

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Colonel Olcott, in the latest chapter of 'Old Diary Leaves' (now publishing in 'The Theosophist'), gives an enlightening and humiliating glimpse of the impression we make upon the native Indian. He says:—

The grand carved doors of the Adyar Library, on which are represented the Ten Avatâras of Vishnu, were the gift of Harisinhji, and at Bhaunagar were awaiting my inspection before shipment. Imagine my surprise on finding that each avatâra panel was flanked by tiny medallions in which were carved emblems which the native artisan thought would be most acceptable to the European taste. There they were, a silent sermon for our edification; on one, a pistol; on another, a corkscrew; on a third, a soda-water bottle; on a fourth, a padlock, &c. ! And the innocent carver could not understand in the least the expression of horror that came into my face when I saw these artistic monstrosities. His own look of blank astonishment was too much for my gravity and I exploded in laughter, giving him, no doubt, a suspicion that I was not altogether sane. The doors were *not* shipped until the offensive symbols had been cut out and replaced with lotus buds, as they now stand.

Charles G. Ames, one of the true 'children of the day' in the United States, has just sent to the press a delightful sermon of 'The Divine in the Human.' The following four extracts indicate the splendid thought it unfolds:—

Men do not respond to music unless they have the musical sense. The moment a soul is in tune with heavenly harmonies, that soul vibrates in unison with them, easily believes that the universe is a vast symphony, and becomes not only a sharer, but an interpreter and utterer of songs that seem worthy of angels.

Dr. James Walker once startled his congregation by saying, 'Every man here has in him the might of an archangel!' Yet, perhaps, in his prayer he had confessed the weakness of humanity. What could he mean by proclaiming this gospel of strength? Just what Paul means by boasting: 'When I am weak, then am I strong. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' Just what Jesus means when he says; Have faith in God, and nothing shall be impossible to you. Just what many brave believers are saying in our own time:—*The Divine is in the Human.* The highest powers work in lowliest processes. The infinite forces—power, wisdom, love—are at our service. 'Hitch your waggon to a star,' quoth Emerson. If our life is geared into the true order, we are taken along—taken along, even through pain, loss, death; and nothing can do us real harm.

It must be that the creative Mind, the universal Life, is present and active everywhere and in all things; but this Presence can only be evident to those who share its illumination.

Now we can understand the 'authority' of Jesus. As he called men to purity of heart and rightness of life, to faith in the Fatherhood and love of the Brotherhood, the outward voice awoke the inward voice of reason and conscience. It was the voice of the Universal Soul resounding in the depths of the individual soul.

The Divine in the Human, the opening of the mind of man to the Mind of God! Of all the blessed wonders of our faith this is the most impressive and inspiring; the most fruitful of impulses that do not exhaust, of restraints that never grow irksome, of repose that continually refreshes and renews, of love that casts out fear, of peace that passes understanding. 'The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.' Look and listen. Be quiet and teachable. Be trustful and be true. 'Love, and you will know.'

'As shines a star in the deep sea,
So shines the thought of God in me;
It lights my eyes, and I behold
What sages saw and prophets told.'

There is, in America, a paper with an enormous circulation, called 'Our Dumb Animals.' 'The Progressive Thinker,' referring to its late tribute to the fact of spirit-communion, says:—

There was a time, and that not long past, when the belief in Spiritualism, if entertained, was held in profound secrecy. It is surely an encouraging sign, showing the profound change which has been wrought in a few years, when spirit guidance is not only directly acknowledged, but put forth as a claim for greater honours.

Thus George T. Angell, the founder of the American Humane Education Society, and its president and devoted advocate of the humane movement which has done so much to prevent cruelty and teach mercy, in the last number of 'Our Dumb Animals,' a paper devoted to the cause, has the following article:—

'We have just listened with profound interest to a sermon by one of America's greatest preachers, in which he relates how the life of Mary A. Livermore [as she assures him] was once saved during her travels in the West by hearing and instantly obeying a voice. She did not know whence it came, but she leaped [as the voice ordered her] from one side of the car to the other, and instantly the side where she had been sitting was crushed in and utterly demolished.

'It is widely believed by millions of the human race that there are sometimes near us spiritual powers [which we call guardian angels].

'Is this doctrine true?

'Those who have read the 13th, 14th, and 15th pages of our Autobiographical Sketches, commencing with the heading "Almost Providential," may think the foundation of our Massachusetts Humane Society and their subsequent history may have had some such help.

'How happens it that through their instrumentality millions of missionaries for the kinder treatment of dumb animals have gone out over the world in the form of that little book, "Black Beauty"?

'Whence came the more than thirty-seven thousand Bands of Mercy which they have already caused to be established in our country, and this little paper of ours going every month to every editorial office in North America, north of Mexico?

'Were these things simply the result of human thought, or were they the suggestions of other agencies which have power to influence us?

'We prefer to believe the latter, and many things have occurred to strengthen our belief.'

It is sometimes said that Unitarians are not exactly ardent as to belief in a future life; and there is too much truth in the assertion. They are too apt to express 'hopes' and 'trusts,' to weigh pros and cons, and to stand aloof from proofs. We are always specially glad, therefore, when there comes from that quarter an inspiring note of assurance. Such a note delighted us in a discourse lately spoken and published by the Rev. W. Harrison, before 'The

Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire.' The speaker said :—

Do we believe in the Future Life? Then let men know that we do. Let us speak of it from the depths of the soul. We have the aged, the infirm, the bereaved who attend our services. Theological problems and philosophical speculations have little interest for them. They need the comforts of religion ; let them not go empty away. It makes a world of difference to those whose work on earth is done whether they are assured of immortality or not. Without it they feel under sentence of death ; with it they feel under promise of life. They do not want immortality proving, they want it enforcing with all the assurance of deep conviction. I know from experience how much it helps them when they are in the presence of one who has conviction deep enough to speak on this great theme with no uncertain sound.

'The South African Spiritualist' presents us with a useful Paper on the slightly over-worn subject of 'The Devil and Spiritualism.' One paragraph especially pleases us. It deals with the oft-repeated statement that Spiritualism must be of the Evil One because its tendency is to loosen belief in the old creeds. 'The South African Spiritualist' says :—

There is a foundation of truth in the accusation, but in our opinion not a shadow of foundation for the deduction, for it would equally apply to those who made the charge. The whole of the thinking portion of our various sects is dropping point after point of doctrine at one time deemed important enough to fight and die for. Amongst the churches, essentials are sinking into non-essentials year by year, and the only difference between Spiritualists and others is that the former have come into the truth from facts and their rational consequences, whilst the latter were born into it with all the errors which the ignorance of our forefathers accepted as an inheritance from the past and handed down to their children. Religion of the churches is tending towards Rationalism, and this will become more and more so with Spiritualism at the front. Is the subject of reason in religious matters, of the Devil? Are we not required to 'Give a reason for the faith that is in us'? Are we not invited to 'Come and reason together'? May we not, therefore, conclude that to be reasonable is not to be Devil-like but more God-like, for God is the perfection of reason ?

Mr. J. W. Dennis, writing in 'The Banner of Light,' says :—

The old 'fad' of 'Crystal Reading' is coming into use again, and if people understand the secret of the matter, then none will be deceived by it. For instance, if I attempt to bring forth my clairvoyant sight, I put myself in a passive condition in which I can get sight into the spirit side of life. To do this I must put everything out of my mentality, so that there is nothing between my soul-sense and the spirit realm. When this condition is obtained, spirit visions are pictured upon my soul-sense, and I can be properly called a clairvoyant medium. This very desirable condition can be obtained by gazing into a crystal, into a glass of pure water, into a common glass paper-weight, and sometimes into a mirror, or in fact gaze at anything that will 'Concentrate' the mind. 'Harmony' and 'Concentration' are two very desirable factors in obtaining clairvoyant sight. A ten cent paper-weight is just as good to gaze into as some fake's fifteen dollar crystal is, especially if said fifteen dollar crystal is worth about two dollars and no more.

The last words we should apply to crystal-seeing are 'fad' and 'deceived.' On the contrary, we sometimes think that crystal-seeing may become the most interesting, convincing and beautiful mode of mediumship.

Mr. Dennis is probably right, however, in his remarks as to the rationale of the operation. Miss Goodrich-Freer has said very much the same thing ; and she should know, if anybody does.

Two NEW BOOKS from the busy pen of Miss Lilian Whiting are to be published next month. The first will be entitled, 'Kate Field : a Record,' and the second will be 'A Study of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.' Both of these ladies were gifted with rare psychical natures and Miss Whiting's sympathy with experiences of a spiritual character should make these works deeply interesting to Spiritualists and psychical students generally.

SPIRITUALISM A GOSPEL OF GLAD TIDINGS.

'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he,' is a saying which is appealing with increasing force to the thoughtful and observant students of human character. That the mental attitude which we adopt, or encourage, towards life and its cares and burdens reacts upon ourselves with beneficial or injurious effects is being admitted on all sides, for we are compelled to recognise that the mind affects the body just as surely as bodily states and conditions affect the mind.

Many people are prepared to admit all this in a tentative sort of way, but they do not assent to the proposition that by determined application of the mind it is possible to cultivate a habit of vigorous cheerfulness ; of healthful optimism ; of self-healing expectancy ; of morally strengthening gratitude. Yet, after all, is not the positive and affirmative frame of mind the one which has sustained the world's heroes, reformers, martyrs, and teachers? When we are *sure* all is for the best we are secure and confident, and that very buoyancy of spirit renders us impervious to much trouble and suffering which would otherwise oppress and weaken us. But, the main difficulty seems to be that while we theoretically accept all this, yet, when cares, anxieties, or ill-health come upon us, we weakly submit and worry ourselves with fear and with angry or antagonistic thoughts, and are not only tortured but overthrown by the enemy within the fort of our consciousness, and we capitulate before even a blow has been struck.

Now, the mind is as capable of being trained and strengthened as are the muscles of the body. Indeed, we can give direction and tone to our mental processes in such a way that they can affect the nerves, and, through them, the circulation of the blood and the whole body.

The deep breathing, so often recommended for physical renewal, has its analogy and correspondence in the deep breathing of the spirit, when we inhale rich draughts of psychic energy, and are renewed, quickened, and strengthened by consciously, purposefully, and confidently making demands upon the great realm of Power and draw upon the resources of the Spirit. Once let us recognise that the Spirit is the centre of all energy, and that we can command unlimited supplies when we are attuned thereto and make our demands with confidence, then we shall find the 'Elixir of Life' which will enable us to make our daily existence full of strength and sweetness, light and love. The secret lies in our attitude and in our point of view. We can if we *will* ; and 'Blessed is he that overcometh.'

We can educe the divinest powers from within. We can cultivate the mind as well as train the body, and direct our thoughts and feelings into channels of strength and cheer. We can successfully determine to be 'on the side' of brightness and goodness, and see light and beauty everywhere. We can decline to worry, and refuse to be angry. We can, if we will, banish irritability and cast out fear.

There is good in all—God is everywhere. Every sorrow has its compensations ; there is no trial but serves a good end, if we are ready to respond. We are ready when we refuse to be cast down or overcome, and resolutely maintain a hopeful spirit, knowing that there is ever a 'soul of good in things seemingly evil.' If it is true that there is 'a power in the Universe that makes for righteousness,' then that power operates in, through, and by us ; with difficulty if we are timid, faithless, or afraid, but with success if we are confident, sanguine, responsive, and co-operative !

Spiritualism is therefore an affirmative, an optimistic, an altruistic gospel. It is veritably—GLAD TIDINGS. We should be glad that we are alive ; glad that this beautiful world is spread around us for our enlightenment and enjoyment ; glad that love is law, and life is endless ; glad that we are spirit people, endowed with power and intelligence, for whom all things work together for good, both here and hereafter. And, in that thankful, appreciative, and affirmative frame of mind our spiritual consciousness will grow strong. The fellowship with the unseen will become a joy and a consecration. Spirit will respond to spirit. Love will shine from our eyes, and Hope, like an angel, will make glad the hearts of men. 'Be of good cheer,' then, oh ! weak, sad, and weary ones. Call upon the forces within : ask of the living God, and be assured that you cannot ask in vain. In that attitude—confident of triumph—you will win enduring happiness.

'IMAGINATION AND ITS WONDERS.'*

When we think of an absent person does our thought affect the person thought of? 'All thinking,' says Mr. Arthur Lovell in his recently-published work on 'Imagination and its Wonders' (Vol. III. of the 'Ars Vivendi' series), 'sets the ether in motion. Vibrations are set up which radiate from the thinker in all directions to an incalculable distance.' In ordinary, or transitory, thought, these vibrations are too diffused to be effective; they impinge upon the distant brain, but have not the strength to compel recognition. In order that they may come into consciousness two things are necessary: intense concentration on the part of the thinker and an almost special sensitiveness in the percipient, or person thought of. Much, of course, depends upon the existence of the ether, and Mr. Lovell is at great pains to establish its reality. That it does exist no reasoning mind can doubt, but whether the conceptions of modern scientists respecting it, as quoted by Mr. Lovell in his first chapter, are to be accepted as reliable, is, in the present state of our knowledge, an open question. Subsequent discoveries may modify, in many ways, the views now held, and the etheric transmission of thought may be found to be untenable.

Imagination, Mr. Lovell defines 'as the faculty of forming an image in the mind,' and he cites Hegel, as showing how important a part this 'image-making power' plays in much of our thinking. He goes even further and asserts (p. 18) that these mental images are 'literally made of the fine substance of the ether,' or, in other words, they are the outcome of a 'certain mode or motion in it.' Man, then, can create. He is made in the image of God, and with Him possesses the power of calling into being or existence.

To be sensitive or mediumistic is to be so constituted as to 'respond to fine etheric waves not felt by ordinary people.' Sensitiveness, regarded as an abstract quality, is neither good nor evil. It may prove the greatest blessing or the greatest curse, according to the nature of the vibrations we lay ourselves open to receive and allow to come into consciousness. Our aim should be (p. 55): 'To be receptive or negative to what is above us in goodness and wisdom, and repulsive or positive to all that is evil or beneath us.' Sensitiveness underlies all psychic phenomena. It is more or less latent in everyone, and when not *directly* responsive to the etheric vibrations it can be sometimes roused into action by artificial aids. These may be divided into three general types (p. 58): (1) 'Gazing into some bright object, such as a crystal, a mirror, steel, water---anything, in fact, which has a reflecting surface; (2) Holding a rod or wand in the hand and watching the ensuing movement; (3) Divination by a symbol, such as a pack of cards, numbers, water, earth, air, and fire, &c. These objects in themselves have no occult powers whatever; they are merely means to an end—the scaffolding by which we climb. What is obtained or suggested by their use is to be referred to *the action of the mind of the person using them.*'

That imagination can powerfully influence the body has long been recognised. 'A morbid idea strongly held will eventually bring about a morbid state of body, and just as surely a healthy idea will bring about a healthy state of body. The indispensable condition is that the imagination is powerfully impressed and the will firmly fixed' (p. 72). The image formed must be distinct and definite, or it will not have sufficient force to affect the organism.† However much a person may desire to get well, if he lacks the power to imagine, to form a vivid image, his recovery will be uphill work. As Mr. Lovell pithily expresses it (p. 83): 'Good intentions are of no avail. There must be the mental photograph, clear, distinct, and definite; and this photograph, to be effectual, must be so intensely impressed that it obliterates all other disturbing images.' This power of thought or mind upon the organism is for ever manifesting itself. What we think, we become. Each of us is a composite picture, the reflection of past thoughts—a picture, let it never be forgotten, symbolical of

our life from the beginning, and as such readily interpreted by the intuitive mind.

Magic itself, as Mr. Lovell is careful to point out, is based upon the belief that the mind can wield a direct influence on the outer world by means of the imagination and will. As Paracelsus puts it: 'Determined imagination is the beginning of all magical operations.' The wonders of Magic are simply an extension—a development—of the latent powers of the imaginative faculty and will-force inherent in every human being. All magical rites and ceremonials have as their object the strengthening of the will and the vivifying of the imagination to the accomplishment of a certain end. We are all magicians, our successes depending upon our power of imagination and strength of will.

The concluding chapters of Mr. Lovell's book are devoted to the methods to be adopted by 'an ordinary individual, living an ordinary life, desirous of improving his imagination and employing it profitably.' The cardinal point is to develop the 'pictorial power' of the mind; to see at a glance 'the idea hidden in the symbol,' and so gradually attain to the perception of Nature as the symbol of Mind and Spirit. The advice given is very useful and worth remembering, even supposing the reader to be a sceptic as regards the 'Supreme Science of Mind.' It cannot be too strongly insisted upon 'that by constantly presenting to the mind images of a certain nature, the character of the individual will be forced ultimately to correspond to them'; and when we are beset with doubt and despair as to our material well-being, it should not be forgotten that 'according to the teaching of the best minds that have appeared in history, the material event is bound to follow thought sooner or later.'

'Imagination and its Wonders,' if somewhat dogmatically written, is, on the whole, a closely-reasoned work. The main theme of the book is thoughtfully presented. The potentiality of mind is strongly insisted upon, and the key is given to so much that baffles and perplexes in the study of occultism, that one cannot but feel well-disposed towards the author, and forgive his discursive tendencies. The field he opens up is, indeed, a wide one, and he may, perhaps, be pardoned if he now and then wanders, as a glance at the table of contents will show. We look forward to the publication of his next work, 'Concentration' (Volume IV. of the series), with interest.

ARTHUR BUTCHER.

REMARKABLE CURES.

A brief but very interesting account is given in the last number of the 'Rivista di Studi Psichici' of two cases of remarkable cures. The first of the cases, reported by Dr. Rizzi, he considers of great importance, because it was one regarded by the medical faculty as absolutely incurable. The doctors who were in attendance had agreed that an operation was necessary, when a message was received through a medium to the effect that the patient (who was a child) would be cured by the spirits, without any interference by medical operators being necessary. 'Let Dr. Rizzi examine the tumour and come again in a week to see it'; this was the instruction given. 'After four days,' says the doctor in his report, 'on looking at the tumour I found it had completely gone down, where it had been there remained only a small blue spot, as an indubitable witness that it had been there.'

The second case occurred in the same family, but in itself it is not equally important, as the tumour was one of a class which do sometimes (though rarely) disappear rapidly. The peculiarity in this instance consists in the fact that the communicating intelligence announced beforehand that the cure would be completed in eight months, prescribing a very simple remedy which should be applied; this promise was fulfilled.

'With regard to the first case,' says Dr. Rizzi, 'I challenge anyone not to be astonished at the presence of this mediumistic curative force'; which force he concludes by ascribing, not to a departed spirit (although this claim was made by the 'force' itself, which manifested under a personal name) but to an emanation from the Ego of the medium! The article is dated June 10th, 1899. Dr. Rizzi promises a further communication of his views on this subject.

* Published by Nichols and Co., 23, Oxford-street.

† Sometimes a suggestion or idea becomes dominant in the mind, and much discomfort or even obsession results. Much that is interesting in this connection will be found in a valuable contribution by Dr. Milne Bramwell, 'On Imperative Ideas,' which appeared in 'Brain' some four years ago.

THE 'PRODIGIOUS' POWERS OF THE
SUBJECTIVE MIND.

A MODERN CANUTE.

The opposition to Spiritualism has passed through a variety of stages, and no sooner are the anti-Spiritualists driven from one stronghold than they proceed to establish themselves in another which they fondly imagine will be impregnable. As soon as one antagonist is conquered and led captive into our camp another valiantly steps into the vacant place with some newly-devised weapon with which to assail us. 'Toe-joint snapping' was employed to explain the facts when ridicule and contempt had failed. Then followed 'unconscious muscular action,' 'psychic force,' 'unconscious cerebration,' 'duplex action of the brain,' 'mesmerism,' 'thought-reading,' and similar theories. The advocates of 'the devil,' 'satanic agency,' 'evil spirits,' 'impersonating demons,' we have had with us all the time. Then came 'elementals,' 'pisachas,' 'shells,' 'corpse candles,' and other gruesome monstrosities. Following hard upon these we had 'telepathy,' 'subliminal self,' 'auto-suggestion,' and 'sub-conscious mentation,' &c. But, however successful these various weapons may have proved with some people, they did not succeed in disposing of the proven facts which demonstrated the existence of the intelligent operator on the other side; nor did they account for the messages which proved the identity of the communicating spirit. But the foes of Spiritualism pure and simple—which alone covers the whole ground of the well attested facts—were not to be disheartened, and Mr. Thomson Jay Hudson valiantly came to their aid, and, Canute-like, essayed to stay the inrolling tide of Spiritualism. This gentleman claimed to have discovered, and to be able to demonstrate, that every phase of spiritualistic phenomena was produced by the conscious or unconscious exercise of the powers possessed by the living man. Mr. Hudson's three primary affirmations are: Man is possessed of a dual mind—objective and subjective; the subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion; telepathy is a power of the subjective mind. These are followed by the assertion that the psychics (spirit mediums and hypnotised subjects) are always in a state of more or less profound objective insensibility, the state in each case being induced by suggestion. The Editor of the 'Harbinger of Light,' referring to these assertions, says:—

'Mr. Hudson is remarkably good at assertion, and would make an excellent hypnotic suggester, his positive manner being calculated to overcome the resistance of weaker minds. But the rational Spiritualist is not of that sort; his mental faculties have healthy exercise, and thus become keen and strong; indeed quite impervious to unproved assertions. If Mr. Hudson believes this last one of his, he is grossly ignorant of mediumship as a whole, as we know from our own personal experience and observation. We have elicited physical phenomena without any forethought or preparation, by just placing our hands on a table, box, or chair. We have, in company with a friend, resisted violent movements of a table, caused by some unseen intelligence which opposed a force, in opposition to our muscular energy, very little inferior to that of both of us. We have in our possession writing of an instructive and exalted character, part of which we saw written by the hand of a friend whilst he was *conversing on a different subject*, with his eyes turned away from the book in which he wrote, the handwriting also being quite distinct from his own. And we have never during our long experience been in an abnormal state, though we have submitted ourselves to mesmerisers in the past with the desire, and in the hopes, of inducing it; yet have we been witnesses and participants in very varied phenomena when no mortal has been present. And *our* experiences are not singular.

'Mr. Hudson says: "The memory of the subjective mind is prodigious," and according to him the powers of it are equally so, for it not only remembers every incident of the individual's life, but all that the people it has come *en rapport* with have in *their* minds, and this accounts for all the mental phenomena of Spiritualism! This (according to Mr. H.) is how it is done: An investigator visits a medium, with the idea of getting a communication from the unseen; the medium's subjective self looks into the subjective mind of the visitor, gets from it all it knows and desires, also a reflection of all its relationships to others, whether dead or alive, and having all this information, professes to be a disembodied spirit, and fools the visitor to his heart's content.

'From this we must clearly infer that the subjective minds of all mediums are "prodigious liars," and they are also forgers, for it is no uncommon thing for exact imitations of the signatures of deceased persons to be written through the hands of mediums, and sometimes in closed slates. The former has occurred in our own personal experience. The Rev. Minot J. Savage and Mr. F. W. H. Myers, two very cautious writers on Spiritualism, whom Mr. Hudson claims acquaintance with, in giving their experiences tentatively agree to set aside all phenomena that could possibly be covered by extant theories of opponents, and claim that there is yet a small but sufficient residuum, adequate to sustain the spiritual hypothesis. On this Mr. Hudson affirms that no hypothesis can be true unless capable of explaining *all* the phenomena. This is not only disingenuous, but recoils upon himself, as by showing, as we have incidentally done in this article, that phenomena do occur when individuals are in their normal state, he is put out of court by his own hypothesis. When first perusing Mr. Hudson's book some two years since, we wondered how he was going to account for the psychical phenomena, especially the levitation of heavy bodies, and the alteration of weights as illustrated in the experiments of Professors Hare and Crookes. We had been startled by the "prodigious" powers of the subjective self in mental matters, but a further shock awaited us in this direction: for the subjective self, Mr. Hudson informs us, possesses "kinetic energy," and can operate on objective matter! This simplifies the thing very much if Mr. H. could afford us any evidence in support of his "prodigious" affirmation, which up to the present time he has failed to do.

'His book has the portentous title of "A Scientific Demonstration of a Future Life," and on the assumption that he has demolished the spiritualistic one, as such, we turn to page 321 for this more substantial foothold, and here it is:—

"Every faculty of the human mind has a normal function to perform either in this life or in a future life.

"Some faculties of the human mind perform no normal functions in this life.

"Therefore some faculties of the human mind are destined to perform their functions in a future life."

'This syllogism is the *Scientific Demonstration* that Mr. Thomas Jay Hudson offers us in lieu of Spiritualism; the accumulated facts and evidences arising out of the patient experimental investigation of several of the most eminent scientific men of this century, confirmed by the testimony of thousands of highly cultured students and millions of intelligent lay investigators. As Dr. E. D. Babbit says in a recent article in which he incidentally alludes to this matter, "If Mr. Thomson Jay Hudson had possessed some psychic development, he would not have written a whole book to prove, contrary to ten thousand facts, that all supposed communion from beyond the veil comes simply from the illumination of the psychic's own brain."

'Mr. Hudson's theory is looked upon as a go-send by those who have had to let go of the obsolete ones, and were casting about for something to hold on by, but to the experienced Spiritualist it is a gas-bag. That Mr. Hudson's object in writing the book was not purely scientific is very clear from the concluding words of it, which read as follows:—

"Moreover, science ceases its revelations at the very point where Jesus paused, namely, at the portals of the tomb. He gave us an assurance of a future life; and science confirms His words. He assured us of abundant rewards in the future life for righteousness in this; and science reveals in us the capacity for the enjoyment of the promised rewards. Beyond that His lips were sealed. Beyond that science cannot penetrate."

'This bit of ecclesiastical dogma is an appropriate context to Mr. Hudson's baseless theories, unproved affirmations and dogmatic assertions, which can only have weight with the prejudiced or those ignorant of the subjects on which he treats.'

'LIGHT.'

As an inducement to new and casual readers to become subscribers, we will supply 'LIGHT' for thirteen weeks, post free, for 2s., as a 'trial' subscription, feeling assured that at the termination of that period they will feel that 'they cannot do without it,' and will then subscribe at the usual rates. May we at the same time suggest to those of our regular readers who have friends to whom they would like to introduce the paper, that they should avail themselves of this offer, and forward to us the names and addresses of such friends, upon receipt of which, together with the requisite postal order, we shall be pleased to forward 'LIGHT' to them by post, as stated above?

CHARACTER OF SPIRIT CONTROLS.

We are well aware that this article is likely to call forth expressions of dissent, as various people have various ideas. However, we should not let prejudice control us, but look fairly and squarely at this question.

Many times we have seen, read, and heard the expressions of different Spiritualists, and especially mediums, who claimed that Jesus Christ, Moses, St. John, Paul, and various other ancient persons controlled them. To me, logically and personally, the claim is absurd. Psychically and psychometrically, we call them personations. Let us take personality out of this question, and assume reason. The All-Comprehensive Power of Knowledge has endowed us with reasoning faculties; hence, why not use them?

Before we enter upon our subject, we wish to give an experience which occurred in this city (Oakland). Two years ago a medium was engaged by a Spiritualist society. This society got out handbills, on which was the following:—

‘Jesus Christ will control and speak through Mrs. — this evening; also heal the afflicted.’

As you can imagine, the hall was filled. Many people went, of course, out of pure curiosity to hear what Christ had to say. Among those in the audience were three reverend gentlemen and one college professor, who afterwards told me that they were mortified and disgusted. The greater portion of the audience felt the same, and expressions were heard like this: ‘When Jesus was at the age of twelve, He was found in the Temple, teaching the old and wise men, and now, two thousand years after His transition, and as we would suppose, with all these centuries of experience in higher fields of knowledge, progression, and purity, He comes back to speak through the instrumentality of this person, and instead of teaching wisely, murders English grammar.’ It was so painful to be a listener that many people left the hall before the lecture was finished.

Now, let us give credit where credit is due, but let us break the idol of superstition and do away with the erroneous idea of letting such things appear publicly, to drive away our thinking people.

Let us think for a moment about these ancient people coming back and giving their pictures upon slates and controlling mediums. That it is the work of spirits, when under strict test conditions, there is no doubt, except when it comes from the medium’s own imagination. Some people are, I am sorry to say, so light-brained that they are tickled out of their reason to have such names given to them. But let us reason: a medium was once controlled and gave the name of George Washington; finally, being cornered, he confessed that he was not the spirit he claimed to be, explaining that if he gave the name of Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith, he could not attract the attention that he could by giving the name of George Washington.

I call these cases personations, and, in some instances, obsession of the medium. If a spirit comes back and impersonates, he is a deceiver, and cannot be trusted, no matter what name he may assume. To our knowledge there are scores of mediums and Spiritualists claiming to be controlled by Moses, St. John, Aaron, Jesus, and other Bible personages, but, psychically, we say they are all personations.

But let us appeal to reason. Our philosophy claims to teach eternal progression; and if this is true, such spirits as we have mentioned, who have passed out thousands of years ago, and were living a true, good life then, have, no doubt, progressed far beyond this impure, insignificant planet of ours, and could not, if they wanted to, come back here. Hence we affirm again that it is a personation and deception on the part of the spirit, or imagination on the part of the medium.

Let us go a little further. I have found in my investigations that there are some Spiritualists who teach that the very highest spirits have wings! Think of it, dear reader; eventually we shall have to grow wings so that we may fly! What an erroneous and materialistic idea! It never has been, nor will it ever be, a law for anyone to grow wings. A spirit, not being a material, ponderable

object, is not controlled by the law of gravity, and travels to any point of the universe with the speed of thought, which is the only motive power known in the spirit world.

It is high time, in this intellectual age, that we throw down all bonds of superstition, delusion and the like, and let reason rule.

May the All-Eternal Wisdom and Knowledge lead us into brighter light. Give us ‘Light, more light.’

MAX MUEHLENBRUCH.

Oakland, Cal.

IS SPIRITUALISM DECLINING?

We are often told by the know-nothings of the over-smart London papers that ‘Spiritualism and all nonsense of that kind’ is rapidly declining. The official report of the Smithsonian Institution, issued at the U.S.A. Government Printing Office at Washington (and quoted by ‘The Theosophist’) does not echo that. On the contrary, it says:—

Simultaneously with the development of the truly scientific aspect of alchemical theory, there has arisen an extraordinary revival of the metaphysical side of the question; this goes hand in hand with the interest in chiromancy, astrology, theosophy, and occult sciences which occupy so large a place in modern thought, literature, and polite society on both sides of the Atlantic. This tendency to cultivate the esoteric manifests itself in the study of the Kabala, the investigation of the mysteries of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other Oriental philosophies, in researches into the phenomena of Spiritualism, so-called, and in the foundation of societies to study psychic force and the tenets of the followers of Madame Blavatsky. Crystal gazing, reading in magic mirrors, slate-writing, planchette, the quasi-scientific study of apparitions, of table turnings, of rappings by unseen powers, of telepathy, of the subliminal self, are now regarded as legitimate pursuits, in no wise necessarily associated with the black arts of mediæval times, provided only they are conducted in a spirit of inquiry and for the purpose of discovering the latent power underlying these phenomena. And this line of research receives stimulus from the results secured by students of experimental psychology, of hypnotism, from such discoveries as the phenomena of the X rays, and from the transcendental physicists who theorise on the miraculous consequences of four-dimensional matter. Crowded lecture-halls reward exhibitions of trance mediums, speakers on theosophy, palmistry, and occultism; in lower walks of life fortune-tellers and clairvoyants reap a modest harvest; books treating of occult themes enjoy great notoriety; writers of fiction find it profitable to introduce the mysterious into the children of their brains; even secular journals, especially those of France, give space to the all-absorbing discussions on hermetism; these are some of the evidences of great popular interest in the unknowable. Only persons with special intellectual equipment are able to measure, weigh, sift, and co-ordinate the novel phenomena gathered by researches in the field of hypnotism, psychology, and occultism; those of weaker mental powers fail to perceive the real significance of the discoveries and are led away into unprofitable and dangerous superstitions.

‘OUR PLACES IN THE ZODIAC.’

The Zodiac, with its fateful signs and fascinating symbology, has attracted many writers both ancient and modern. In a comparatively recent work by W. J. Colville, entitled ‘Our Places in the Universal Zodiac,’ the subject is dealt with in a series (thirteen) of delightful essays. The author contends ‘that we have a place in the Zodiac; that we are a vital part of it; that it includes us, and that we are working individual entities embraced within the sweep of its comprehensive activity.’ He differs radically from those ‘who speak of the influence of the Zodiac upon human life, as though it were entirely external to ourselves. . . .’ The essays are scholarly and well written and contain much interesting information. They are decidedly above the average. The type of person associated with each sign is boldly outlined, and their mental and physical characteristics clearly indicated. The birthday determines the Zodiacal position, and striking instances of its potency, as manifested in the lives of notable individuals, are frequently given. The book may be obtained of Mr. G. Osbond, Devonport, Devon.

A. B.

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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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THIRTY YEARS AGO.

One of our most profitable occupations is to go over the old ground of human thought and effort, for the purposes of comparison and contrast: and just now this yields us precious and consoling results. It is only ignorance or flippant wantonness which insults our common-sense with the taunt that we are losing ground and drifting back to obscurity. On the contrary, we venture to say that there was never a time when our testimony was more hopefully borne, or when our teaching was more generally echoed. A portion of the Press is, of course, still funny at our expense, but even the man in the street finds the fun a little silly, tiresome and stale; while a far larger portion of the Press consciously or unconsciously justifies us. The same thing is true of the pulpit. In that direction the change is wonderful, whether we consider its teachings concerning some of the old creeds, the place in Nature of the human spirit, or the fate of man in the universe beyond the veil. The change amounts to a total reconstruction of the Theology and Eschatology of thirty years ago. We need not go into particulars. This is not the place for pitting doctrine against doctrine, or creed against creed; but it is the place for comparing standards in so far as these relate to the origin and destiny of the spirit-self.

We might test the change from many points of view, and with the help of many modes of faith; but we select one which is not usually regarded as crucial, though, in our opinion, it is: we refer to belief in the resurrection of the body and its reunion with the spirit. We commend to the thoughtful reader the reflection that upon this turned the greater part of all the old beliefs concerning the nature and destiny of Man. Let anyone test it. Put that belief in the centre, and see how those other beliefs cluster about it. Take it away, and see how they behave. Then put in the centre the great belief that the real self is the spirit-self who only dwells for a time in the physical body for physical uses, but who, after the body's falling away, passes on to its proper spirit-sphere; and then see how the old beliefs behave in relation to *that*. We need say no more, as to that crucial experiment. Anyone can try it.

An instance lies before us, in the form of a sermon preached by Mr. Spurgeon exactly thirty years ago, on the subject of 'The Coming Resurrection'; and, at that time, the sermon expressed a very general view. This sermon knows nothing of half measures, symbols and subtile

explanations. It is a frank, honest, and totally uncompromising statement of belief in the resurrection of the physical body and its reunion with the spirit. It even binds up this notion of the resurrection with Christianity itself: it is called 'in some respects the key-stone of the Christian arch.' The doctrine is sharply distinguished from belief in the immortality of the soul. That belief, says the sermon, was known before Christ; but it was left to him to declare 'that there should be another life for this corporeal frame.' Here are the assertions of this now amazing sermon:—

The resurrection shall consist of the quickening of all the dead bodies of men that have ever existed. . . all who ever were buried, though they may have been disinterred, and their bodies may have mingled with the elements, been scattered by the winds, dissolved in the waves, or merged into vegetable forms. All who have lived and died shall certainly rise again. Great marvel this, if you consider the hosts of the sons of Adam who have fattened the soil and glutted the worms; and yet shall every one of them rise again.

Count ye now the countless! How many lived before the deluge? It has been believed, and I think accurately, that the inhabitants of this world were more numerous at the time of the deluge than they probably are now, owing to the enormous length of human life; men's numbers were not so terribly thinned by death as they are now. Think if you will from the times of the deluge onward, of all Adam's progeny. From Tarshish to Sinim men covered the lands. Nineveh, Babylon, Chaldea, Persia, Greece, Rome, these were vast empires of men. The Parthians, Scythians, and Tartar hordes, who shall reckon up? As for those northern swarms of Goths and Huns and Vandals, these were continually streaming as from a teeming hive, in the Middle Ages, and Frank and Saxon and Celt multiplied in their measure. Yet these nations were but types of a numerous band of nations even more multitudinous. Think of Ethiopia and the whole continent of Africa; remember India and Japan, and the land of the setting sun; in all lands great tribes of men have come and have gone to rest in their sepulchres. What millions upon millions must lie buried in China and Burmah! What innumerable hosts are slumbering in the land of the pyramids and the mummy pits! Every one, both great and small, embalmed of old in Egypt, who shall compute the number? Hear ye then and believe—out of all who have ever lived of woman born, not one shall be left in the tomb; all, all shall rise.

We have no wish to even criticise this, much less to scoff at it. It may stand before us to-day as a squat and ugly idol stands before us on the quiet shelf of the museum. We feel no scorn; we do not want to condemn; we only say, 'How curious!' and pass on. But, as we do so, the queerest imaginable little scream follows us. The preacher says: 'Pass on. "All that are in the grave shall hear his voice." Hear! Why, the ear has gone! A thousand years ago a man was buried, and his ear—there is not the slightest relic of it left—all has vanished; shall that ear ever hear? Yes, for He that made it hear at the first, wrought as great a wonder then as when He shall make it hear a second time. It needed a God to make the hearing ear of the newborn babe; it shall need no more to renew the hearing ear the second time. Yes, the ear so long lost in silence shall hear! And what shall be the sound that shall startle that newly awakened and fresh fashioned ear?'

The 'fresh fashioned ear'! It is too much for us. We willingly 'pass on.'

But, for the present, we will only pass on to other portions of this astonishing sermon. Its quaint inconsistency is as curious as its rhetorical extravagance. Quite suddenly, the preacher confounds his doctrine with the immortality of the soul, though, in commencing, he drew a sharp distinction between them. Commending this notion of the resurrection of the body, he adds, as a reason for believing in it: 'The doctrine is continually blessed of God to arouse the minds of men. When we fancy that our actions are confined to this present life, we are careless of them, but when we discover that they are far-reaching, and that they cast influences for good or evil athwart an

eternal destiny, then we regard them more seriously. What trumpet call can be more startling, what arousing voice can be more awakening, than this news to the careless sinner that there is a life hereafter ?

But what has that to do with it ? The life hereafter is one thing: the resurrection of the body is another thing: and, in fact, the two are, in a very profound sense, antagonistic ; for the more you insist on the life hereafter, the less room is there and the less need is there for a resurrection of the body—thousands, perhaps millions of years ahead: and the more you insist on that far-off resurrection of the body, the more a life hereafter fades into a thin and postponed 'perhaps.' No: it is the Spiritualist, with his simple, clear and philosophical faith as to the spirit-self, who can at once give the seeker good ground for belief in unbroken life, and relieve him from the gross and confusing idea that the spirit will need and get the body back again.

The dramatic preacher, with excited forgetfulness, drew from his doctrine of the resurrection of the body a lesson of 'consolation.' 'It is but a short parting,' he said, 'it will be an eternal meeting.' What about Adam and Eve, and those men and women from Nineveh and Babylon, those 'Tartar hordes' and those 'northern swarms of Goths and Huns' ? 'A short parting' ! The preacher was surely thinking of our faith: not of his.

But now as to that resurrection of the body and its reunion with the spirit. Where are the men who teach it to-day as it was taught thirty years ago ? Where are the men of mark who literally teach it at all ? It is an enormous change.

MISS ROWAN VINCENT.

We have pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of the following subscriptions towards a fund to be presented to Miss Rowan Vincent, as an expression of sympathy with her in her severe illness, and as a token of the grateful recognition of her valuable services to the cause of Spiritualism:—

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STEPS IN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.

By CHARLES DAWBARN, San Leander, Cal., U.S.A.

The first effect of 'spirit return' is undoubtedly emotional. The feelings are aroused and excited. Mere curiosity once gratified, and it is the love element which dominates. Anything lower than that, and all which seeks personal ends and aims, belong to the realm of Black Magic, which we will not now stop to discuss. Those lost to every-day life are greeted as visitors from the beyond. So the mourner is comforted, and 'spirit return' is extolled as solving the problem of a future life for man.

Under the rule of emotion progress is always limited and slow. Love is a universal faculty, and is the mother of self-sacrifice. The great majority of mothers of every race and degree will die for their young. Man has no monopoly either of love or of self-sacrifice, although he proclaims them as manifestations of God 'in the flesh.' His infancy and childhood are feeble and prolonged beyond that of other animals, hence parental love must cover and protect during more years than in any other race. No wonder that love has been proclaimed as divine, for without it almost all life, save the very lowest, would cease to exist. Yet love, like a thermometer, is marked with degrees, and the love of the helpless babe is the lowest worthy of the name. Even the romance of youth is but the sex instinct, necessary for the perpetuation of the race. It is love on the animal plane, and but a hair's breadth from emotional lust. Yet human history is enfolded in love on this level, and much of 'spirit return' has marked a similar degree on life's thermometer 'over there.'

This is an era of progress, and unless emotional love can be lifted to a higher level, it arrests true spirit growth. We have had our Modern Spiritualism founded on this emotional love, which has seemed, for most, to be the aim and object of spirit return. For the great majority it has remained at that level, and such believers gladly welcome inspirational talks and writings which picture this animal love as dominant in the next life. The mother who lost her babe a score or more of years ago is told that her child will appear to her after death as the wee infant whose feebleness had demanded protection from her mother love. So her first greeting in her new life is to be simulated baby caresses. The budding intelligence of her babe, sweet in its time and place, has been taught by seers and seeresses as re-manufactured by angels, in order that the new-comer may experience once again her old maternal instincts. This class of teachers insist that friendly Death has written 'to be continued in our next' on this entire class of emotional sensations. But when we remember that that mother's child is now an educated spirit woman, with her privileges and developments of the higher life, and that childhood itself is but a passing incident of spirit growth, we begin to see the absurdity of such beliefs and teachings. If eternal progress be the law, and that child has advanced in normal growth, we may be sure she will neither simulate nor dissimulate when she greets her earth-mother on the spirit side. That poor mother has to grow into a far higher conception of the meaning, responsibilities, and power of 'love,' and will not be tied down to her own past by emotional forms of love which are shared by the whole animal creation. Love is the bond of union in spirit-life, and its importance to spirit progress cannot be over-estimated, but we must keep in mind that it is of a very different degree to its shadow cast upon mortal experience. Now, for the present, we will leave this emotional field, and seek the step that must be taken by the believer who desires to evolve a higher manhood out of the facts of spirit return and his own proved immortality.

The emotional believer does not stop to play the critic. He just caresses and enjoys, feeling secure in his own belief. If told that he is often only welcoming a shadow born of the mortal, he believes and asserts that personal experiences are sufficient proof for every rational man. The discovery that clairvoyance, psychometry, and telepathy were attributes of mortal man startled him, but was not allowed to throw any doubt upon his loved spirit return, as being just what he had always claimed it to be. But at last, when fraud after fraud had discredited the public circle, the poor believer retired

into the sanctuary of his family séance, or personal sitting, where he believed himself perfectly safe. This is about as far as the great majority of Spiritualists have travelled to-day. It has been a real advance, which has demanded fifty years of slow experience. But, all the same, it is woefully imperfect. Mysteries abound in every direction. Expected loved ones do not appear. Strangers intrude. Mis-statements darken truth. At last the student begins to discern that there is fraud on the spirit side as well as the mortal, and that all his precautions, which have driven him from enjoying public mediumship, have done little to ensure him safety and truth in his loved intercourse with spirits. The student now realises this, but the mass of believers, busy to-day in arresting and punishing mortal fraud, hardly dream of this greater barrier that will still remain between them and their loved ones 'gone before.' Yet this is the next step that must be climbed in the pathway of progress. One may linger long here, fighting the hidden foe, and seeking to master conditions whereby to gain comfort with safety out of spirit return. And under special circumstances of peculiar harmony and sympathy, such as those, for instance, of Stead with his 'Julia,' Lilian Whiting with her 'Kate Field,' and many others, that which is received may be reasonably claimed as truthful and pure. It is the limitations, the impossibility of prolonged free and open intercourse, that tell the tale, in such cases, of *something* not yet understood which holds the mortal and a really advanced spirit apart. Yet this is the condition under which those most favoured hold their communion to-day, apparently accepting as inevitable certain obstacles that darken spirit return. Their motto seems to be, 'Smallest favours thankfully received,' and they are shocked at the suggestion that it may be possible for the mortal to unravel certain of these mysteries, and reach a level where he is measurably beyond contact with deliberate deception from either mortal or spirit.

We have thus far noted three steps in progress in spiritual experience which, apparently, all but the favoured few must climb, unless they become hopelessly discouraged. The first step was the emotional phase under which all spirit return is accepted as true, and the talks and teachings of the séance are accepted, for the most part, for just what they seem to be. This is the level of the average believer, on which he often finds great comfort and consolation in his hours of darkness and sorrow. Then we have a certain class of minds, born to doubt, and thoroughly afraid of everything emotional, who have been content to spend a score of years discussing and trying to prove from an intellectual standpoint that there is not any such thing as spirit return. The emotional believer, who *knows* he talks with his loved ones, has been shocked and disgusted as these 'terrible doubters' have proved, item by item, that he is often a victim to gross fraud, and exhibits almost total ignorance of the powers which belong to a mortal while in earth life. These miserable doubters have actually attempted to prove that most of so called 'spirit return' can thus be explained either by ignorance or fraud. So there is great wailing in the home of the emotional believer, who thinks true love and personal honesty should sufficiently protect him. Usually he falls back on his personal experience, and sobs out, 'Don't I know my own father, my dear mother, my loved wife, or lost child?' I have seen such an emotional believer rushing from séance to séance, and every time claiming his darling, although the cabinet form might vary a dozen inches from the one greeted elsewhere, and has become blond instead of brunette. He refuses to note that the spirit memory which worked well at one exhibition would not connect with anything said elsewhere. But usually the poor enthusiast almost shrieks, 'I don't care; I know it's my darling,' and so lives and dies clinging to his belief. If one phase of phenomena is proved to be leaky, he immediately quotes his experience in some other direction that he claims is certainly water-tight. Such has been the first step in the experience of the great majority, and some veterans in the movement still walk in the darkness, ignorant that day is breaking at last. Thus, thanks for the most part to the miserable doubter, the second stage in progress has been reached, so that editors and their readers have combined to crush fraud and expose ignorance. It is a wearisome and

nauseating task. The fraud belongs to to-day, and may be detected by shrewd common-sense; but the ignorance of the occult powers of mortal man is only a chapter in the history of humanity. Still the séance chamber must be swept and dusted, and daylight let into its crannies, before the world of history will be ready for another advance. That is to say, the mortal with dustpan and broom will have swept out all the fraud he can discover. Then comes for him the third step in his spiritual experience, for he discovers deliberate fraud that his dustpan and broom will not touch. It belongs to the invisible—is embedded in spirit return itself—and editor and reader cannot by combination oust this negro from his accustomed pile of wood. Yet it must be met and overcome, or spirit return would remain to curse humanity.

The great mass of believers do not yet realise how often they are victims to their own sense limitations. They do not see into spirit life, but simply judge from what the spirit tells them *he* sees, with the result that they are often fooled to their heart's content. It is painful to realise the advantage that is taken of our blindness. One of my first experiences was in a séance where we were greeted by the spirit of an old and renowned physician. It happened that a young doctor was one of the circle, and by a few questions he demonstrated the ignorance of the spirit, who then left discomfited. Presently we heard a voice which said, 'That was one of my pupils; I am here now.' It is true that this last spirit knew more than the young doctor, but, all the same, our blindness had been used to deceive us. Some may call it amiable deception, but I count it as damnable fraud. And the believer who does not recognise a danger signal from such experiences must expect to become a victim.

The whole question of the extent to which the mortal is fooled by unseen visitors is most important to the student whose object is 'truth.' It cannot be avoided. No personal purity is any protection, any more than the emotional almsgiver is safe from the professional beggar, or the skilful rogue. So spirit fraud is a phase to be studied as carefully as fraud by a mortal. But we must remember it includes every danger, from what is called amiable deception to the horrors of obsession and possession which too often curse mortal life.

There are two ways of meeting this obstacle to intercourse with our loved ones. One way is to stand in the mud up to your neck: to analyse the filth, and microscope the microbe; to fight single cases, as they do in the East, where occasionally a spirit seems to know less than a mortal; also to search the records of prisons and asylums, and occasionally release a wretched victim. Yet all alike will demonstrate but too clearly that the world of spirit and of mortal cannot be held apart. They will meet and blend in spite of all we can do. But the truth to be proclaimed from the house-top is that *purity is no protection*. A good motive is fooled as easily as a bad one. Denial of spirit intercourse is itself a lie, whether proclaimed from pulpit or legal bench. Such intercourse is a fact—the most awful fact in human life. It strikes the preacher who talks of the devil, just as much, and as readily, as the abandoned woman in the street. When the world realises that it is not a matter of morality or motive, but a fact of nature darkened by ignorance, the world will be prepared to ask if there be no other way of fighting the evil.

(To be continued.)

A LADY (widow) wishes to join a private developing circle within easy distance of Tulse Hill. The occasional companionship of local Spiritualists would be appreciated. *Letters only* to B., 8, Mervyn-road, Tulse Hill, S.E.

'STAR LORE' for the September quarter is hardly up to the average. The crisis in South Africa is shown to be in accordance with predictions contained in this year's almanack (Zadkiel's). Other papers deal with the 'Recent Earthquake in Italy' (July 19th last), and 'Some Greek Astrological Terms.' The latter consists mainly of extracts from a scholarly paper contributed by Dr. R. Garrett to the 'Classical Review.' The horoscope of Lord Verulam is given, together with his views upon astrology as a science. 'Horary Astrology in the Fifth Century' proves conclusively that this branch of the science is much older than has been supposed. —A.B.

THE CULT OF THE OCCULT.

A friend in South Africa draws our attention to an article published in the 'Natal Witness' of July 17th, upon the 'Cult of the Occult,' which he considers is worthy of our attention from the fact that—to his knowledge—it was written by a clergyman of the Church of England. The writer says:—

'The occult is to be found in all religions, and in all forms into which these religions are subdivided. The phenomena and "supernatural" elements in which religion deals are remarkable in their likeness to one another. The rites of the religions of the East bear resemblances in their nature to the sacramental ordinances of Western Christendom. Both teach an esoteric mystery accompanying them. Both appeal to the psychic being rather than the intellectual. Both employ material vehicles for the conveyance of their "mysteries." The "séance" of the Spiritualists, Brahmists and Theosophists, the manifestations of the Buddhistic and Zoroastrian worships, the sacraments of the Church, the strange phenomena recorded as having been experienced by George Fox and his co-participants in the early Quaker movement; similar experiences given in the diaries of John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, and in the first beginnings of the Irvingites, as recorded by Mrs. Oliphant,—all these go to show that in religion, when sincere and ardent spiritual persons are met together, their devotions produce the same mysterious occurrences, and the phenomena experienced are generally similar in their character, though differing much in their manner of manifestation. Indeed, not a religious movement that we know of exists that did not, in its earlier and enthusiastic periods, trench on supernatural grounds, and was not accompanied by occult manifestations. In these days the investigation of the occult is claimed to be a science, and men of science are rapidly becoming profound believers in psychic truth. For this reason, the more occultism is being known and comprehended, the more scientific it becomes. So far science has been practically non-Christian, and has declared itself agnostic; simply because Christianity in the present age of modern scientific research has never offered to scientific men any facts, supernatural or otherwise, that they can examine. Probably, if science had been as advanced in the days of Christ and the first Christian century as it is at the present time, science would have been Christian from the first, because in those days Christianity had something to produce for the investigation of science, something that men of science could lay hold of to justify their acceptance of the Christian propaganda. It is this total absence of "signs following" the faith of the Churches that is the one great stumbling-block to materialists. And it is the utter unexplainableness of this absence in modern Christianity which has made materialism and agnosticism advance with such startling rapidity in the last fifty years. It is this, too, that explains why preachers of all sects have so largely abandoned the claim for miracles, and have confined their preaching either to dogma or ethics. They have ceased to believe in "supernaturalism" because there is nothing to demonstrate it in the churches of Christendom to-day. Yet anyone who follows the literature of to-day will readily observe a remarkable trend towards supernaturalism. Whilst theology has discarded the argument of miracles, philosophy, and the general culture of the present age, have taken it up, and expound it, in modernised form, as the new argument in favour of religion against materialism. In fact, the occult is in human nature. If man is a spirit incarnate, embodied in flesh, he must be a Spiritualist latent or committed. But what can we say to those—a vast and increasing army of people—who aver, seriously, that occult phenomena are not only possible, but can be of everyday occurrence; are demonstrated, and open to the investigation of men of science? What shall we say when we hear that men of science, like Sir William Crookes and many others, are committed to absolute faith in these spiritual phenomena? What can we say, but that probably the occult manifestations, as they are tested and proved by men of the most reliable character, are, after all, the very miracles of

the first century returned to us, on which the argument for Christianity was based?

'There can be no getting behind "facts." Here we have solid ground, and it is the success with which occultists appeal to facts that compels serious investigation. Many men of science, materialists, have been confronted, face to face, with the materialised "astral" shape of a departed one, or with a direct communication, either automatically written, or by alphabetical raps on a table, which have been submitted by them to every conceivable test of genuineness. And this really is the chief reason for the growth, the phenomenal spread, of occultism, in the popularity and acceptance of serious scientific people—not previously, as a rule, associated with any religion, but generally materialists, scientists, and unemotional people, who will not take anything from mere hearsay. It would seem that there is quietly and secretly growing up a new religion, a new "cult," on all fours with and exactly resembling the occultism of the patriarchal and apostolic Churches of Scripture, and parallel with the occultism of the East. Is this, the thoughtful mind inquires, the beginning of a universal "re-union," the union of Christendom, taking shape of itself, spontaneously, and independently of the propaganda and futile endeavour of the Churches to coalesce? And may not the world awaken, one day, to discover that all their differences are resolvable, have been resolved, in the gradually involved belief in the occult, in the cult of the occult, which is one of the most marked characteristics of modern literature?'

STRIKING PHENOMENA—AN INTERESTING SPECULATION.

The following interesting occurrence is quoted in the 'Rivista di Studi Psicici' from a book called 'L'Essistenza dell'Anima,' by Dr. Ruete, a professor of the University of Leipzig.

The doctor had two patients, Signorina W. and Signorina P. They had never met but were mutually interested in one another. Disease made more rapid progress in the case of Signorina W., who was obliged to keep her bed, whilst Signorina P. was able to remain up. Nevertheless one night Dr. Ruete received a sudden call to the bedside of Signorina P. and arrived just in time to see her die. On returning to his house, it occurred to him to inquire as to the condition of Signorina W., although it was still night. The mother of the latter, in an agitated state, then told him that the invalid had had a startling dream, in which Signorina P. had appeared to her and told her that she too would die during the day, and that then they would go together. The doctor then repaired to the sick woman, who herself narrated the vision to him. From this time she grew rapidly weaker and died the same day.

The same number of the 'Rivista' records a séance held on November 1st, 1898, during which a small table was levitated without contact. The article is signed by six witnesses. It is particularly mentioned that the unseen operator requested, before attempting to produce this phenomenon, that one or more of those present should sing. It would be interesting to know whether there is any connection between this request for singing (which is not infrequent), and the statement made to Mrs. Underwood (reproduced in a recent number of 'LIGHT'), that deep breathing helps the conditions and makes communication easier. Deep breathing is a necessary accompaniment, of course, of all real singing. Is it not just possible that this dilation of the physical organism results in a widening of the inter-atomic spaces, and a corresponding quickening of the rapidity of the ethereal vibrations, and that this acceleration of vibration may generate more psychic force? Sir W. Crookes' experiments with radiant matter have, as we know, proved that accelerated motion in a vacuum liberates a considerable amount of unsuspected latent energy. Can anyone who knows more of science, either physical or psychical, make any suggestion upon this point? Singing may have this advantage over breathing alone, that it serves also to distract the mind, and a self-conscious state is, we know, an unfavourable condition for receiving communications.

H. A. D.

SERIOUS ILLNESS CURED BY A SPIRIT.

Under this heading a long and interesting report of a cure effected through the instrumentality of one of Mrs. d'Esperance's spirit friends, 'Humnor Stafford,' was given in 'LIGHT' of January 14th last. This report has recently appeared in the 'Uebersinnliche Welt,' supplemented by the following 'note' by the Editor:—

'We have to thank the kindness of Herr Fidler, of Gothenburg, for the foregoing narrative. We are, however, convinced that the explanation of this most interesting occurrence, as given in his title and the concluding paragraph, will be disputed by our readers; and we ourselves must say that the events—the truthfulness of which admit of no doubt, owing to the sources from which they come—are to be explained by the animistic and not by the spiritistic theory. The mediumistic action of the medium apart from the body seems to us in this instance to be clearly proven.'

I have been asked by Spiritualists, who are not versed in the terminology of German occultists, what 'Animism' really means, and the shortest explanation I can give is that it is 'Spiritism without the spirits.' These German psychical researchers cannot deny the manifestations, but they say that they are to be attributed entirely to the 'Anima,' or 'Psyche,' or 'Subliminal Consciousness' of the medium, and that the spirits of the departed have nothing whatever to do with them. Thus in the foregoing narrative, 'Humnor Stafford' is supposed to be but a myth, or fiction, created by Mrs. d'Esperance's 'subliminal consciousness'; in fact, to quote the immortal Betsy Prigg when speaking of Mrs. Harris, 'there ain't no such person.'

For my part, I cannot understand the fascination this theory of 'animism' possesses for these extremely clever people. I observe that 'automatic writing,' so-called, is one of the medial phases *invariably* put down as 'animistic'; but if I could be brought to believe that the volumes written in this way through my hand, purporting to be messages from dear spirit friends, who have (to my thinking) proved their identity beyond a doubt, were performances perpetrated by my lying 'subliminal consciousness,' I would, like Prospero, bury my magic staff, *i.e.*, my pencil, and fondly hope that this most objectionable 'anima' would, at my death, be buried with my mortal body; for the thought of annihilation would to me be infinitely preferable to that of the continued existence of such a lying spirit, doubtless in company with other similar ones, as 'like attracts like.'

I will here just remark that our spirit controls make no pretence whatever to be able to produce phenomena without the aid of their mediums. Thus in the foregoing narrative, 'Humnor Stafford' could not work his miracle of healing without, in some way, bringing Mrs. d'Esperance's physical mediumship to his aid, in what manner we cannot quite understand, but that she, or her 'magnetism,' was present with the invalid when he performed his kind action, is (in my humble opinion) as clearly shown as that he himself, thus aided, performed the cure; the spirit is the operator, the medium the instrument without which he cannot work.

M. T.

FAREWELL TO MRS. M. E. CADWALLADER

On Wednesday evening, September 6th, by invitation of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Morse, a representative gathering of London Spiritualists assembled at 26, Osnaburgh-street, Euston-road, London, N.W., to meet, and bid God-speed to, Mrs. M. E. Cadwallader and her father, Mr. B. B. Hill. After a pleasant interchange of thoughts, Mr. J. J. Morse, in his own genial way, referred to the object of the meeting, and expressed the pleasure it had given him and Mrs. Morse and family to have the company of his dear friends, the guests of the evening, and on behalf of the Junior Spiritualists' Club, and other Spiritualist bodies, he extended to them sincere good wishes for a pleasant voyage and a safe return to their home in Philadelphia. Mr. E. W. Wallis, secretary of the London Spiritualist Alliance, being called upon, joined in the cordial sentiments and good wishes which had been expressed towards Mrs. Cadwallader and Mr. B. B. Hill, both of whom acknowledged the kindness of Mr., Mrs., and Miss Morse, and testified to the pleasure they had experienced in meeting with the Spiritualists of Great Britain. Refreshments were kindly provided by Mrs. Morse, and the company dispersed after a pleasant evening with hearty good wishes to our departing friends. COR.

A SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE.

As I read in 'LIGHT' of August 26th the remarks of Mrs. Underwood upon a 'Spiritual Atmosphere,' I asked myself whether I have breathed thereof. The joy of my life is from the world across the way, and I pass no day nor night without hearing of the mysteries, or seeing the strange glories of the near beyond; and trials—which, at one time, I must assuredly have sunk beneath—are more cheerfully met and overcome. The power is given to me of leaving my body at will, and of manifesting my presence to earth friends at great distances across land and sea; and it verily appears to me, at these times of brief partings from my mortal frame, that I breathe an atmosphere not of this earth. Laying myself down as for physical repose, I cast all weary and troubled thoughts aside; the day is done and its labours ended. With the stillness of the evening I seek for peace, and bid disquietude and worry join the vanished day. In passiveness I rest, and clearer grows the inner vision. Spirit friends surround me; but always one in particular draws nearer to me, as though to prepare the body for the spirit's brief parting therefrom. He bends over me and makes several slow passes across my brow. I feel strangely dull and heavy. 'Breathe deeply,' I hear him say, as after a few passes he lays his hand upon my brow. I take a long, long breath, and often before it is ended a deep physical sleep has been produced, and my spirit liberated. At first I remembered but hazily what then passed, but now all is clearer, and the ecstasy of a joy unspeakable comes to me, well-nigh overpowering me just now as I go back in thought to the doings of the night. For having spoken with my earth friends on the other side of the water, it is as though I were permitted to join other spirit friends and see the beauties of their land. Maybe I go no further than the door, maybe the lowliest seat is mine, but that is all I could bear—for methinks even the memory of greater joy would be too great for life below. Above all, it is most necessary that I follow implicitly the instructions of him who has constituted himself the leader of the unseen friends around me. Once only, fearing to lose sight of the spirit forms near for the brief second necessary to produce bodily sleep, I heeded not the injunction 'breathe deeply.' He who made the passes continued, however, but in less than a minute I felt as though surrounded by some suffocating gas; the pulse in my temples beat loudly; my heart became suddenly much agitated; I could not swallow; I gasped for breath, and, instinctively, I rushed to the open window, throwing wide the lowered *jalousies*. But it needed half an hour's rest by the open window before complete recovery. When I gave myself to the Unseen again, no word of reproach came, but only, it seemed to me, sympathy that I was obliged thus painfully to learn the lesson of obedience. There are times during the day when the need is sore for advice from without, and then I strive to unburden my mind of all earthly care, and take two, three, or four deep breathings. A semi-conscious condition results; the hearing and vision become finer, and invariably, upon return to the normal state, the way of action is clearer for the brief spiritual communion. But most decidedly I seem to inhale a different atmosphere after the first long breath—an atmosphere which comes from without and yet strangely from within. In passing under control I experience the same sensation, and can compare it to nothing earthly so much as to the taking of chloroform, of which when I have taken the first deep breath I feel, for the remaining two or three respirations before unconsciousness ensues, as though I were inhaling an atmosphere from within, as well as from without, the which, at the same time, I sense as different from the natural atmosphere. Can it be that the 'spiritual atmosphere' of which Mrs. Underwood writes is of the kind I experience? 'PHYGIA.'

MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN is lying seriously ill, we regret to learn, and may pass to the spirit side of life at any moment.

It affords us much pleasure to be able to announce that both Miss Rowan Vincent and Mrs. J. Venables, of Walsall, are making satisfactory progress towards restored health and strength.

WILL-CULTURE.*

Instead of relying upon external agencies, the Menticulturist aims at arousing and utilising the interior potencies of the self or spirit. To this end he urges us to banish fear and worry; to maintain a cheerful, equable, and confident frame of mind; to call upon the spirit to control the psychic centres and direct strong and healing mental energies upon the body through the nervous system. We desire to be happy—and yet go on submitting to the habitual thoughts and feelings of anxiety, care, foreboding, and irritability, and consequent physical and mental dis-ease. When we realise that the remedy for a very large proportion of life's trials and burdens rests with ourselves—that we can transform our mountains into molehills by the simple process of absolutely refusing to be mastered by our fears and feelings, and by positively affirming the good—we shall cease to see so much that we call evil, and find unexpected pleasures.

Hypnotism has demonstrated the potency of spirit, and we are constantly finding evidence of the power of thought—by self-suggestion—to modify our own disposition. It is possible to adopt a certain frame of mind—to be calm and happy intentionally, and with set purpose. I *can*—not I *can't*—is the requisite attitude. I *am* happy—not I *want* to be happy—is the necessary affirmation.

From this standpoint we can readily recognise that we become what we *think* we are. Why wait until to-morrow to discard anxiety or feelings of incapacity and thoughts of coming disaster? Why go out to meet trouble and drag it in and give it lodgings? Time enough when it arrives to meet it—with a flat denial, and to shut the door in its face. It is surely better to smile than to weep!

Quite a large number of books have been published in America upon these lines, and one of the best of those that have appeared in England is entitled 'Have You a Strong Will?' by Charles G. Leland, in which the author advocates a novel method of self-development and self-control. Referring to this work the 'Harbinger of Light' says:—

'The writer of the book before us has presented hypnotism in a new aspect, which, if his affirmations are correct, will be of immense value to humanity. He affirms that "Will can, by very easy processes of training, or by aid of Self-Hypnotism and Suggestion, be strengthened to any extent, and states of mind soon induced, which can be made by practice habitual"; that by positively willing overnight you may determine your mental, and to a large extent your physical, condition for the next day. This is not put forward as a theory, but as a fact capable of easy demonstration. Instructions are given how to awaken attention and create interest as a preliminary, and how to practise Self or Auto-Hypnotism. Systematic Forethought appears to be the ground-work, determining what you intend to do, and thereby impressing this clearly and forcibly on the brain by a concentration of the will, before retiring at night. This appears to be the action of the intellect upon the sub-conscious self, or rather, as we should put it, of the cerebrum on the cerebellum, the latter being the seat of the automatic action of the body during sleep.

'There is much wisdom and beauty in the following short extract, which fits in admirably with Professor Elmer Gates's theory of the development of moral brain cells by suggestion:—

'To be true we must be far more familiar with Nature than with scene painting or photographs, and to do this we must, so to speak, fascinate ourselves with pictures in life, glad memories of golden hours, rock and river and greenwood tree. We must also banish resolutely from our past all recollections of enemies and wrongs, troubles and trials, and throw all our hearts into doing so. Forgive and forget all enmities—those of Misfortune and Fate being included. Depend upon it that the brighter you can make your Past the pleasanter will be your Future.'

From our own knowledge of the power of the will and of the mind over the body, we can confidently recommend the book in its therapeutic aspect, and if only a fraction of what the author affirms of the effects of his method in its moral aspect are realised, it will be found to be a valuable volume.

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

* 'Have You a Strong Will? or how to develop Will-power, or any other faculty or attribute of the mind, and render it habitual by the easy process of Self-Hypnotism.' By CHAS. GODFREY LELAND (Hans Breitmann). London: Geo. Redway.

TO THE SPIRIT WORLD AND BACK!

The following incident appears in 'La Revue Spirite, being a translation from 'Psychische Studien,' No. XI., 1898, p. 560:—

At Falkenberg, Marianna Przemyskie died of phthisis on January 26th, 1898, at the age of thirty-one years. Those present recited the prayers for the dying, and in about a quarter of an hour after this the last sigh was breathed, the body became cold and rigid, the pulse was still, and to all appearance the woman was dead. After an interval, during which the members of the family were weeping, the apparently dead woman roused, opened her eyes, became conscious, and asked: 'Why do you weep? *Mon Dieu!* it was lovely up there. . . . I had risen already into space, into the ethereal world.' She lived for a short time after this, with full consciousness, and at last died peacefully.

This narrative is the more interesting, that it is by no means unique. A very similar incident occurred at the death of the Rev. F. Denison Maurice, in the presence of his medical attendant, who himself tested the pulse. And an equally remarkable case, well authenticated, is related in 'Phantasms of the Living,' in which a young soldier, apparently resuscitated, stated that he had, in the interval in which he seemed to be dead, seen his mother, who was living at a distance from the place where he was dying. This case also was reported by a medical man who witnessed it.

WAS IT A SPIRIT VOICE?

One of the August numbers of 'L'Echo du Merveilleux' relates the following incident, which is stated to have occurred on June 25th, 1881. The narrator was then a girl of eighteen. The companion with whom she shared a room had been in anxiety about a favourite cousin; the last tidings received had, however, been slightly more favourable. The narrator, who was kept awake by toothache, says that her companion was sleeping quietly near her when suddenly, about three o'clock, she shuddered, opened her eyes, and said: 'Did you call me?' 'Not at all,' was the reply. 'Oh, I was dreaming, then; someone called and touched my shoulder.' 'You dreamt,' responded her companion. She closed her eyes, but after about five minutes she started again, got up and ran to the window, exclaiming: 'I am not dreaming, someone pulled me by the arm, calling "Belle."' (This was a pet name used only by the sick cousin.) In the sky opposite the window a lovely trail of colour, graduated from bright pink to mauve, was visible; at that moment the clock struck the *quarter after three*. The girl called 'Belle' turned deadly white and nearly fainted; she said that she had again felt a hand on her shoulder and heard the words 'Belle—adieu!' Subsequently the news arrived that her cousin had died precisely at 3.15 a.m., and that her last words were about her friend. The article is only signed with initials.

'CHRISTIAN SCIENCE' FOUND WANTING.

The 'Daily Mail' recently contained the following statement:—

'Mrs. Baker G. Eddy, the founder of the Christian Scientists, is lying critically ill at her home at Concord, New Hampshire. The leading Christian Scientists of the United States have been summoned to her bedside to make the supreme test of their faith in their endeavour to save her.'

So it appears that the 'Christian Science' method of healing from a distance is inoperative in the case of their leader; the 'real presence' of the faithful being required. An explanation of this incongruity is desirable.

But how has Mrs. Eddy become ill at all? If 'Christian Science' will cure disease, it ought also to prevent it.

Again, they tell us that disease has no real existence, that it is only a delusion of the 'mortal mind.' Therefore, as Mrs. Eddy is only labouring under the delusion that she is ill, why make all this fuss about healing her? There is nothing to be healed!

By the way, when a 'Christian Scientist' dies, if they ever do die, ought we not to say that they are under the delusion that they are dead?

48, Sussex-gardens,
Hyde Park, W.

E. W. BERRIDGE, M.D.

A BABY MEDIUM.

The August number of 'La Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme' records a curious instance of automatic writing through the hand of a child of under three years of age.

The child was given a pencil and paper, and after an interval, during which she was occupied with scrawling upon it, the paper was examined and two messages were found inscribed. The messages, of which a facsimile is produced, are quite unlike each other in orthography, and the latter of the two was identified as being in the *patois* of a spirit who had previously communicated through 'Maria,' of whose strange experiences a brief account was given in 'LIGHT' in July. Dr. Dusart, whose name is affixed to the article recording the phenomena of incarnations through 'Maria,' forwards this record of automatic writing through the baby girl 'Elise.' He concludes his letter by saying: 'This specimen seems to me of considerable interest on account of the two types of writing, so completely different, which were traced on the paper by the child in a few moments.'

An article in the 'Rivista di Studi Psichici' discusses some further messages written by the hand of this child medium. The evidence of external origin is, of course, greatly accentuated in a case like this, where the writer is so incapable of imitation and fraud, but one cannot but gravely deprecate the use of an irresponsible child of three for such experiments. Since we know at present so little about the force used by spirits to effect the phenomenon, it seems to us that it is altogether imprudent to let a young child, whose constitution is at an early stage of formation, be subjected to this additional strain; and morally we think the peril even greater, for the spirits who communicated through 'Elise' seem themselves to have been undeveloped. Surely no advantage to science can at all justify the exposure of an immature infant's mind to unknown influences of this sort. We should have been glad to see Dr. Dusart's letter conclude with a warning and a protest such as a medical man would be well fitted to make.

ZERO.

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.

Dr. Hodgson and Mrs. Piper.

SIR,—The expression, 'Mrs. Piper is the most remarkable woman who has appeared in the world's history,' attributed to Dr. Hodgson and referred to in a letter by Dr. Wyld in last week's 'LIGHT,' is a mistranslation, and as I alone am responsible for the error I will ask you kindly to let me correct it. It was not till after I had sent you the translation which you incorporated in an article that, looking again at the French, I recognised that what he really is reported as having said is that she is the most remarkable woman 'who has appeared for centuries.'

I wish to apologise for the inadvertent error due to over-hasty translating. H. A. D.

Mrs. Corner's Illness.

SIR,—The week following the séance held here on August 17th (and described in 'LIGHT' of September 2nd), Mrs. Corner became suddenly ill with a severe attack of gastritis, and has been confined to her bed for about a fortnight. As my article appears to have been widely read, and she has subsequently had many applications for sittings, she has asked me to state that until quite the end of this month she will not be in a physical condition to bear any undue fatigue, but she hopes in the course of a week or two to resume her séances.

In consequence of this unexpected illness I am delaying the little series I proposed holding here until the middle of October, to enable her to fully regain her health and strength, as at present she is only just able to sit up for a short time, and is totally unfit for a week or so to answer personally the numerous letters she is receiving.

Hurstborne Lodge, EFFIE BATHE.
Ashchurch Park Villas, Goldhawk-road, W.

The Spiritual Atmosphere and Internal Breathing.

SIR,—In the last two numbers of 'LIGHT,' letters have appeared with the above headings, and I now write to explain how these terms are misleading.

'The Spiritual Atmosphere,' which some men are supposed to breathe, can only mean the spiritual inspirations

which may, at times, come to their souls; and 'The Internal Breathing' of Swedenborg means the same thing, namely, the spiritual inspirations which come more or less in entrancement.

When we are in the body, the fuller and freer the natural inspirations of the lungs are, the better is the blood oxygenated and the better are our bodies nourished and strengthened; but when we think deeply, and especially when we think spiritually, then our breathing is subdued more and more until, as with the Fakirs, the breathing becomes almost extinct, and in such cases the subject becomes entranced; that is, his soul leaves his physical body as no longer a machine it can work with.

In the year 1874, I demonstrated by experiments on myself that anaesthetics acted in the same way, and these experiments proved to me that the soul could be demonstrated to be the true Ego and capable of thinking and working when outside the physical body, and that, therefore, it survived the death of the body.

This discovery has ever since seemed to me as the most important scientific discovery yet made in practical psychology, because from the thousands of cases put under anaesthetics weekly we have continual opportunities of verifying the facts, and we find that a large proportion of those placed under anaesthetics declare, on 'coming to,' that they had been outside of their bodies, and hence it is thus that anaesthetics render the body incapable, for the time, of suffering the pains of surgery because it is not the body but the soul or mind which feels. The details of my discovery can be read in my 'Christo-Theosophy.'

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

7, Westbourne-street.

Test Conditions.

SIR,—Having read in 'LIGHT' the advice to sitters at physical and materialising séances, to sit under strict test conditions, I should like to know what constitutes strict test conditions. Perhaps some of your readers who have sat under these conditions would kindly inform me of the requirements necessary for a test séance. To my mind they should be so as to proclude any possibility of doubt, but at the same time they should offer no impediment to the manifestations.

OLD SOCIETY ORGANISER.

Miss Read.

SIR,—There is a slight error in your summary of my communication in regard to Miss Read. It says, 'and she laughed and spoke as usual both before and after the séance.' It should have been 'before and during the séance.' She did not laugh after the sitting, but spoke in a normal way. This slight correction will oblige.

H. BASSETT.

Excuses for Fraud.

SIR,—I have read with interest 'Quæstor Vitæ's' reply to Dr. Hodgson. I have been an investigator of spiritualistic phenomena for a long time and have entirely failed to find any evidence that the 'fraud hunter,' as he is sometimes called, begets fraud on the part of the medium. If he or she is a fraudulent medium, there will be false communications whether you trust or distrust the medium. I think it is time to eliminate this from the list of excuses for the weakness of human nature. In Mrs. Piper's case Dr. Hodgson expected and looked for fraud, as did others, and never found it. It should be so with the Bangs Sisters, if they are genuine mediums.

M. L. HOLBROOK.
46, East 21st-street, New York.
August 28th, 1899.

Payment of Mediums.

SIR,—Mr. Blythe asks whether a charge ought to be made in case no materialisation has taken place at a séance held expressly and avowedly for materialisation purposes.

The answer depends, it seems to me, upon the question whether or no the medium has been put to any expense for holding the séance. If he has, then, to that extent, the sitters ought, it would seem, in fairness to indemnify him; but if he has not, then were I he, I, like Mr. Blythe, should make no charge.

E. D. GIRDLESTONE.
Harborne, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. MACB.—Next week.
W. (ILFRACOMBE), G.W., 'SPHAERA,' W.Z.—Communications received with thanks, and shall have due attention.
A.N.C.—A little patience and inquiry will convince you that you have misjudged.