

# Light:

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

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

'The Prasnottara,' the gazette of the Indian section of the Theosophical Society, makes an effort to meet the never ceasing objection that Nirvâna means extinction of being, or personality. It says:—

Perhaps now we may have got some glimpse of what is meant when it is said that 'individuality perishes in Nirvâna.' It does not mean that you cease to exist. It does not mean that you become nescient, but that you become omniscient. Your consciousness has reached a state so lofty that it can hold itself as consciousness without being cut off from other consciousnesses by the wall of individuality, and Nirvâna is the most vital, most positive, most intense, most vivid state of super-consciousness.

People have talked about Nirvâna without realising the possibility of this transcendental consciousness. Yet one of the statements of the Lord Buddha is that Nirvâna is beyond death, is uncreated, eternal. He strains language in trying to give the idea of something very positive. And remember, He had entered Nirvâna, His consciousness had realised it, ere He began the preaching of the Good Law. It is sometimes described by negative words. 'It is not this.' 'It is not this.' It is not anything about which we can affirm anything, through our individuality. It is not anything which this mind is able to conceive. It is not any of the qualities which are manifested in the vehicles. Negatives alone are used in order to strike away all those limitations. That which is blown out, or extinguished, is the separated life.

Perhaps it may help if we suggest that this state of omniscience or super-consciousness is the pure and lofty result of sympathy and receptivity. If one were perfectly receptive and responsive, the narrow walls of individuality would be as though they were not; and all would be known because, to unselfishness and love, all would be revealed in and through the blendings of sympathy. This is spiritually conceivable. If it could be reached, the conqueror would be at one with God—would, in fact, be as God, the 'All in all.' Perhaps *that* is Nirvâna.

'The Oper. Court' for September is by no means 'milk for babes.' To tell the truth, it is not only 'strong meat,' but tonic medicine as well. 'The Christ of Paul,' by Moncure D. Conway, is a trying Essay, sharp and clever, but far-fetched. He certainly does not comprehend Paul's point of view. Paul's Christ is far more the ideal son of God in every human being than the fantastic and unlovely being described by Mr. Conway.

An illustrated Article on 'Staurolatry,' by Dr. Paul Carus, admirably traces the promotion of the cross from a dreaded and disgusting instrument of execution to the supreme symbol of spiritual power; but he strongly holds that when Christianity was officially recognised by the Roman Empire, 'the Imperial State Christianity reassimi-

lated all those Pagan elements which proved strong enough to survive the crisis.'

An incisive little Essay on the question, 'Is Religion a feeling of dependence?' is horribly illustrated by a Frontispiece, and is in other ways unpleasant, but the conclusion, though it needs a little watching, has a serious truth in it:—

If we cannot have a religion which makes us free and independent, let us discard religion! Religion must be in accord not only with morality but also with philosophy; not only with justice, but also with science; not only with order, but also with freedom.

Man is dependent upon innumerable conditions of his life; yet his aspiration is not to be satisfied with the consciousness of his plight; his aspiration is to become independent and to become more and more the master of his destiny. Religion is that which makes man more of a man, which develops his faculties and allows him more independence.

We must only learn that independence cannot be gained by a rebellion against the constitution of the universe, or by inverting the laws of life and evolution, but by comprehending them and adapting ourselves to the world in which we live. By a recognition of the truth, which must be acquired by painstaking investigation and by accepting the truth as our maxim of conduct, man rises to the height of self-determination, of dominion over the forces of nature, of freedom. It is the truth that makes us free.

So long as the truth is something foreign to us, we speak of obedience to the truth; but when we have learned to identify ourselves with truth, the moral ought ceases to be a tyrannical power above us, and we feel ourselves as its representatives; it changes into aspirations in us. True religion is love of truth, and being such it will not end in a feeling of dependence, but reap the fruit of truth, which is liberty, freedom, independence.

A writer in 'The Dublin Daily Express,' dating from Kilkee, deals in a clever way with Mr. Yeats' article in 'The Contemporary Review' on 'Ireland bewitched.' This writer resents the suggestion that the spirituality of Ireland is a survival of ignorant childhood or 'a parody of some Eastern cult.' He says:—

The spirituality of the Irish people—their revolt from the despotism of fact—is not a symptom of weakness but of sanity. So far as I know our people, their other-worldliness is not the miasma from the marshland of a haunted imagination, but that genuine open-eyed belief in the reality of the unseen and the promptings of those spiritual impulses

'Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day.'

Their appreciation of the supernatural is strong and reverential and definite. It is no merely notional assent that they give to supersensuous truths, but a practical mental adhesion. Without philosophy, they yet feel in the inmost fibre of their being that the spiritual is the truly real and that behind the veil of sense lies the explanation and the justification of the tangle and puzzle of life.

I find the true note of Celtic spirituality, no less, in Burko and Berkeley and Goldsmith, giving colour and cogency to all their work.

'Like some grave, mighty thought threading a dream.'

It is this same spirituality—the strength of the man linked with the wisdom of the child—and not a spurious mysticism, which is the true source of literary and, indeed, of all energy. For it is one of the deepest fallacies of our age to set over against each other as essentially opposite types, the mystic, the contemplative dreamer, and the man of action. This is an unnatural divorce—as those who read the life of (say) Dante or St. Theresa will find—for intellect and sense are not

contraries but complementaries. We Irish have, perhaps, kept the secret of this mediæval synthesis of character; but, if we have, we must recognise it (and make others recognise it) as our strength and not our weakness.

This writer is indignant at 'The Morning Post' and its insolent remark:—

No one need be surprised after reading Mr. Yeats' article if for many a long year to come Irish literature is chiefly taken up with what to the people of the West of Ireland are real things, magic and witchcraft, the half-crazy, half-inspired romances of men who have never ceased to be children.

People in Ireland must try to bear this arrogant tone with patience. It is John Bull's way just now.

There is a good deal of truth in this, from 'The Christian Register':—

Many old forms of vice have passed away simply because they have been forgotten. A good deal which passes for moral teaching is good in spirit and bad in effect, because children often get from teachers their first knowledge of sins which they never would have thought of if left to themselves. In the natural course of things, children will come into contact with some of the physical and moral evils which threaten the health of the race. To a child with a healthy moral nature the evil will be repellant when first seen in its unfamiliar ugliness. But the imagination of a child polluted by images of evil may, through familiarity, have lost the delicacy of feeling which causes one to shrink with loathing from any form of vice.

This is probably the most telling argument against the confessional. In other directions it has practical value. The law of suggestion has, indeed, subtle bearings upon life.

'The Speaker' lately gave us a longish Article on 'A Dying Ghost,' who tenants a great ancient house near Windsor, but whose dwindling appearances suggest to 'The Speaker' failing health and perhaps dissolution. We do not find much pith in the Article, but a quotation by the way is worth recording. Referring to a certain room in this grand house, the writer says:—

Two lines of lettering on the broad beam of the mantel arrest the eye. They are these:—

'Lyfe is mainly froth and bubble. Two things stand lyke stone:  
Kindnesse in another's trouble, Courage in your own.'

The Article was worth writing for the sake of these two noble lines.

'An Apocalypse of Life,' by W. T. Cheney (Rome, Georgia, U.S.A.), is an intensely emotional but seriously thoughtful book. Its declared object is to present and illustrate the truth of a higher Spiritualism, which necessarily classes man as a spiritual entity, with spiritual powers and attributes of being, and a spiritual destiny resulting therefrom that links him with the Infinite Spirit, and eventually places him in perfect spiritual environments and conditions consonant with his nature.

This purpose is carried out with the help of a familiar device,—transportation in vision to the spiritual spheres, resulting in discourses and discussions which serve as the vehicles for the author's ideas. These, we are bound to say, belong to a high plane of emotion and thought, and deserve sympathetic attention.

'Songs of the New Age,' by H. D. (London: 'James Speirs'), can hardly be said to rise up to the title. The sentiment is usually excellent, but the poetry is too often thin, and forced into rhyme, apparently against its will. Translated into honest prose, the book might make a charming selection of readings for odd moments of quiet, lonely thought.

'Rhymes of Road, Rail, and River,' by E. Derry (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co.), is a pleasant, light-hearted description of journeys in France, Switzerland, Holland and England. It is, in a way, clever; but it might have been better done in prose, though, as prose, it might have lacked substance.

'The Banner of Light' publishes an important communication from M. Camille Flammarion in which he repudiates the whirl of statements made concerning his desertion from our camp. He is still dwelling snugly in his old tent, from which he says: 'This strange campaign of the newspapers of the entire world upon my supposed desertion of the psychic studies has no need to be.' He said a good deal to his interviewer, but the whole of it may be inferred from the following, published in a report of an interview which he endorses:—

INTERVIEWER: 'How about the famous comet, whose tail is to destroy the earth?'

FLAMMARION: 'There will be no comet, any more than there was a letter of mine renouncing psychic researches. But you will find the newspapers announcing one just the same.'

Now will the newspapers who gloated over M. Flammarion's supposed desertion publish this repudiation?

#### 'WHY SHOULD INSPIRATION CEASE?'

The Rev. B. F. Austin, B.A., D.D., who was recently expelled from the Methodist ministry in Canada, preached in the Winnipeg Theatre, by request of a committee of citizens, on Sunday, July 6th. The sermon, which was printed in full in the 'Light of Truth' for August 5th, was upon 'Freedom through Truth.' Among the many good things advanced by the preacher we find the following:—

'In morality, in wisdom, in moral heroism, in spirituality, the world has lost nothing in the character of its prophets or psychics. Why then depreciate our own age? Why relegate all spiritual gifts of prophecy, miracle working, seership and inspiration to a bygone age? I assert without fear of successful contradiction that the spiritual man of to-day who uses the opportunities this age affords knows more of God, of nature, of providence, of the past and of the future than any man in any preceding age.

'It is a libel on our age to say we have no seers, no prophets, no gifts of healing, no miracles, no inspiration. There never was before so spiritual an age as ours, notwithstanding the unbelief of orthodoxy and the blind spirit of materialism of to-day. There never was before an age in which Heaven and earth were so near each other, nor an age in which inspiration was so common, so rich and copious. Why should inspiration cease? Has man learned all that Heaven can teach? Has God no more truth for His children? Why then should prophecy be dumb? The harp of inspired song be silent? The voices of Heaven be hushed in our day more than in past days?'

Lecturing at Brandon, Manitoba, he said:—

'That Spiritualism is the religion of the Bible is demonstrated by the following: Angels appeared and conversed with men. This forms the heart and substance of Scripture. The angels were the spirits of departed men. Prophets of olden days were the mediums of their time, were seers, were men of great psychic endowments. The work done by prophets and apostles was the same as that of modern mediums, namely, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and the gift of tongues. There is not a single miraculous phenomenon in the Old Testament which is not the result of Spiritualism. Every form of miraculous incident in the Old and New Testament is duplicated to-day. Do you doubt it? Come and see. Any honest inquirer can in one month's time prove this by investigation. No preceding age had so much spirituality; so much new truth, so hopeful an outlook. The spiritualistic view of the Bible has the following advantages: It gives a simple and consistent philosophy. It vindicates the character of God from charges of injustice. It does away with that nightmare of the Church, that libel on Christianity, that blasphemy on the character of God, an everlasting hell. It gives a rational view of the Bible, not as infallible, but as containing sublime spiritual truths. The spiritualistic view of religion ennobles character by its sense of personal responsibility. What ought we to do? We ought to investigate and accept the results. Let us love the truth, seek the truth, and live the truth.'

### A SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE—DEEP BREATHING.

In addition to the communications on this interesting subject from some of your more experienced readers, I should like to relate an experience of my own.

Not only did Swedenborg assert the psychic power of 'internal breathing,' but Mr. Maitland and others have also done so. Right breathing for the development of their powers is one of the lessons the Yogis must learn and practise; and many attain to the power of 'internal breathing.' But it is not about that I wish to write, but the 'spiritual atmosphere,' referred to in Mrs. Underwood's article.

Many years ago I began to practise deep and slow breathing, but for physical reasons entirely, choosing the time when out alone in the country, and preferably on the top of some hill, for there the air is fresher and more inspiring. When I began the study of psychic subjects I discovered that deep breathing, under favourable conditions, had a tendency to rouse the spiritual nature also. Sitting alone on the top of my favourite hill, the sea in front of me, the little town of Combe below, hills and dales on either hand and further away the moors, many times has the exercise of deep and slow breathing developed the power of sensing the presence of spirit friends. Sometimes the result has been merely a feeling of 'rest and quietude,' as Mrs. Underwood describes, very refreshing to the spirit; but, occasionally, when my thoughts were specially fixed on spiritual subjects, I have felt as if breathing a more interior or more spiritual atmosphere than is needed for the physical life alone. And on rare occasions I have felt as if coming into '*rapport* with the crowning force of the Mind Universal.' This may, of course, have been merely a day-dream, caused by the stimulus of deep breathing and pure air, and also, possibly, by the presence and influence of spirit friends. Still even then it was a beautiful experience and suggestive of wonderful possibilities.

The result of this development has been to make me very sensitive on other occasions. I seem at times to get into spheres of exalted thought or feeling. For instance, I suddenly became wide awake one night, and though quite comfortable and at rest physically, I felt as if spiritually I was in an atmosphere of pain. I seemed to sense the pain of the world, more particularly in its collective forms in our large towns and cities. This may merely have been the result of having seen on the previous day a poor broken-down horse still at work, long after it was past all work for anyone with any human feeling, and which was stimulated to extra effort by the whip of the driver. Yet this was not the only time I had seen pitiable sights and cruelty; indeed, I have even seen much greater suffering, yet never before had it resulted in such a strange experience as sensing the pain of the world.

On another occasion I saw a drunken woman being taken to prison. She was stupidly drunk, and her face most extraordinarily bloated. No unkindness was shown to her, and she was probably safer in prison than at liberty in her then condition, so there was nothing but the woman's condition to rouse my sympathy. At one time I should have felt nothing but disgust, but now a flash of recognition seemed to pass from myself to her, and on the instant I realised the unity of all life. Intellectually I had long acknowledged this, but that is a very elementary stage in comparison with the spiritual recognition of the fact. And deep breathing, under right conditions, tends, I believe, to the development of the power of sensing psychic conditions and spiritual truths.

It may be that I have not yet sufficiently mastered the art of deep breathing, but as yet it has not developed the wish to live on this earth, while in its present condition, for seven centuries—a possibility as predicted for Mr. Stead, if he only masters the art. Far more has it a tendency to create the wish to pass away to the spirit world, and to be able always to breathe the 'divine spiritual atmosphere.'

W. (Ilfracombe.)

As a constant reader of 'LIGHT,' I was much interested in the short reference to 'Internal Breathing' in a recent issue of your excellent and deeply interesting journal.

I should like to have written something on Mrs. Underwood's article, but my time is very limited just now, and it is only the reference to Swedenborg that calls forth a few remarks from me on the subject.

Swedenborg does make almost innumerable references to spiritual atmospheres, and when his philosophy on the subject is fully grasped and applied, the discoveries of the 'X' Rays will pale into insignificance.

Comparing the difference between spiritual and natural atmospheres, Swedenborg writes: 'The spiritual atmospheres are receptacles of Divine fire and Divine light, thus of love and wisdom, for they contain these within themselves. . . . That there are atmospheres in the spiritual world, equally as in the the natural world, may be evident from the fact that angels and spirits breathe, and also speak and hear, equally with men in the natural world; and their breathing is effected by an ultimate atmosphere which is called air; in like manner their speech and hearing.' (D.L.W., 175, 176.)

There are also references made to the seeing, thinking, and feeling of the inhabitants of the spiritual world; all of which are shown to be dependent upon spiritual atmospheres. It is said, 'thought and affection are not possible except by means of still purer atmospheres.'

Very evidently the atmospheres in the spiritual world have a much greater variety than they have on this earth plane. We are told of atmospheres 'of such beauty and pleasantness that they cannot be described . . . which flash in all their smallest parts as with diamond spherules . . . which resemble the glittering of all precious stones . . . as of pearls transparent to the centre, and irradiate with the most brilliant colours . . . flaming as with gold, with silver, and also with diamond-like gold and silver . . . of many-coloured flowers, which are in their smallest and invisible forms. . . . Nay, there are atmospheres presented to view which consist in their smallest and invisible forms of little children playing together, but only perceptible to an inmost idea.' (A.C., 1621.)

Much more does Swedenborg write on the subject of atmospheres, and it would surely be interesting to the readers of 'LIGHT' if someone acquainted with Swedenborg's writings were to contribute a special article on this important suggestive subject. As to breathing, Swedenborg teaches that present-day 'outward breathing' is an indication of a fall. The men of Most Ancient Times (Adam) 'had similar breathing to that of angels,' and, in consequence, 'were in profound ideas of thought, and had such a perception as cannot be described. . . . This inward breathing vanished little by little—with disastrous results—(and) . . . when inward breathing ceased outward breathing gradually succeeded, almost like that of the present day.' (A.C., 607, 608.)

Such being the case, we are scarcely surprised to read a thought, full of the deepest suggestiveness, namely: 'the inmost communication of the spirit is with the breathing and the motion of the heart.' (H. and H., 446.)

Trusting that you, sir will find these extracts and comments of sufficient interest to your readers to introduce them, and thanking you in anticipation.

Blackpool and London.

SPHAERA.

### ANOTHER CONVERT.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Lease, well and favourably known in America as a speaker upon reform subjects for some years past, has recently become an advocate of Spiritualism. The 'Chicago Inter-Ocean' says:

'Standing before 10,000 people, August 6th, at Chesterfield, where Indiana Spiritualists are holding their annual meeting, Mary Ellen Lease, of Kansas, affirmed the report that she is a Spiritualist, stating that she became converted to this belief when the spirit of her mother visited and conversed with her not long ago. She assailed denominational creeds, and was continuously and uproariously applauded by her audience.'

Mrs. Lease has been one of the great attractions at the Lake Pleasant Camp Meeting, Mass., which has been more successful this summer than for a number of years.

## LIMITATION IN SPIRIT RETURN.

Mr. Charles Dawbarn has recently published in our American contemporaries some thought-provoking articles, which have elicited a number of replies, including one by Miss Lilian Whiting, entitled: 'Psychical Research: Limitation in Spirit Return.' This was first published in 'The Coming Age,' Boston, U.S.A., and has since been reprinted in pamphlet form. The following extracts will be of interest to the readers of 'LIGHT,' and the tenour of Mr. Dawbarn's arguments will be gathered from the passages that Miss Whiting has quoted:—

'There are probably more subtle and complicated conditions that invest the communication between the seen and the unseen than the two arbitrary ones of genuineness and fraud. That these two divisions exist is, of course, a matter of general acceptance. But of late the possibility that we cannot relegate all the phenomena to one or the other of these divisions has haunted me, and on the principle of Dr. Holmes that we talk in order to find out what we think rather than to tell what we think, I have wished that we might have a little speculative discussion on this matter to elicit something of that wisdom which is said to lie in the multitude of counsellors. It is but justice to Mr. Charles Dawbarn, of the Pacific Coast, to add that my nebulous thought on this matter has been focused and precipitated by a most interesting paper from him, in which he discusses with great clearness and sincerity the limitations that attend all phenomena, and suggests his own theory of these limitations.'

'In this article Mr. Dawbarn says:—

"The most experienced Spiritualist is often dismayed and disheartened at the limitations that haunt his phenomena. For instance, when Shakespeare is announced as his visitor he invariably discovers that the wit and wisdom of the spirit will not overshadow the unlearned conversation of his neighbour, John Smith. This same sad fact applies to the return of any and every spirit, whatever his renown for special knowledge and talent in earth life. The invisible scientist may apparently influence some uneducated medium to talk with a learned twang that is abnormal, but the science exhibited rarely reaches the text-book level, and never equals that of a learned specialist."

'Now, here is a definite arraignment, and one which must be conceded as very largely true in the experience of every investigator. No one of us who are studying the new revelations of psychic law is, I take it, a special pleader in any way. There can be but one common aim, that of discovering and accepting the truth, whatever that truth may be. If it were true that the event we call death so entirely changed the plane of consciousness that no communication between that state and this were possible, then by all means let us come to the clear perception and the entire acceptance of this theory. Even then, as our present state has definite limits, we need not be as those without hope. Could we for a moment imagine (I confess it is difficult) an absolute barrier shut down between the two states of life—an impenetrable one which forbade to us any intimation of the friend who had passed out of his physical body—even then life would have its duties, its dignities, even its hopes and beliefs. For myself, I stood face to face one June morning nearly three years ago with this hypothesis. I do not mean that I accepted it. I confronted it. Previously to this date I had accepted the idea of unseen companionships and influences as naturally—perhaps with almost as little thought—as I had the companionships and influences of the friends in this life. The whole idea was to me as unquestioned as that of the reality of the atmosphere or of the universe. It was equally a part of my consciousness in an unanalysed and unquestionable recognition.

'Suddenly the question of the reality of communication over this gulf of death confronted me, as sooner or later it confronts us all, and its truth or untruth, its reality or its unreality, became a most important question. Even then I felt so deeply the rich assurance of the Eternal Goodness of the living and glorious realities of the spiritual life, that I could not say that the possibility or impossibility of communication with a friend presented itself as the most important question, but as a most important one. For, while it was a question that seemed entirely to include all possibilities or personal happiness during the remainder of life here, yet we all in these hours of deepest experience realise that there are other interests than those of personal happiness—that we may, as Carlyle has said, "do without happiness and find blessedness." While the question of this intercommunication is of the profoundest interest and importance, it is yet always and essentially secondary to the supreme truth of our spiritual relation to the divine. For that is the larger question and includes the

lesser one. And this brings us back to the consideration of Mr. Dawbarn's conclusions. He says:—

"Almost everything claimed for the spirits of the dead can apparently, with just as much propriety, be claimed for spirits of the living mortal. One heals in the name of Spiritualism. Another healer who denies 'spirit return' is quite as successful. The prophet and test-giver may be only a psychometrist; while clairvoyance and clair-audience are undoubtedly uncultivated faculties inhering in every mortal. And when at last we come to the fact that after many years of most careful investigation the Society for Psychical Research acknowledges that it has found traces of independent intelligence, through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, that can only be explained by 'spirit return,' we are still left face to face with the old mystery. In these acknowledged cases of spirit return we have the same old limitations and imperfections, till the weary sceptic exclaims, 'At best there is but a grain of wheat to a bushel of chaff.'"

'It is true that a large proportion of the experiences which come through communication from those who have passed through death can be duplicated by experiences of communication with those still in the physical body. But I think we can already safely affirm as a demonstrated truth, that these two forms of experience are not mutually exclusive, but mutually complementary—that the one is just as natural as the other. To-day A in Boston has conscious telepathic communication with B in San Francisco; to-morrow B has passed out of his body and A has with him the same telepathic intercourse. Is not the one as natural as the other? Once given the truth that the spiritual man is the real man, and that whether in or out of the body is a mere detail, and do we not have a clear grasp of the conditions involved? And the onus of mystery is rather on the side of telepathy in the physical world, for there the flashes of spirit to spirit have greater barriers than when, on one side, these barriers are removed. For, we must remember that the physical body is that which hides rather than reveals us to each other. As the poet says:

"We are spirits, clad in veils :  
Man by man was never seen :  
All our deep communion fails  
To remove the shadowy screen."

'Now, Mr. Dawbarn came to the conclusion which he presents in these words:—

"The new personality thus destroys memory, but retains the effect of every mortal's thought life. The acts are all that tell the tale on earth to-day. It is the thought vibration that holds the register in the life of to-morrow. This law necessarily applies to every mortal, and to every grade of thought that can produce a vibratory reaction on the soul of man, thus becoming a state of consciousness."

'And then he says:—

"(a) Death changes all vibrations to such an extent that the spirit organism becomes invisible to mortal eye.  
"(b) Therefore death also destroys all memories of earth life."

'Now, if the accumulation of evidence was exclusively that of the nature of the limitations described by Mr. Dawbarn in the first paragraph that I quote from him—if there were, invariably, nothing in any communication outside the actual or the possible knowledge of the sitter—then I should, for one, accept Mr. Dawbarn's theory which he states with scientific accuracy and wide comprehension. It does provide an explanation tenable for a large proportion of the phenomena. It does not in the least explain all, and a proportion of actual phenomena entirely negatives the theory of a loss of memory.

'As Mr. Dawbarn alludes to communications made through Mrs. Piper, I may venture to state that in a personal experience with a series of frequent sittings with her extending over some fifteen months, I had communications involving a clear and accurate memory of the life on earth, a memory that not unfrequently made statements of matters unknown to myself, but which I afterward verified and which proved an almost unbroken consciousness continuing from the life here to the life in the ethereal world. Much of this could not possibly be thought transference from my own mind, because things I had never known were told, and things I did know were not told. As an instance of the latter was this—and to make my story clear I must simply say (what has already become semi-public) that the special friend from whom these communications came to me through Mrs. Piper's hand was Kate Field. The circumstances of her death are still fresh in the public mind. She had gone from Honolulu to the island of Hilo in pursuance of her work, and, seized with pneumonia, embarked on a local steamer to return to Honolulu. On this steamer there chanced to be (is anything a chance?) Professor and Mrs. Todd, who—on their way to go in a yacht to Japan to observe a total eclipse—had stopped at Hawaii for a few days. Within a few hours the physician,

Dr. Adriance, saw the fatal nature of Miss Field's illness, and Mrs. Todd very kindly went to her room and remained with her, offering every possible service and attention. Miss Field and Mrs. Todd had never met before, and Miss Field was already in periods of unconsciousness, and she passed on to the other life within a few hours. This, then, was the situation. Now, in one sitting with Mrs. Piper it occurred to me that it would be an admirable proof of identity if Miss Field would tell me Mrs. Todd's name. So I questioned. Mrs. Piper was in deep trance, and her hand—evidently guided by Miss Field—was writing. I asked Miss Field to tell me the story of her passing out, immediately before and after. Mentioning her weariness and last work, she then wrote that there was a period of unconsciousness, and that when she awoke (in the new life) she was standing in the room where her body was laid, and that her mother was beside her; and she told me the words that her mother said, beginning, "Kate, my child, have no fear; come with me."

"Let me state here that it is only within the past three months that, in reading old letters of Mrs. Field's to her daughter in my work of writing Miss Field's biography, I have discovered that Mrs. Field always addressed Kate as "my child," rather than as "my daughter." At the time of this communication—in the late weeks of 1896—these letters had not come into my possession, nor did they come until some months later, and only since last October have I opened and read any of them. But to return: I must say here that certain details described by Miss Field of the room in which her body lay were afterwards verified to me in letters from Mrs. McGrew, of Honolulu, to whose house Miss Field was tenderly carried from the steamer, and where, two hours later, she died.

"Naturally I thought she would give me the name of Mrs. Todd, which was strongly in my own mind.

"Who was the lady with you, darling, on the steamer in those last hours?" I asked.

"I do not know," was written. All urgency on my part was fruitless to get the name. Finally I said, "Why, Kate, it was Mrs. Todd, do you not remember?"

"I never heard the name in my life that I know of," she replied, the hand of the medium writing.

"Then I said, "Mabel Loomis Todd, who assisted Col. Higginson in editing the poems of Emily Dickinson, and who afterward edited her letters—don't you remember?"

"Oh yes," she wrote, "I remember those books well; but I did not know that she was the lady with me."

"This all seems to me very natural. In those last hours she was continually relapsing into unconsciousness, aroused only momentarily at intervals, and she probably did not in the least, in those dying hours, connect the identity of the lady with her with some books which I am quite sure she had not read, but only knew of. For, during the time that the poems and letters of Emily Dickinson were appearing, Miss Field was deeply absorbed in political interests in Washington, where she was editing her able review, and all the literary part of her paper (Kate Field's, Washington) was relegated to other hands. Politics and affairs absorbed her attention.

"The fact that she did not write out the name of Mabel Loomis Todd, as I anticipated, tended to establish that the knowledge in my own mind was not the source out of which the communications came. Conversely, a great deal was written—taking the sittings in the aggregate—which I did not know, but which I afterward verified. Some of the most striking and convincing instances of this nature do not lend themselves readily to narration, they are too involved with a myriad of personal details; but to me these experiences prove in an absolutely unanswerable way, and beyond possibility of doubt, that memory survives the change called death.

"Yet, believing this, it still seems to me that there is important truth involved in Mr. Dawbarn's suggestion that this great event of the separation of the spiritual man from the physical body involves such signal changes of the rate of vibration as often—though I think not always—greatly to affect the memory. Yet, again, the memory, even while here in the body, is a variable thing. An eminent woman of letters now living says that her memory plays her such tricks that she is liable at any time to forget the most familiar things. A friend recently showed her some literary matter that included a stanza from "In Memoriam," and, although poetry was her especial province, she inquired where that verse came from, and this regarding a stanza so peculiarly unlike any others in the English language as are those which compose this poem of Tennyson's. And the story of Emerson at the funeral of Longfellow, when he said, "This gentleman was a sweet and noble soul, but I cannot remember his name," is familiar to all. Nothing is more treacherous than the memory, and "whether in or out of the body," as St. Paul says, does not perhaps very greatly determine its power to register accurately.

"Regarding the limited nature of the communications, which is so prevailing a feature, and which is the rule to

which the higher and more remarkable communications are certainly the exception,—regarding this, shall we accept Mr. Dawbarn's theory that the cause is loss of memory?

"Mrs. Browning, writing of this special thing, says:—

"We have to learn—we in the body—that death does not teach all things. Foolish Jack Smith who died on Monday is on Tuesday still foolish Jack Smith."

"Mr. Dawbarn would say in reply to this that he was not instancing "foolish Jack Smith," but Shakespeare, Newton, Plato, Washington, Lincoln, or Gladstone. Then, might it not be, if inane communications came labeled with a great name, that it was merely one of the "foolish Jack Smiths" playing some trick? Such things occur in this life, why not just beyond? Spirituality is a condition, and one not miraculously achieved by the mere event of death. There are as many persons who die who have not yet made high attainment as there are those who live who have not attained unto high things. There have been communications of a very high intellectual order written through the hand of Mrs. Sara A. Underwood and embodied in her book, "Automatic Writing," and it was natural that the scholarly culture and scientific achievements of such persons as Mr. and Mrs. Underwood should attract a corresponding quality of companionship from the unseen.

"All in all, the more one studies the whole field of psychic law and intercourse between the seen and unseen worlds, does it not seem that the conditions are full of subtle and complex variations which cannot be sweepingly relegated to the too arbitrary divisions of genuineness or fraud, but which are simply a series of mental phenomena existing in both the physical and the ethereal world? "Mediums sometimes cheat," admitted Mrs. Browning. "So do people who are not mediums." The friend in the unseen often forgets several things. So does the friend in the seen. Do we not, then, find that all the variations of phenomena that perplex us in dealing with those who have passed out of the physical world have their prototype in all our dealings with those in the physical world? For myself, at the present status of whatever study and research I have been enabled to make, I find this true. I find that all intercourse, either by letter, telepathy, or *viva voce*, with all my friends or acquaintances, or with strangers, on the present plane of life, presents a similar and a corresponding range of phenomena to that which I recognise in all forms of communication with those who are on the plane of life just beyond. I find in myself, and in my associates in this world, curious lapses of memory, unaccountable moods, inconsistent mental attitudes, inexplicable attractions and repulsions, all the variation of phenomena, indeed, that I encounter in intercourse and association with my friends in the unseen world.

"What then? Does not one take heart to enter on renewed effort with this realising sense of the continuity of life; that all advancement made to-day is felt to-morrow; that all achievement made this year is so much gained for next year; and not only in this specific way, but also that every advance made uplifts one more and more into the region of intenser life, of nobler purposes, where progress proceeds in an accelerated ratio. On this upward way are encountered unseen companionships of the loftier order. The potent influence of the friends we do not see has been erroneously relegated to the mystical realm, rather than recognised as one of the most actual and practical factors in daily life. "Who knows the pathways?" says George Eliot "We are all of us denying or fulfilling prayers; and men in their careless deeds walk amid invisible outstretched arms and pleadings made in vain." The best results of all true culture are in that they so refine and exalt the real nature of the individual that he becomes more susceptible and more sensitive to these unseen influences that are around him to lead him upward in spiritual life.

"The unbroken continuity of life is the one supreme fact that makes for all achievement that is of value, and for all progress and happiness; and how this truth is concentrated in the one line from Robert Browning:

"No work begun shall ever pause for death."

MR. A. PETERS.—We are requested to state that owing to a family bereavement, Mr. A. Peters will be out of town until October 1st.

MISS FLORENCE MARRYAT has for some weeks been lying dangerously ill at Brighton, and we regret to say that the latest bulletin which reaches us as we go to press is "Gradually sinking."

To him who knowingly does me wrong will I return the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him the more good shall go from me. Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, hatred ceases only by love.—BUDDHA.

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

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,  
LONDON, W.C.  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd, 1899.

EDITOR ... .. E. DAWSON ROGERS.

*Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.*

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## Light,

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

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APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane W.C.

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

### THE FUNCTION OF LIGHT: IN NATURE AND LIFE.

We have had a gorgeous summer, and England has been bathed almost night and day in sunshine. We have complained of browned grass and empty pools, but these can easily be remedied; let us not forget what it means to be soaked for a summer in the sun. Light not only shows us the lovely created tints and forms: it first is itself the creator; for Light gives Life. All things depend upon it. A year without sunshine would be the ruin of the world.

Then, in turn, Life leads to Light—in the lower reaches, by means of the lovely creatures that Light produces and that reflect the hidden glories of Light, flashing back its loveliness in iridescent tints of every hue; and, in the higher reaches, by teaching the eyes to catch the many-tinted glory, and the brain to translate it into the loveliness it seems to be.

This, in the spiritual sphere, is the meaning of the great saying that 'the Life was the Light of men'; for the reference is to that 'Logos' which, however we interpret it, is, in its essence, the manifested Life of the invisible God. By a bold stroke, this 'Logos' is separated for a moment from God, conceived of by itself, as something 'with' God and coming forth from God, and yet really God. This seems inconsistent; but it is spiritually inevitable, for us. We try to think of God as pure Mind or Spiritual Power, 'in the beginning,' and, if we attend to it and closely watch ourselves, we find we simply cannot do it. As such, and in that time-relation, He is unthinkable, just as time beginning or space beginning is unthinkable; and we can only be relieved by postulating manifestations, the emergence of the 'Logos,' the coming of 'the beloved Son.' Call it what we will: it is the Life of the Eternal Father communicated to the Son; and in that is Light as well as Life.

This is a truth of unspeakable significance, and the Theism and Spiritualism of the future will be largely dominated by it. Talk as we will of knowing God, it is a simple fact that He is really unknowable in Himself. All we know is the manifested Life; and that is all our Light. Men have shut themselves up in their studies, gathered together in Council chambers, assembled in Synods, and have compiled inventories of the Deity, spinning His 'attributes' out of their own weaknesses and passions, and making a God after their own image, as He is said to have made man in the beginning. A mournful failure! Speculating about God, in the abstract, is like travelling by

candle light in a closed carriage, or substituting the perusal of an antiquated time-table for a survey of the country.

Some of the ancient Hebrews understood the truth here better than many modern Christians; and, in their sublime poetry, they left us ideas of God to which Christendom itself has hardly attained. One of these carries us to the very heart of the truth that God's Life is man's Light, when he says: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. Though there is no speech nor sound, yet is their music gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. . . The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' This glorious poem is probably nearly 3,000 years old, and it is not a cheering thought that, so far from surpassing it, Christendom can hope for salvation only by getting back to it: for it has come to this that the God of the unnatural and unspiritual creeds in some of the high places is out of harmony with Creation and Humanity.

We need, then, to refresh religion with these glorious thoughts of the Hebrew poet's God—the God of the beautiful heavens, the God of the generous universal firmament, the God of the lovely day and kindly night, the God of the music of the spheres, whose law is perfect, restoring the soul; whose testimony is sure, making wise the simple; whose statutes are right, rejoicing the heart; whose commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes; in other words, a living God of the heavens and the earth and the soul of man, and not a dead God of mere formulas and documents.

And if anyone should think that the phrase 'dead God' is too strong, let this be considered:—that men say; God once dwelt amongst us, and His Life was once the Light of men. Prophets He inspired and psalmists He taught to sing; kings He guided, and even the handicraftsmen He instructed; seers and angels He sent through many centuries, and ended by sending His anointed one: but that ended all; revelation is closed, the Holy Ghost is silent, He has no more to say. Now are we left to the written word, the echoes of a living voice now gone.\*

But they who talk like this do so because they do not understand the Divine Life, which has no existence for us apart from its manifestations in creation and in the human soul.

We therefore have open to us all sources of knowledge concerning God that any ever had; and if the glorious prophets, psalmists and seers could re-live upon the earth, they would simply go to the sources of knowledge they discovered when they were here, centuries upon centuries ago. They believed in the living God, and they therefore found Him; they believed that the heavens manifested Him and that the earth revealed Him; they believed that the human conscience spoke for Him; they felt that His Life was the Light of Man. If we believed as they believed, we should find what they found, and the Life would still be our Light.

God is not dumb, that He should speak no more.  
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness  
And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor.  
There towers the mountain of the voice no less,  
Which whoso seeks shall find: but he who bends  
Intent on manna still, and mortal ends,  
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.  
Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,  
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone:  
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,—  
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.

\* Mr. Edgar Fripp lately told us that he had read the following note at the end of a Belfast Protestant's Bible: 'God has not spoken since this book of Revelation was written, the longest silence since the creation.'

While heaves the sea, while mists the mountains  
shroud,  
While thunders' surges burst on cliffs of cloud,  
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit.

When men return to that grand faith, life will again  
become heroic ; faith will lead to surrender ; fear will give  
place to love ; the world will glow again, like the fabled  
bush of old, with the glory of the present Deity, and His  
Life will be the Light to guide men to Himself.

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 recog-  
nition of her valuable services to the cause of Spiritualism :—

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Coates ... ..	5	0	0
Mr. C. A. Maitland, J.P. ... ..	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. H. Withall ... ..	2	2	0
Mr. E. Dawson Rogers ... ..	2	2	0
Miss H. Withall ... ..	2	2	0
Mr. W. H. Wood ... ..	2	2	0
Mrs. Torre ... ..	2	2	0
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Mrs. M. A. Bush ... ..	2	2	0
Mr. H. Lucas ... ..	2	0	0
Miss Withall ... ..	1	1	0
Miss Mina Sandeman ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. W. P. Browne ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. W. P. Browne ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Waterhouse ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. N. Fabyan Dawe ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. A. C. Swinton ... ..	1	1	0
Mr. E. W. and Mrs. M. H. Wallis... ..	1	1	0
Mr. Morell Theobald ... ..	1	1	0
Friends at Greenock (per Mr. W. Ohlms)	1	1	0
Major Menars ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. A. Glendinning ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Pym ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. Jas. Robertson... ..	1	0	0
Mr. G. Pearce Serocold ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. J. J. Meyrick ... ..	1	0	0
Miss Mack Wall ... ..	1	0	0
Col. Taylor ... ..	1	0	0
'B. C.'... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. E. Rae ... ..	1	0	0
Mr. D. Gow ... ..	0	10	6
Mrs. R. Wortley ... ..	0	10	6
Madame I. de Solla ... ..	0	10	6
'A Sympathiser' ... ..	0	10	0
Mr. Beriah Shepherd ... ..	0	10	0
Miss E. L. Boswell-Stone... ..	0	5	0
'A Birmingham Friend,' per Mr. J. J. Morse ... ..	0	5	0
'A. M.' (Glasgow) ... ..	0	5	0
'B.A.'... ..	0	5	0
Miss F. Minchin ... ..	0	5	0
Mr. Bevan Harris ... ..	0	2	6

Contributions should be sent to Mr. E. W. Wallis,  
Secretary, London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-  
lane, W.C.

DEATH OF DR. DAVID M. FINLAY.

We are pleased to learn that Miss Rowan Vincent is  
making good progress towards recovery, but during the  
past week she has sustained a severe shock owing to a fatal  
accident to Dr. David M. Finlay, a member of the London  
Spiritualist Alliance, who had been exceedingly kind  
and sympathetic to her during her illness. The 'Daily  
Mail' reported the accident as follows:—'Olten, Switzer-  
land, September 17th.—An English tourist, Mr. David Fin-  
lay, of London, who was coming here from Lucerne, was  
this evening run over by a train at Aarburg Station. He  
died in an hour and a half from hæmorrhage without re-  
gaining consciousness. Both his legs were broken. It is  
not known how he got under the train.'

STEPS IN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.

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

II.

(Continued from page 440.)

We have seen that it is useless for us to say 'We will  
have nothing to do with Spiritualism,' for spirit return is a  
universal fact, whether we like it or not. So the student  
who would progress realises that the world of humanity is  
blundering along in a dark night, on a road which is full of  
pitfalls and dangers, although it leads to the land of joy and  
peace. There is no other road. Nature has decreed that  
man shall have companions. The hermit, the devout church  
member, the debauchee, like the average man and woman,  
are never alone, and their associates are of two very different  
classes. There are spirits who would gladly play the  
guardian angel, and help them to a higher life. But there  
are also wayside spirits of every class and degree, against  
whom they jostle and crowd as the days and years of earth  
life pass by. These last may be but associates of an hour,  
but the man who is ignorant of their presence, and perhaps  
denies their very existence, is always more or less their prey ;  
it may be, perchance, only as the victim of pompous self-  
conceit, posing as a righteous Pharisee, one of the 'Holier  
than thou' variety, greeted with roars of spirit laughter as  
he falls into pools and puddles of his own self-righteousness.  
Such is life and such is spirit return, but both life and spirit  
return may be spared most of such experiences by walking  
in the daylight of knowledge, instead of the midnight  
ignorance of these natural facts. Such is a step in spiritual  
experience which has not yet aroused the attention of the  
earnest believers who are honestly fighting to-day against all  
mortal fraud they can discover in their ranks.

The dangers that have made 'spirit return' either a  
farce or a woe for humanity, all along its history, may  
surely be overcome by the patient student. His first great  
effort must be to study the laws and limits of personal inter-  
course with spirits who live outside and above the general  
level of earth-bound humanity. He must leave the region  
of emotional love, and make a calm and careful study of  
the methods by which every Ego holds intercourse with its  
fellows, and dominates its own body, whether that be spirit  
or mortal. Ignorance will howl and shout in the name of  
'love' whenever the old pet belief is proved a delusion.  
When a whole-souled, unselfish believer and medium, like  
Hudson Tuttle, discovers and moans that the student is  
actually over-turning fifty years of spirit teachings, he  
understates the fact. It is not fifty, but five thousand or,  
perhaps, five millions of years whose spirit communications  
must pass the ordeal of the 'higher criticism' of to-day.  
The keynote is the discovery that our experiences are never  
what they seem to the ignorant. The sun never rises in  
nature, but only in the human mind. The rose is fragrant  
and gorgeous in colour only to the sense of the observer.  
The petal may typify a maiden's blush for me, and only be  
brown or yellow to another. Science demands the fact  
just as it is. Emotion craves to be allowed to live in  
its own sense limits. Spirit return has been held to  
the sense level. The very moment the student begins  
to investigate the law, for instance, governing memory  
of both spirit and mortal, he discerns that it affects  
all intercourse of one Ego with another, and that  
such intercourse is, therefore, not just what it seems to  
mortal sense. Oh ! the woe of it, for the believer who has  
erected a love barrier between himself and truth. 'Do I  
not know my own father when he comes back to counsel and  
advise me ? And when he tells me that this is true and that  
false, am I not to believe him ? He often gives me wonder-  
ful tests, with proofs of his power and love. He has blessed  
my whole life, and it is cruel to tell me that this may not  
all be just what it seems.' Yet, alas ! it is equally true that  
the same spirit will sing a different song, in tones that may  
be sweeter or harsher, through some other channel into  
earth life ; and that another spirit father, loving another  
mortal daughter or son, will contradict and deny questions  
of tremendous import. Both alike will probably claim  
certain powers as inhering to spirit return, although such

powers have now been demonstrated to belong to the mortal, for in all spirit return there is fierce exaggeration of mortal limit and spirit power.

The moan, the wail of it, the sob that greets the slightest investigation into intercourse between love and love, are awful barriers in the way of the student. Yet if he would grow he must discover for himself whether the truth he is seeking makes a sunrise of appearance or reality; that is to say, whether it rises for him, or whether he must rise for it; whether the spirit father really comes all the way back into earth life, or whether the mortal child must go out to the fog-land of sense limit, and there interpret sensations into real spirit teachings and communications.

So the student discovers that another step has become necessary if he would advance. He puts behind him for ever the investigations of deception and fraud, whether of mortal or spirit, and seeks by self-development to himself advance further into the 'fog-land.' He believes that meeting him at that point the advanced and loving spirit may find a clearer expression of truth than when compelled to approach the earth limit more clearly.

He must now study in every possible detail the laws that govern communications between mortal and spirit, remembering as a basic fact that sense perception is not what it seems. He is now, like the patient Copernicus, determined to find the secret of sunrise itself, although universal experience proclaims him a fool for his pains. The sun rises for every eye but his. Yet at last he realises and proves that sunrise itself is but a sense deception. The poor fellow died just in time to save his life, for those who know that they cannot be mistaken counted him as a dangerous foe to revealed truth. As a repetition of such history we find to-day that the accepted revelation from a revered spirit father or loved spirit friend cannot be questioned without an almost stupefying astonishment at such audacity. Let a student commence by investigating the laws which must dominate memory in both worlds, and he becomes an outlaw for such minds. It is said that Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was accepted only by the young. His own generation had to die clinging to its old belief. So the student who offers his discoveries to the world of to-day must not expect that he will find ready credence. His reward will be in his own advance into the 'fog-land,' and his own perceptions of the actual sunrise of truthful communication between spirit and mortal.

When the present writer was giving to the world his 'Creative Power of Thought,' followed by 'Nature's System of Thought-Storage,' through the spiritual Press, he was himself pressing on into this 'fog-land' of mystery, and away from the apparent realities of the day. As a humble student he was chasing the truth. And when he further grasped some of the laws that make memory eternal, but only on its own plane of vibration, he was but making another step forward. He was denounced as contradicting fifty years of spirit teachings, and denying the assertion of the revered spirit father who declared that he had forgotten nothing. Fierce was the indignant protest, or very loud the silence, with which his suggested truth was received.

The student presently discovers that his 'chase' is as much subject to law as the truth he seeks. He is dealing with, and through, sense perception of truth, and the laws of such perception must be studied and mastered. This would have been impossible until science had proved that all sense perception is expressed and received through molecular vibration. A certain rate of vibration is its own historian, and the psychometrist is one through whom un-normal vibrations may be received and interpreted. The truth developed by Professors Buchanan and Denton has been distorted and deformed in a thousand platform exhibitions claimed to be proofs of 'spirit return.' So the student at last recognises that his own progress into this truth must depend upon his being able to change the rate of his own brain vibrations, till they form foothold—so to speak—for the thought of the advanced spirit. What his attempt in this direction means and demands is the real object of this article, and of much written before.

Only those who have studied the enormous power of thought are ready to make even a feeble attempt at this change of vibrations, which can be effected in no other way. All recognise that thought can both kill and cure. Most

know that anger and intense love may alike excite the pulse, but in very different degrees. They are thought effects on the human brain. But the student must inreach much further who attempts self-mastery and the control of his own vibrations. The old proverb that 'The causeless curse comes home to roost,' was less than half a truth, for the return is just as certain whether the curse be causeless or apparently justified. The electrician teaches us that his generated current makes its circuit, using whatever may be the most direct route for return. And intelligence in activity, which is 'thought,' and itself a far mightier force than crude electricity, obeys the same law. It returns to its starting point at the same rate of vibration with which it commenced its journey. Few realise this power of thought, and it has been left for the most part to the black magician, who wields it as a destructive energy. I have but just listened to a striking illustration of this truth which I am trying to make the reader understand. 'Did you know,' said the speaker, 'that Mrs. So-and-So has come to live in our town with her family? There was a terrible scandal where she lived before. It is a shame she should be here, and I hope she will be refused all social recognition and be driven out.'

There was here a 'curse thought' sent out that, no matter what work it did on the way, was bound to return as a 'curse thought' to its creator. That speaker was something of an invalid, and I recognised that his own physical inharmonies were made worse by each return of his own uncharitable thought sent out to others. The doctor or healer may struggle for years to overcome such self-poisoning vibrations, for a cruel thought is cancer to the soul. Suppose he had created a 'love thought' of pity and sympathy, and had said, 'The poor woman is perhaps struggling to a higher level; let us try and aid her.' That thought would have returned instead of the other, and his own inharmonies would have risen one degree nearer happiness and health.

The above will be recognised as an every-day illustration of mortal thought. The student will perceive that such vibrations must be patiently continued in one direction if any advance is to be made. A thought-created advance to-day and a similar thought-created retreat to-morrow is useless to soul-growth. He must, if he desire to change his brain vibrations to a degree where there is even measurable safety in spirit intercourse, kill the unkind and unloving thought the moment it is born. This is a power that inheres to the human soul. At this point it is well to determine what is really possible in this realm of self-mastery, through which alone vibratory change is to be effected. Even the black magician is powerless without his creative thought, much more he who would commune with angels.

The reason the world is neither better nor worse than it is to-day is because thoughts are rarely all bad or all good. Where every thought is turned to self-gratification, we have the essence of the devilish. The particular ambition or appetite, and the conditions of his mortal life, garb such a man to outward eye; but, in every case alike, he represents the devil side of human nature. His thoughts go out endowed with malignant life by creative power. They do their work and return to roost in the home of their birth. Hate, envy and greed rule. They are disharmonies; therefore, sooner or later, such a personality disintegrates, leaving its immortal Ego in the cosmos of universal life.

The opposite to all this would represent the highest, brightest, noblest manhood of which we can conceive—the manhood of an angel. This does not include the self-lover who does good for reward, simply postponing his recompense till the to-morrow—after death. It is the manhood which finds its own joy in the happiness of others. But the student will notice that each and every variety of manhood is as much expressed by vibrations as heat, or light, or electricity. The expressions of every manhood are thoughts, each endowed with creative power of self-multiplication. And when such creative power is consciously wielded to an intended end we have Black Magic on the one hand, and White Magic on the other.

(To be continued.)

MATERIALISATION.—Will anyone possessing a pamphlet, now out of print, entitled 'Later Phases of Materialisation,' by Archdeacon Colley, kindly lend it for a day or two to Captain R., 21, Redland Park, Bristol?

## 'IMPERATOR' ON CREMATION.

I have been asked to send for publication the following passage from 'Imperator's' communications to Stainton Moses. I do so the more readily, that it strengthens a misgiving I had myself felt long before reading the communication in question, as to the popular assumption that it is safe to burn when it is safe to bury. The public has been concerned with the dread of premature interment, but has given no thought to the possibility that the complete liberation of the perispirit may in some cases be a gradual process continuing after final cessation of the need and function of physical respiration. It might thus still have the power and necessity of reacting sensibly upon such a shock as that of physical consumption by fire, and should not be violently driven forth by such means.

The communication is in the twelfth of the MS. books, under date April 6th, 1874, and is as follows, in reply to the questions put by Stainton Moses:—

'You do not like churchyards,' says the latter. 'Would you approve of cremation in preference to burial?'

'Anything would be preferable to the folly of entombing the mouldering body in the midst of great living centres, so that the air they breathe may be poisoned. We should say that the burning of the body might do well if care were exercised that it were not recklessly and rashly done. Time should be given for the complete separation of the spirit body from the earth body.'

'But that does not take long, does it?'

'In some cases it might be long before complete separation ensues. The burial of the earth body does not hurt the spirit body, but the consuming by fire would maim and injure it.'

'What do you call long?'

'It might be in some cases many days, twelve or even more.'

'Then it would not be safe to introduce cremation, because a week would be the limit during which a body would be kept?'

'Care should be taken to ascertain from the guides that complete separation has ensued. It would not be well to burn the body till such knowledge were obtained. When a due knowledge of these subjects is spread, then doubtless the useless corpse will be so disposed of. When men know better they will cease to poison themselves thus. It is barbarous and wicked; foolish too, foolish.'

'That is to say, Spiritualism must be general before cremation is safe. But when it has become generally known, cremation will be the best?'

'That is what we think. We do not counsel it. But the discussion of the subject shows that men are beginning to be wiser.'

'You know of the discussion?'

'Oh yes; we know through you and other sources.'

Probably it was in deference to the above judgment that Stainton Moses forbore leaving instructions for the cremation of his own body. C. C. M.

## A SPIRIT'S MESSAGE.

Writing in the 'Woman's Tribune,' Miss Lilian Whiting gives the following interesting testimony regarding a slate-written message:—

'Miss Farmer (the daughter of Professor Moses G. Farmer, the noted electrician) recently received the following message, signed "Phillips Brooks," on a slate which she herself held on a table in full sunlight. Without visible hands the pencil wrote:—

"I hope I shall never be spoken of or thought of again as dead. I have come into a most remarkable condition of life. We are the same individualities in and out of the body. I am always glad to write a word in testimony of my continued life."

'The chirography bears a very striking resemblance to that of Dr. Brooks. The line, "I have come into the most remarkable condition of life," is like that of a great intelligence realising the marvellous richness of a new phase of life; and the expression, "I am always glad," was always his own gracious words in response to any request.

'This is probably the most significant message that was ever believed to be received from the higher plane of life beyond death. It is offered here merely as a fact that has occurred, and one which invites fair consideration.'

POSSESS yourself as much as you possibly can in peace; not by any effort, but by letting all things fall to the ground which trouble or excite you. This is no work, but is, as it were, a setting down a fluid to settle, that has become turbid through agitation.—MADAME GUYON.

## 'LORD GAURANGA; OR, SALVATION FOR ALL.\*'

This is an important work and well worthy of our consideration, but it must be read sympathetically and in full consideration of much that characterises the religious in Orientalism if we are to appreciate it and get the good from it which it certainly contains.

Of course, we take it for granted that the narrative on the whole is honest and truthful, all due allowance being made for the license of the poetic mind of the Oriental devotee. It is the history of the reformation of Vaishnavism, *i.e.*, the adoration of God as infinite love manifested by Sree Krishna. We ought here to consider the history and character of the Sree Krishna movement, but space will not permit us. Nor can we go through the interesting story of the boyhood, youth, and manhood of the chosen instrument of this work, Nimai of Nadia, in Bengal, born about 400 years ago. Like our Jesus of Nazareth, he was of humble birth, yet of good descent. He was a twelve months' child. Though apparently the offspring of ordinary mortals he was of extraordinary beauty of body, and of wondrous precocity of intellect. 'His skin was fair as molten gold, the soles of his feet and hands were as of fresh vermilion, his eyes elongated as the petals of the lotus.' His whole form was so divinely beautiful that everyone who saw him asked if he were a child of the gods.

We cannot say that necessarily this is all unfounded exaggeration. We do not know that it is impossible for a spiritual influence of a high degree to form for itself a human medium, nor why, even in the womb, there may not begin the 'preparing of the body,' the evolving of the conditions, the perfecting of the instrument by spiritual agency. So far as our knowledge of the laws of spirit manipulation of matter goes, there is undoubtedly much that favours the hypothesis. And naturally a spiritual intelligence of a high degree would prepare for itself a fitting medium, one of beauty and strength in intellect and form. This is one of the fascinating subjects that must yet be left open for discussion by us mortals. Were it understood it would explain much that splits Christendom into contesting factions, and we might then really hope for a Catholic Christian Church.

This much we can say, that Nimai was effectively developed as a powerful medium by a very powerful and far advanced will. It is claimed that he was an Avatar of Sree Krishna, and it seems not at all unlikely that the spirit who illumined Sree Krishna, finding in Nimai a fitting instrument for a great work, developed and purified him until it obtained complete control over his personality. And much had to be done in the way of control before this was accomplished, for Nimai was naturally very self-willed. But with the increase of the control, this self-will and his pride of intellect were taken from him and the original Nimai ceased to be. He became the most humble of men.

We are sorry that the gifted and earnest writer of this work has not a more perfect knowledge of the laws of mediumship, for it would have saved him from much that must be perplexing to himself and certainly seems ridiculous to any intelligent reader. When Nimai swoons through exhaustion of vitality, the author constantly writes such things as these: 'The Lord fell down in a trance.' 'Three hours passed, and still the Lord showed no sign of life.' And this Lord who swoons is declared to be 'God Almighty the Supreme.' Surely the writer knows that it was merely the body of the exhausted medium that 'showed no sign of life,' call the controlling intelligence by what name we will. True, this 'Lord Gauranga' was a very high manifestation of God to these Hindus, probably the highest that was possible, or that will be possible to them for many a day, even as Jesus Christ is to us—each perfect in its way as a revelation; yet is it only a manifestation. That he was God Almighty to them does not make it so to the soul who dwells in the Infinite. But it is not for us here to discuss Trinitarianism or Unitarianism.

The doctrine that 'Lord Gauranga,' *i.e.*, Nimai, under control, taught above all others was 'Reverence' or

\* By SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE. Two volumes. Calcutta: Golap Lal Ghose, Patrika office.

'Bhakti,' and 'Prem' or 'Love,' and that through these powers alone can the human soul attain to any knowledge of God. This is, of course, the true mystical doctrine. On the attaining of 'Bhakti,' 'Prem' is also added, and the joy that comes to the soul therefrom is ecstatic. Out of this rapture the 'Kirtan' or ecstatic dance naturally arises. It was at first a very close séance; the small circle of Bhakta or pious souls is kept intact. If any specially favoured outsider is allowed to witness this dance of 'Bhakti' and 'Prem' he cannot but become a devotee. Thus it is that when the 'Kirtan' is performed publicly whole communities are converted to Vaishnavism. The Bhakta does not preach, for to do so would arrogate superiority, and a true Bhakta considers himself meaner than the grass. It is by the power of this Love of God that all love for, or concern about, the things of the world is taken absolutely away from a Bhakta; and all allowances being made for exaggerations, we are of opinion that Lord Gauranga was as perfect a manifestation of the principle as was possible to his time and race.

But when Lord Gauranga forsakes mother, wife, and all social ties and becomes a Sannyasee, he enters on a sphere of action which it is not ours to criticise. It was a word for his day, and produced wondrous fruit of a spiritual order all over India.

We feel the utter inadequacy of this brief notice. There is so much of subtle and beautiful doctrine in the book, so much to be noted of the correspondence between this great social and religious reformation and that of Christianity—the cardinal doctrine, that to love God we must love Him as manifested in man, being identical in both. Shishir Kumar Ghose certainly deserves our thanks and congratulations on the accomplishment of what must have been to him a labour of love—the publication of this big work; and even as an interesting and fascinating story of a great life, we can honestly recommend it to the ordinary intelligent reader.

JAMES MACBETH.

#### A GOOD CASE OF IDENTITY.

The following letter appears in 'Le Progrès Spirite' for the current month, dated September 1st:—

'I should be glad if M. C. Flammarion could explain to me the following occurrence. In the course of my spiritualistic studies I was occupied with a young medium absolutely incapable of deceiving me, a girl of sixteen years of age, who came of a good honest family, was very gentle, naive, and excessively shy, and very much attached to me. She visited me twice a week and some of my best experiences and successes have been with her. On one occasion I was alone with her in my dining-room; it was on a Sunday, and when she was in a sound sleep I asked her to go to my husband, who was in the country with a friend. "Do you see anyone near him?" I asked. "Yes, I see a spirit." "Can you describe him?" "He is tall, strong, brown, with a sympathetic face, fine black eyes, and a thick moustache; he must be fifty at least." "His name?" I inquired. "He was called Auguste when he was on earth and belonged to a noble family." "You are mistaken, my child," I replied, "I know none of our relatives who bear that name; the spirit whom you see by my husband is a cousin who is called Paul and who never leaves him." "No, no," she exclaimed, "I make no mistake. He is a kind spirit, but as during his earth life he loved pleasure to excess, his influence may be harmful; for he was frivolous, and is frivolous still.'

'In the evening when my husband returned I spoke to him of the séance with Blanche and of the fact she had reported. My husband tried to recall old memories, and remembered that formerly he knew very well a person called Auguste de la T—. "I have even kept a photograph of him," said he, "which he gave me himself and at the back of which he wrote a few kind words."

'At the next séance, when the medium was thoroughly asleep, I gave her, in a sealed envelope, this photograph. "The card in this envelope," she at once remarked, "is a photograph of the spirit which I saw by your husband; it is exactly like."

'I was utterly taken aback, and it is not surprising. I ask concerning this fact, and many others that I have witnessed, for an explanation (scientific or otherwise) which can satisfy me, but not that of thought-transference most assuredly.

'There are mediums who can read thoughts; I have seen them; it is a faculty peculiar to certain persons; but there is a vast difference between acknowledging this fact and attributing to this faculty all the phenomena that occur, M. Flammarion notwithstanding. CAROLINE DESBOIS.'

#### MR. AND MRS. G. H. BIBBINGS AT BOOTLE.

On Tuesday, September 12th, a social reunion was held at the Masonic Hall, Bootle, to publicly welcome Mr. and Mrs. Bibbings on their coming to reside in Bootle prior to Mr. Bibbings taking up the position of resident speaker and organiser of the Bootle Society in January next. An excellent tea was served up by Mesdames Norton, Hollinrake, Fry, and Parr, assisted by a staff of ladies. Some 180 members and friends took part in the subsequent proceedings. The President, Mr. J. G. Owen, was supported on the platform by Messrs. Norton and Parr, of the Bootle Society, and Messrs. Chiswell, Watts, Henry, and Anderson, and Mesdames Chiswell and Pears, of the Liverpool Society. The musical proceedings were capitally rendered by Mrs. R. P. Bates, Miss Fanny Lucas, Miss Bessie Jones, Mr. J. Howard Eld, and Mr. R. P. Bates; Miss Evans acting efficiently as accompanist. Mr. J. J. Parr, secretary of the Bootle Society, moved the following resolution:—

'That the members and friends of the Bootle Society of Spiritualists assembled in public meeting this 12th day of September, 1899, do most sincerely extend to Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bibbings a cordial welcome and hearty congratulations on their advent into Bootle for permanent residence; and in connection with the progress of our society we trust that under Divine guidance both Mr. and Mrs. Bibbings and each and every member of our society may be blessed in the work undertaken; that prosperity, perfect peace, and good health may be granted Mr. and Mrs. Bibbings and their dear family during the whole of the period they may remain resident amongst us.'

Mr. Parr regretted that he was unable to adequately express the pleasure he felt at the honour conferred upon him in being chosen to move the resolution of welcome, and stated that Bootle had honoured herself in honouring Mr. Bibbings, who as an exponent of our philosophy was pre-eminent. None the less sincere was their welcome to Mrs. Bibbings, whom they would regard as a helpmate to her husband in his ministry and as a leader in the Lyceum, and he could promise their children a hearty reception on coming into their midst. Bootle, as the first society to appoint a resident speaker had set an example to other societies.

Mr. J. Norton, vice-president, in seconding the resolution, expressed his pleasure in at last seeing Mr. Bibbings in their midst, and warmly eulogised his capabilities as a speaker. Although Mrs. Bibbings was not known to the same extent, their welcome to her was quite as sincere. Neither the eloquence of Mr. Bibbings nor the efforts of the committee could secure the success of his ministry without the assistance and co-operation of all the members.

Mr. S. S. Chiswell said he did not represent the Liverpool Society, but the members from Daulby Hall who were present had asked him to speak in their name. He supported the resolution with the greatest pleasure. He knew that Mr. Bibbings was highly thought of in all parts of the country, and he felt confident that Mr. Bibbings' ministry would result in benefit to the society and to the residents of the district.

The President, in a few appropriate remarks, placed the resolution before the meeting, and it was carried with acclamation.

Mr. Bibbings said he was deeply touched by all the good things that had been said both about himself and Mrs. Bibbings. He thanked them most sincerely for the splendid reception accorded them, and also for the confidence they had placed in him by electing him their resident speaker for 1900. He would, to the best of his ability, endeavour to show that their confidence had not been misplaced. He was busy working out schemes for the development of his mission amongst them, and if they had any ideas to bring forward he was prepared to consider them. He was prepared to assist in any good work having for its object the upliftment of humanity.

Mr. J. J. Morse and Mrs. Cadwallader wrote expressing their deep regret that prior engagements prevented them from being present to pay their tribute to the abilities of Mr. Bibbings. A farewell meeting to Mrs. Cadwallader and Mr. B. B. Hill was, however, held on Wednesday evening, when Mr. Morse very efficiently presided.

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

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

In 'LIGHT' of September 9th, appeared some interesting suggestions as to the form religion will take in the next century.

The nineteenth century, as shown in Dr. Alfred R. Wallace's book, has been the most important in the world's history; but I am impressed with the conviction that during the next century, the religious, social, and physical progress or evolution on our planet, will be still more profoundly manifested.

1. I have no doubt whatever that Spiritualism, at present chaotic, will take a strictly scientific position, and that the existence of man's double nature and his spiritual Ego will become as easily demonstrable as that water is a combination of the two independent gases, oxygen and hydrogen.

2. I further believe that the existence of the Eternal Mind, in which man 'lives and moves and has his being,' will also become manifested as a scientific fact.

3. I believe that it will become the universal belief, that the reverent love of God and the unselfish love of all creatures, will be established as the whole of religion and the whole of morality, and thus render all intolerant theological discussion impossible.

4. I believe it to be a rational conclusion that electricity, which fills all space, may become, by the ingenuity of man, easily and inexpensively captured, and thus not only supersede steam, but become the one great motor power, as it now, I believe, is in the infinite interstellar space; and that it may further supersede gunpowder in war, and thus render war so terrible as to make it impossible; and thus encourage the formation of a Court of Arbitration composed of the wisest and best minds of all great nations.

5. I believe also that the ignorant use of powerful and injurious drugs which during the last fifty years has been gradually modified or abandoned, will more and more give place to the power of human sympathy, as in mesmerism, and of spiritual power, as in faith healing.

6. I believe that we shall more and more learn the wisdom of moderation and simplicity in food and all other physical desires, and that in clothing, extravagant fashions will cease to disgrace our bodies, and that health, comfort, and beauty, will become the rule in society regarding raiment.

7. I believe that in London and all large towns, especially in manufacturing towns, the abolition of that hideous nuisance, smoke, will be shown to be a problem which admits of an easy and economical solution.

8. I believe that marriage will cease to be the result of the selfish love of money or physical beauty, and will be regarded more and more in the light of increasing the number and goodness and beauty and strength of the human race.

9. I believe that the right housing, especially of the poor, will not be left entirely to philanthropic energy, but will be judiciously carried out by State aid, and that great landlords will joyfully surrender portions of their lands as freehold house plots in aid of an industrious peasantry.

10. I believe that the English language will become the one universal language of intercommunication throughout the world. At present more people speak English than any other language, except Chinese. About ninety-five millions speak Russian, but English is spoken by about one hundred and thirty millions. The British race in Europe, America, and Australia has doubled during the last thirty-five years, and if this ratio continues, thirty-five years hence two hundred and sixty millions will be speaking English, and in seventy years hence five hundred and twenty millions; but, of course, there may arise wars, famines, pestilence, or prudential restraints, which may interfere with the rapidity of this expansion.

11. Finally, I believe that our laws will be so written that he who runs can read, and that the object will be to render the getting of justice as expeditious and cheap as possible, instead of, as at present, being so complex, dilatory and expensive as sometimes to madden and often to ruin its victims.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

7, Westbourne-street.

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

## DREAMS.

'Le Journal du Magnétisme,' for September, contains a brief notice of a communication which M. Vaschide has just made to l'Académie des Sciences on the subject of dreams. M. Vaschide has devoted five years to the study of this question with thirty-three persons of all ages. The sleepers were watched for either the whole or a part of the night, were sometimes awakened and questioned, and during sleep their expressions, gestures, and exclamations were closely observed. The result of this five years' study has led M. Vaschide to the following conclusions. He is of opinion that dreams are an accompaniment of all sleep, even the deepest, but that the dreams during deep sleep are quite different in character from those which occupy the brain before waking or when the sleep is light. 'The chaos of sleep' is absent from true dreams, which seem to be directed by attention and will, and by what he terms 'something which escapes us' ('ce quelque chose qui nous échappe'). The more profound the sleep the more closely are the dreams associated with an anterior part of our existence, and the more remote are they from reality. The occurrences and sensations of daily life have a greater tendency to appear in proportion to the lightness of the slumber. He (M. Vaschide) considers that there is continuity in the conceptions which arise throughout a night's slumber, and he holds that everyone dreams, without exception, whether conscious of doing so or not. The article ends thus: 'It is worth while to observe the prudence and faithfulness of M. Vaschide's statement when he affirms the intervention in dreams of "ce quelque chose qui nous échappe," and this association between dreams, "difficult to explain by current ideas" ("difficile à expliquer par les opinions courantes").'

## A VIVID EXPERIENCE.

The numerous instances now on record of visions of the life beyond, by the dying, are extremely interesting and valuable, the more so because of the well-nigh unanimous testimony to the beauty and attractiveness of life 'over there,' and the joy experienced by the 'seer' in meeting again the loved ones gone before. 'The Progressive Thinker,' of August 26th, printed the following:—

'News from Wheeling, W. Va., tells of a Mrs. Alexander Taylor, a widow, thirty-five years old, residing at Toronto, near Wheeling, who has been slowly dying of consumption. On the 9th inst. she became unconscious.

'A doctor pronounced her dead and funeral preparations were begun. About midnight her friends were astounded to see Mrs. Taylor move, open her eyes and ask for water. She asked that a favourite niece, who lives in Iowa, be summoned at once to receive a message from her mother, who has been dead several years.

'Mrs. Taylor says her spirit was disembodied and soared through space till a brilliant and beautiful grove was reached. Here angels were guarding what seemed the entrance to heaven. She was refused admittance, but was allowed to converse at a short distance with her husband, who died last winter, and with her sister, the mother of the favourite niece. The message sent for the niece she refuses to disclose except to the young woman. Mrs. Taylor says she was promised that she should come to paradise very soon. Mrs. Taylor is an educated woman, and is in ecstasy over the belief that she will soon join her friends gone before.

'This is not an isolated occurrence. Similar ones have been common to all ages, and seem to give a foregleam of the life awaiting us. Others may be content to read of the reanimation of a Lazarus to life, but this narrates an event of to-day, all the details of which can be gained from living witnesses.'

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'X' RAYS.—If you have received no ticket for the approaching *Conversazione*, it must be because you have incautiously failed to renew your subscription for the current year. The Secretary of the Alliance assures us that tickets have been duly posted to all Members and Associates whose subscriptions have been paid.

'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT,' W. B., G. B. R., AN ASSOCIATE, 'BIDSTON.'—Were glad to receive your communications, but cannot afford space for them in this week's issue.

## COLONEL INGERSOLL AND DR. SLADE.

Now that the outspoken Agnostic has passed over, the American papers are publishing many incidents in his life, and the 'New York Sun' recently printed the following letter by W. C. Strickler, which will be of interest to the readers of 'LIGHT.' It is strange that after such an experience the Colonel did not investigate more thoroughly, but he had his limitations and did not seem anxious to pursue the subject. Mr. Strickler says:—

I was sitting one evening in one end of a sleeping car in Peoria, Ill., talking with a grain merchant, waiting for the car to start for Chicago, when in came Robert G. Ingersoll and his wife. They sat down facing us. After talking for a few moments I said: 'Colonel, I see by the "Transcript" you have become a Spiritualist.' He gave one of his peculiar chuckles and said:—

'I'll tell you all about that. A few weeks ago Mrs. Ingersoll, Colonel Plumb and myself were in New York City. We concluded to go and see Slade, who was then at the height of his fame as a medium. We were shown into a plainly furnished room with a round table in the middle, a few chairs, and a lounge or sofa. Slade came in and asked if we wanted a test. We said: "Yes; that's what we came for." He then asked me to sit at the table, the top of which was covered with a piece of paper. Slade then handed me a small piece of slate pencil and an ordinary school slate and then left the room, and during his absence I spat on the slate and with my handkerchief washed it off, just as I have done many a time when I was a boy.

'While I was cleaning the slate Mr. Slade came in. I felt guilty of an injustice toward him and began to apologise. I told him that we were seeking for the truth and that we did not want to be imposed upon if we could help it, for the religious element in man had been imposed upon from his youth up. He said: "That's all right; wash it as much as you please." He then asked me to put the pencil on the table and cover it with the slate. I did so. I was then asked to place my hand on the slate as it rested on the table, covering the pencil. I did as directed. Pretty soon the pencil began to scratch the under side of the slate, and in a short time he told me to look and see what message we had received. With some difficulty I managed to read:—

"I am glad you are here; the soul is immortal. F. Plumb."

'Colonel Plumb sprang from his seat, grabbed the slate out of my hand and said, "That's Fanny."

It seems that Colonel Ingersoll had been a guest of Colonel Plumb a short time before, and during the evening they had talked about the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and Colonel Ingersoll had said he had no evidence of the truth of the doctrine. Colonel Plumb's daughter, Fanny, was in the next room, ill, and she overheard the conversation and was pained to think he had such ideas, for she, like everyone else who knew him, loved him. She often spoke of it during her decline, and just before she died she said, 'Tell Colonel Ingersoll the soul is immortal.' I said to him: 'Well, how did it strike you?' 'Right between the eyes,' he answered.

Notwithstanding the fact that I could believe the Colonel as much as any other man I ever knew, I could not exactly credit that story. I had my doubts, as others will. A few years after this, having some business with Colonel Plumb, who was then a member of Congress, I told him the story and asked him to affirm or deny it, and he said: 'Every word is true.'

## 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.*

## Inspiration or Accident?

SIR,—I am spending a week among the mountains of North Wales, at a very old-fashioned hotel. My room is at the end of a long passage, and on Saturday last, about 7 p.m., having dressed for the half-past seven dinner, I was going downstairs, and on my way passed (as usual) by the open door of a dark housemaid's closet. Moved by a sudden impulse, I looked in, and, to my horror, saw a lighted candle end, certainly not more than an inch in length, stuck on the wooden shelf, though there were plenty of candlesticks at hand. I had to use some force to remove it from the shelf, as the heat had already melted the wax sufficiently to fix it to the wood. Of course I extinguished it and then went downstairs, where I found the chambermaid, a heavy Welsh girl, quite at the other end of the low, long building. I asked her if she had left a lighted candle in the closet. She said she had, but seemed to think nothing of it; and I told her how dangerous it was to do so.

*Possibly* she might have gone up before the wood had caught fire, but more probably she would not have done so, as she had taken all the hot water up, and, as a rule, went to turn the beds down when the people were at dinner. *Possibly*, too, the lighted wick might not have set fire to the dry, wooden shelf, saturated with grease. All the same, I was haunted all the evening with the sense of a danger escaped, for my room being at the end of the passage and wing, it would have been impossible to rescue my valuables if the fire had broken out in the closet.

The next morning, being Sunday, I had my usual Sunday letter in automatic writing, when one of the messages from my guide was to the effect that the previous evening he had impressed me to look in the housemaid's closet, and that my doing so had probably saved the house from being set on fire. I see no reason to disbelieve this, as I have strong impressionable mediumship; and—though I am not so foolish as to think spirit guides omniscient or infallible—I have always found the advice given me by my guides, either by inspiration or by writing, worth following. I will just add that, though I passed the closet every time I left my room, I never looked into it before.

M. T.

Mr. W. J. Colville.

SIR,—Mr. W. J. Colville, the author of the 'World's Fair Text-book of Mental Therapeutics,' and many other well-known works on Mental Science, intends visiting London in October, and will give two courses of lectures on this subject, either here or in some convenient locality, according to numbers likely to attend—one set for enrolled members only in the afternoons, the other in the evenings. The dates and times will be advertised in 'LIGHT' as soon as fixed. As Mr. Colville is one of the most talented lecturers on health subjects in the United States, all those who are interested in being well themselves, and helping to keep others so, should make a point of attending one of these courses. If any of those wishing to do so will write to me I shall be glad to give them any further information on the subject.

(MRS.) A. BELL LEWIS.

99, Gower-street, W.C.

## O.P.S. Sick and Benefit and Pension Funds.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to acknowledge with thanks the following donations to the above funds, received by me during this month:—

From Rustomja Byramja, 2s. 6d.; Miss E. M. Hodges, 2s.; Birkenhead, 2s.; Onward, 2s.; S. E. (two months' subscription), 4s.; Miss E. L. Boswell Stone, 5s.; Mrs. Mary J. Jacques, 20s.; Mr. W. H. Wood, 21s.; J. C. D., of 'Echo,' 1s.; A. B., 10s.; Dora, 16s. 3d.

At the same time permit me to earnestly request all generous Spiritualists (who have not already contributed for this year) to forward a donation as early as possible to the undersigned, as these funds are greatly in need of help.

(MRS.) M. H. WALLIS, Hon. Sec.

62, Station-road, Church End,  
Finchley, London, N.

## ANTICIPATION.

How good it is to contemplate that time  
When, casting off this heavy husk of flesh,  
I shall emerge pure spirit,  
Controlled alone by my pure will!  
How glorious to feel no longer slave  
To brutish passions, no longer prone  
To cringe and smart beneath the trivial ills  
That, like a swarm of gnats, annoy  
Our earthly life incessantly.  
Then, knowing naught of paltry space and time,  
I shall, through ages past and future, trace  
The works of countless influences;  
Then, worlds and systems, uncomputable  
By earth-bound sense, shall all be seen and visited  
Ere yet yon lightning stroke hath struck its mark.  
So, if I will it, shall I all things know,  
And laugh in glee sublime to find  
How simply solve the problems  
That have vexed and baffled man so long.  
And then, like brooding night upon the mountain steeps,  
Shall perfect peace upon my spirit steal,  
Instead of stolid sleep or fevered dream;  
For life shall bloom with fulness, now unthought,  
Of wisdom, beauty, love and rest,  
Excluding evermore both sin and death.

San Francisco, Cal.

W. MITCHELL.

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