. The spell lasted for ten minutes, after which none dared to go over the fire, and during that time hundreds of men passed over it; even some went four or five times over it, without being scorched in the least. The above wonderful spectacle was witnessed by Colonel Olcott, the Countess of Wachtmeister, Mrs. Besant, Miss Lilian Edger, Mr. Keightley, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Pascal (from France), Mr. Venis (Principal, Queen's College), Professor Mulvany and many others. One of the European gentlemen examined my feet and found them all right; one of them was also willing to go over the fire, but could not do so owing to his boots and trousers. One remarked, 'The first part of the ceremony was ridiculous, but the last was wonderful.' The *Sannyási* who managed the whole affair did not himself go over the fire or appear in the ceremonies and in fact he was a mere bystander. He is known here as *Jangum-Baba*, and it is rumoured that he can show the phenomenon again. Further particulars regarding this event may be had from the Theosophical Society, Benares. The cause of this wonderful occurrence, which was not surely a feat of jugglery, should be investigated by scientists, and to a layman or to a sceptic regarding the power of *mantras*, it must remain as one of the mysteries of Nature.

—'THE THEOSOPHIST.'

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Mr. W. H. Terry, Austral Buildings, Collins-street, E.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.*

## 'Repressive Laws.'

SIR,—'Ben-Ben' had your permission to answer 'Spectator's' query 'respecting the remedies for the state of things known to be associated with the higher forms of Spiritualism.' But I had no such 'query' in my letter.

I believe the *higher* forms of Spiritualism are beyond my questioning. Mr. Robinson's desire seems to have been to put in force 'repressive laws' against *lower* forms of Spiritualism. 'Ben-Ben' asked him for further light. Apart from 'Ben-Ben's' part in this correspondence, I pointed out my own difficulties in trying to understand Mr. Robinson. And I found myself in good company, seeing Mr. Bevan Harris in a similar plight. Well, sir, Mr. Robinson has again contributed to your columns, and I hope he will pardon me for saying that he gives *no answer* whatever to 'Ben-Ben'; so I and Mr. Bevan Harris may just as well leave matters where they are, as regards Mr. Robinson.

Just about thirty-three years ago I took up this investigation, and I have read and studied all the literature on this subject which I could get hold of, so that it must be admitted that I have some acquaintanceship with the question. Well, if this is granted, what is my attitude towards repressive laws? You cannot make a man truthful, honest, sober, moral, intellectual, or religious by Act of Parliament. Those who framed the sixteenth century repressive laws, so much admired by Mr. Robinson, have been over to the other side now for some generations; and those, their victims, also have been 'over there' for a considerable period, as we count time. They may not all have awakened yet. The death of the body is not always, in my opinion, the awakening of the spirit. But be this as it may, the law-makers of three centuries ago will not be supported at this time of day. 'Ben-Ben' justifies me in this view. She refers to the 'latent powers' in humanity. She could say more if space allowed her to quote Dr. Babbitt's 'Principles of Light and Colour'; and she will probably be glad to read that I perused the first copy of this book that came to Newcastle-on-Tyne; and this, by the kind favour of Mr. Robinson.

'Ben-Ben' makes us all 'millionaires' in our priceless possession; but we do not need to know more than that, to understand ourselves, we must have experience and opportunity. She says I express bewilderment that 'repressive laws should inspire interest,' and she suggests reading between the lines to discover the truth. But I was 'bewildered' by my friend's *defence* of repressive laws. Not quite the same thing, or, if the same thing ('interest'), not in the same colours as Mr. Robinson paints it. 'Ben-Ben' is on my side: or, at any rate, neither of us is on Mr. Robinson's side: who, when requested to make his case readily comprehensible, writes so that his opponent has to imagine some thought unexpressed between the lines. Friend Robinson has kindly read me a letter recently received from Mr. Bevan Harris, and I know the two so well as to feel sure that both have a whole-hearted interest in the spread of the honest pursuit of Spiritualism. Remarkable to relate, one soars into the transcendental, while the other would gladly welcome the smallest light, the lowest or loudest rap, or other *genuine* evidence of intelligent spirit origin, believing phenomena the very foundation of Spiritualism. The mean between these two mental attitudes is occupied by various types of mind. I am for plain speaking and straight action, philosophy, or cheering discourses on the platform, and every form of phenomena relegated to well-governed séances.

I advocate the registration of names in your editorial charge. I suggest that there shall be an index of all mediums, the names to be supplied and vouched for by persons whose *bona-fides* are satisfactory to you. It is most desirable that the people sincerely interested in Spiritualism should *show* their *sincerity* by exposing all fraud and deception within the ranks. The Press wields a great power; and sometimes prevents a great power from fully operating. For so long as any portion of the spiritual Press advocates one thing, and panders, for the sake of profitable advertisements,

to a possibly worse thing, we cannot say that our hands are clean.

Some scheme might be adopted which would lead to annual meetings, after the manner of the British Association, or the other yearly meetings of societies, at which only those having had ten to twenty years' experience in investigation of Spiritualism should be allowed to take prominent parts. Younger investigators might be listeners. At these meetings committees might be elected for many centres; which committees could plan visitations to the societies, and as visitors, advise upon and discuss local affairs. Before these visiting committees, aspirants for public platform work would have to show fitness for assuming the work of public speaking. In this country, after twenty-five years of public schools, few should be unable to expound spiritual truths in good English. All who stand on our platforms to do platform work, should have fitted themselves to speak their mother tongue accurately. Then, whether humble spirit controls or those of a higher order from the spheres are enabled to use such mediums, their efforts would at least have the benefit resulting from well-attuned instruments. Then might we realise the value of the saying quoted by Jesus—'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast *perfected* praise.' The writer whom Jesus quoted is nameless in the New Testament, but clearly was one who had had a keen perception of the great value of inspired utterances, evidently not the result of the utterer's own mental elaboration, but rather evidence of a higher spiritual control. This is what we want on the platform. All our mediums are not Mozarts, or even Shepards. Why should we have to listen by the hour to a brutal treatment of our mother tongue, any more than we should be compelled to listen by the hour to pretentious efforts to produce fine music from a badly tuned piano or violin? Are our societies too lax, and too easily amused, or satisfied; or our mediums cherished for their wonder-satisfying efforts, to pander to wonder-hunting?

After thirty years in the movement, after having in the course of those thirty years borne the scorn of family, friends and strangers, culminating in my name having been placarded through the division of the county of which I was an elector, and an active opponent, through the Press, of one candidate, so that my effusions should be shown to be the wild ravings of a man who wrote nonsensical articles in the 'Medium and Daybreak,' I am not likely to whine over criticisms written in perfect good faith, and purely for the love of the movement we are trying to advance to higher planes. In one respect I have to confess I have made little progress. I always advocated to the late James Burns, in private talks of many years ago, that our aim ought to be, *not to crystallise* a crude form of the occult into a separate societary effort, but to persevere till all who *professed* faith in the immortality of man were, within the ranks of their respective church and chapel organisations, brought to *realise* and *recognise*, and *courageously admit* their faith, confirmed by *knowledge* of the truth. Our Holy of Holies ought to be our sacredly-guarded and charitably-governed spirit-circle. Not all the mediums are worthy of our Holy of Holies. I could name mediums whose life is a disgrace to our cause, but who are nevertheless hunted up, and encouraged to prostitute their unquestioned gift, in season and out of season. Let us, within the ranks, expose fearlessly all this foulness, and not leave ourselves open to the outsiders' sneers. This attitude, maintained courageously, and yet with clearly marked sincerity, will have the effect, I feel convinced, of eliminating from our ranks those of whom so much is very naturally spoken and written with disapproval.

JOHN LORD.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

SIR,—The signs of the times appear to work against the opinion that evil can be extirpated or even diminished by the 'thou shalt nots' of church creeds, or the cogent voice of legal punishment; for villainy abounds in spite of the danger of years of penal servitude in the event of discovery. Is there no cure? There is, but not in the line of stern repression, but by the all-conquering power of love. Education (more than that of the three 'R's'), Lyceums, and the 'greatest thing in the world,' Love, will slowly but

surely work the renovation in our own ranks, as well as outside, 'grinding to powder' every opposing force of evil.

Already something has been done, and if we are taunted with our small charity towards the suffering poor we do not forget that it is written 'Silver and gold have I none, but in the name of Jesus rise up and walk.' When our critics can show physical suffering reduced through their instrumentality more than we can, in this nineteenth century, we will give in to their comparison.

Still, *something* has been done, even if our philanthropic gifts are small; we have *elevated the tone of ethics* all around. Vivisection, the penalty of death, are by all our best thinkers held to be execrable, waiting only the exterminating hand of public opinion; and many other vices hide away before the firm steps of Spiritualism and Spiritualists who, without interdicts, are a 'law unto themselves.'

Let none for a moment suppose that as a whole the Press has any partiality towards us, or that the pulpit has forgotten its vow to spoil us, and so 'drive away' our heresy, although neither can publish us as criminals or give example of our misdeeds in our police-courts. We do not claim perfection, *but we are not there*. But let a Spiritualist (nominal only) be up, say, for blackmailing, and both the Press and pulpit would vie with each other and 'ring the old year out and the New Year in' in violent, exaggerated story of our whole movement.

Repressive laws may be a stop-gap remedy for the grosser forms of evil, but the true high Spiritualism is *the cure*; and *education for both* worlds is the only saviour of humanity.

BEVAN HARRIS.

Radcliffe-on-Trent.

#### Mental Science and Drunkenness.

SIR,—In your issue for December 24th, you quoted from an article in 'Freedom' by Helen Wilmans, in which she maintains that mental science is the true system by which to exterminate drunkenness. But surely a more efficacious method than that of developing the will-power, and one that promises a far greater success, is to remove altogether the craving for drink, to create if possible a distaste for it. Now, this *can* be, and has been, done in hundreds of cases, by a very simple method—one which has been successful in nearly a hundred per cent. of cases, and which operates, moreover, quite independently of the will of the patient.

It has been conclusively established that the drink-craze is due to a morbid condition of the nerves engendered by the use of stimulating foods, chief among which is flesh-meat; hence that abstinence from flesh-meat almost invariably effects a cure. Dr. Jackson, chief physician to a Home for Inebriates in America where they have adopted this treatment, writes: 'I have found it impossible to cure drunkards while I allowed them the use of flesh-meats. . . . Aside from its nutrition, it contains some element or substance which so excites the nervous system as in the long run to exhaust it, to wear out its tissue, and render it incapable of natural action.' It is a fact also observed by all vegetarians, that soon after adopting the diet they lose all taste or desire for alcoholic drinks. We see, therefore, that it is by a reform in our dietetic habits—a reform desirable for many other reasons—that this curse of the human race can best be extirpated. For surely it is easier to get a man to change his diet than to develop in him sufficient strength of will to overcome his craving.

E. MARTIN WEBB.

#### Churchmen and Spiritualists.

SIR,—Please allow me space to reply to 'English Catholic's' letter. He has forgotten to answer my first question. In reply to my second he says, 'Well, in the first place, if we find our friends in earth-life scrupulously truthful in all they tell, we naturally give credence to all their statements,' &c. But this explanation is also applicable to other spirits who were trustworthy on earth, and who are opposed to the fundamental doctrines accepted by your correspondent. 'English Catholic' has said that spirits told him that the doctrines of the Catholic Church are true, with one exception; but they would have been more correct if they had said that the doctrines appeared to their minds to be true,

On the other hand, there are intelligent spirits who are opposed to these doctrines. Then, what are we to believe? To assume that all these spirits are lying spirits is a reckless assertion. It has often occurred to my mind that there are some people nowadays who glibly assert that spirits are liars without carefully examining their statements to ascertain whether they are right or wrong. To my mind the only satisfactory reason which can be given to account for the conflicting evidence in regard to doctrines, apart altogether from undeveloped spirits, is the one given by me in my former letter, and I assume that it is to some extent convincing, because 'English Catholic' has thanked me for my 'explanation of the opposing statements of various spirits.' With reference to 'English Catholic's' quotation, it appears to me that he is a zealous Christian, and if the 'Christian faith' can make him happier than any other, I do not want him to relinquish it. I am merely opposed to the public advocacy of doctrines in which I do not believe. But years ago I advocated, and do now, that whatever is elevating and ennobling in the bibles of all nations should be accepted by Spiritualists.

I have lately read a remarkably ably-written book called 'Through the Mists,' and I hope that 'English Catholic' will tolerate an extract from it. The spirit who communicated said that he asked an exalted spirit this question: 'Which of all the denominations, or religions if you will, contributes the highest percentage of the redeemed?' The reply was: 'We recognise but one religion here, that is, love, and all its disciples have but one denomination—lovers of mankind. No one of all the man-made religions holds a monopoly of this attribute, but earnest and conscientious followers of it may be found in all. Its worship is service to humanity; its litany, noble deeds; its prayers, tears of sympathy; its sermons, simple lives, known and read of all men; its songs, lullabies to sooth the broken-hearted; its faith, the immolation of self.'

ARIEL.

#### The Ascension of Jesus.

SIR,—I must beg you to allow me to reply to your gentle criticism of my sermon on 'The Ascension of Jesus' in your issue of December 24th. You maintain that the New Testament record supports the idea that 'the resurrection body of Jesus was not a physical body at all.'

The New Testament gives a flat contradiction to you in the following words from Luke xxiv. 36-43:—

'And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit; and he said unto them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, and when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.'

This is further corroborated in the story of Thomas given in John xx. 24-27. A body which can walk, talk, and eat must be a physical body with flesh and bones, &c., and cannot be a spirit.

CHARLES VOYSEY.

December 27th, 1898.

[Mr. Voysey, for the moment, loses sight of the fact that the Gospel stories are not entirely consistent. Besides, in saying what we did, we expressed only our own view, not Luke's. Last of all, we are not at all sure that 'a spirit' could not walk, talk, and eat—or do something equivalent to walking, talking, and eating.—ED. 'LIGHT.']

#### Man as a Miniature Sun.

SIR,—I have just read the quotation in your 'Notes by the Way' in 'LIGHT' of the 24th ult., to the effect that 'Dr. Baraduc, of Paris, has recently advanced the theory that man is a miniature sun.' As many of your readers will remember, for the past two years or more I have been advancing this theory publicly in my lectures on the 'Sun's Influence on Character,' which I have had the pleasure of giving—in some instances for the second time—before spiritualist as well as other societies. It is an intensely interesting subject; but it is not new.

JOHN T. DALES,

320, Upland-road, East Dulwich, S.E.

## The O.P.S. Sick, Benefit, and Pension Fund.

SIR,—In accordance with my custom, and your usual courtesy, I again present to the subscribers to the above Fund the monthly statement of subscriptions that I have received. I do so this time with great pleasure, as the amounts to hand have not only been considerable, but they have helped to relieve our treasurer and myself from some anxiety as to our immediate disbursements. But while this is the case, may I still again appeal to all Spiritualists to give this Fund their hearty support? Now we are still in the light of the season of Good Will let me hope we may not emerge therefrom without a further substantial addition to our funds for the sick, aged and needy in our midst. With sincere thanks to all contributors, old ones and new ones alike, and thanking you, sir, for giving us the space for these periodical acknowledgments.

J. J. MORSE, Hon. Sec., *pro tem.*

Contributions received during December, 1898: 'S.E.' Whitby, 2s.; Mrs. E. Lowe, Trieste, £2 9s. 9d.; E. Dawson Rogers, 10s.; 'Brightonian,' £1; 'A.B.,' Smethwick, 10s. 6d.; 'Onward,' 3s.; A. E. Walker, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Wood, £2; A.W. Orr, £1; E. L. Boswell-Stone, 2s. 6d.; 'W.C.W.,' Derby, 10s.; 'A.C.O.O.' 5s.; 'I. J.' Brighton, 2s.; Rev. J. Page Hopps, 5s.; F. Trueman, 5s.; R. George, 10s.; E. B. Coghill, 10s.; 'A Reader of "The Two Worlds,"' 2s. 6d.; J. Auld, 5s.; Mrs. R. Morgan, £1; 'H. M. M.,' Bristol, 2s. 6d.; A. Green, 2s.; J. Janes, 15s.; 'B. D. P.,' Bradford, 2s. 6d.; Postmark, Horsham, 5s.; Mrs. J. Bowman, 10s.; J. G. Byford, 2s. 6d.; A. J. M. Burden, 2s. 6d.; box at Mrs. Morse's Hotel, quarterly collection, 10s.; total, £14 6s. 9d.

## SOCIETY WORK.

4, MERRINGTON-ROAD, ST. OSWALD'S-ROAD, WEST BROMPTON.—Drawing Room Meeting. Last Sunday evening Miss F. Porter gave us another of her inspired addresses, followed by successful clairvoyance, after which a few short experiences were given. Next Sunday evening, at 7 p.m., Mr. Sherwood and Miss Findlay.

ISLINGTON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, WELLINGTON HALL, UPPER-STREET, ISLINGTON.—On Sunday last Mr. Catto gave a reading from 'LIGHT,' 'Psychic Science.' Mr. Brenchley spoke ably on the subject, 'Christ of the Age, and Spiritualism.' Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Brenchley's subject will be 'The Life of General Gordon in the Soudan.' Thursday, at 8 p.m., circle, for members only; medium, Mrs. Brenchley.—C. D. CATTO.

HENLEY HALL, HENLEY-STREET, BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—On Sunday last, Mr. Boddington conducted the meeting. After an instructive reading given by Mr. Adams, Mr. Fielder gave a stirring address, urging all Spiritualists to look up to Christ as an example. Mrs. Boddington, by special desire, sang 'Gates of the West'; Mrs. Murrell also rendered a solo. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., public meeting, when we hope to have the pleasure of Mrs. Bessie Russell-Davies.—J. MURRELL.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' MISSION, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—We closed our year of spiritual progaganda with a watch-night circle, which was well attended, and interesting. On New Year's Day we had good attendances. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., we shall hold a public circle; at 3.30 p.m., children's Lyceum; at 6 p.m., the lending library will be opened, as usual; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long, subject, 'The Bible: Its Use and Abuse'; at 8 p.m., general assembly of members. The circles for members and associates are again re-opened, as usual, at 12, Lowth-road. Our almanac is now on sale, price 6d.—VERAX.

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 14, STROUD GREEN-ROAD (end of the passage).—On Sunday last, the meetings were conducted by Mr. Jones, 'The New Year' furnishing a fitting topic both morning and evening, in which Messrs. Pursglove, Hewitt and Brooks took a part. Mrs. Jones spoke, under influence. Many of these addresses are of much value, and we regret we have not a verbatim reporter amongst us, as we should prefer giving extracts, instead of these weekly reports, which we feel are of little value, except to let friends know we are still progressing. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday, at 8 p.m. Wednesday, at 8 p.m., members only.—T.B.

GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE.—Mr. James Bell, of Windy Nook, passed over on December 7th, aged eighty years. He will be pleasantly remembered by the old Spiritualists in this district. He opened his home twenty-two years ago for all inquirers, and was the first treasurer for the promoting of public work in the village of Windy Nook. The Windy Nook Society has been visited by all the leading mediums, includ-

ing Messrs. Morse, Wallis, Wallace, Colville, Howell, Lambella, W. R. Robinson, and others. Mr. Bell was a man of unimpeachable character, a medium, and a good clairvoyant.—J.S.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday last our President opened the meeting with a reading, after which several questions were asked by members of the audience, and answered by the friends present. The following resolution was unanimously adopted: 'That this meeting of the Hackney Society of Spiritualists, viewing with alarm the misery arising from the colossal war preparations of the European nations, calls upon the British Government to cordially support the peaceful proposals of the Czar of Russia, as the first step towards a better understanding between the peoples of the world.' Next Sunday, at 6.45 p.m., Mr. J. A. White will give clairvoyance.—OSCAR HUDSON, Hon. Sec.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST CONFERENCE.—A conference was held at Blanche Hall, Stoke Newington, N., on Sunday last. The open-air meeting could not be held on account of the fog. In the afternoon, Mr. White ('Evangel') presided. The secretary read the minutes of the previous conference, which were adopted. Miss Florence Clegg read the paper by Mr. J. Kitson, secretary of the Lyceum Union; subject, 'The Importance of Lyceum Work.' The paper was well received by the conference, and discussion was invited, Messrs. Gwinn, Davies, Boddington, Clegg, and Mrs. Clegg (Stoke Newington), taking part. The interest was well sustained and we look for good results from the conference. In the evening Mr. White again presided, and the following speakers took part: Messrs. Gwinn, H. Brooks, Bullen, Davies, and Mrs. Clegg. Mrs. Sinclair rendered a solo.—M. CLEGG, Secretary.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—A New Year's address by the inspirers of Mr. J. J. Morse has on former occasions proved most interesting, and that delivered at these rooms on Sunday evening last was no exception to the rule. The title chosen, viz., 'As it Was, Is, and Will Be,' fittingly suggested the course that was pursued by the lecturer: The consideration of the past, the present, and the future of man's life. Amongst the many instructive remarks contained in this lecture the following struck the writer as being most apposite and worthy of record: 'If man's philosophy is divorced from man's nature, it cannot minister to his needs,' that sentence forming the key to the position taken up by the lecturer. With much sarcastic emphasis the many existing inconsistent and irrational religious teachings of the present day were commented upon, and similar attention was paid to present-day social and political inconsistencies. A solo by Miss Florence Morse ('The Lord's Prayer'), and a reading from the writings of Professor Wm. Denton were two much-appreciated contributions to the evening's service. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Miss MacCreadie will occupy the platform, and clairvoyance will be given. Doors open at 6.30 p.m.—L. H.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

- 'The Humanitarian,' for January, contains articles on: 'Madame Dreyfus with sketch'; 'The Sunday Question'; 'The Akkas, or African Pygmies'; 'Racial and Individual Temperaments,' by PERCY W. AMES; 'The Position of Women in Sweden'; 'God's Messengers,' &c. London: Duckworth & Co., 3, Henrietta-street, Covent Garden, W.C. Price 6d.
- 'La Telepatia,' by DOTTOR G. B. ERMACORA. Padova: Stab, Tip, and Crescini, E.C.
- 'The Christ Question Settled; or, Jesus, Man, Medium, Martyr, and What the Spirits say about it.' By J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.
- 'Mind,' for January, contains: 'Philosophy—Oriental and Occidental'; 'Woman and Theology'; 'Man—Past, Present, and Future'; 'Progress through Reincarnation'; 'The Art of Concentration,' &c. U.S.A.: Alliance Publishing Company, 'Life' Building, 19 and 21, West 31st-street, New York. Price 20 cents, or 2 dollars per year.
- 'The Bridge of Light.' A Message from the Unseen. By ASTER. London: Gay & Bird, 22, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C. Price 2s. 6d. and 3s. 6d.
- 'James Hain Friswell: a Memoir.' By his daughter, LAURA HAIN FRISWELL (Mrs. Ambrose Myall), with three plates. London: George Redway. Price 15s. net.
- 'Modern Astrology,' for January, contains: 'The New Year, 1899: A Year of War'; 'The Shuttle of Destiny'; 'Astrology a Divine Science'; 'Some Notes on the Zodiac'; 'Complete Dictionary of Astrology,' &c. London: Lyncroft-gardens, N.W. Price 1s.
- 'New Thought Essays.' By CHARLES BRODIE PATTERSON. U.S.A.: The Alliance Publishing Co., 'Life' Building, New York. Price 1dol.