

Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity, both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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This Company is established with the immediate object of starting and sustaining a Weekly Journal entitled "LIGHT"; devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of the facts and phenomena of Spiritualism, and the exposition of the Philosophy of Life and Mind; and secondarily to the discussion of such allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought.

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"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

Published every Saturday

BY THE

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There is a large class of people who believe in a world which they call "the present," and who assert that no knowledge of any other is attainable.

There is another large class of people who believe also in a world they call "the next," and who also assert that no other knowledge of it is attainable than that which has been handed down to them.

There is yet another class of people—usually known as "Spiritualists"—who believe in the existence of facts and phenomena, accessible to those who will seek for them, demonstrating the existence of another world than the present, and who believe that, on the basis of these facts, a science and a philosophy may be built up furnishing a key to the problems of Life and Mind, and uniting both these worlds in one harmonious whole.

A pressing necessity exists for the establishment of a high-toned and impartial Weekly Journal, devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of these facts and to the exposition of this philosophy, and secondarily, to the fair discussion of such other allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought. It is precisely this position which "LIGHT" is intended to fill.

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THE LULL IN PHENOMENAL SPIRITUALISM.

No. I.

It has been apparent for some time past that a lull is taking place in Phenomenal Spiritualism. It is not that phenomenal manifestations of Spirit power have ceased, though we think there are signs that they do not occur with the same spontaneity and regularity as they did ten years since. There are phenomena in abundance, sufficient to satisfy the most exacting wonder hunter. The Spirit rap, the Spirit hand, the Spirit writing, to say nothing of other marvels occurring all around us, are enough to engage the attention of thoughtful Spiritualists, who are familiar with the facts but absolutely ignorant of the method by which they are produced.

It is not that phenomena have ceased. Nor is it that they who observe them are less numerous than of old. On the contrary, for one man who had familiarised himself with these latter-day marvels ten years ago we believe that there are now ten; and second-hand superficial acquaintance with what is roughly called Spiritualism has spread far and wide. Men talk of it everywhere, and display a curious knowledge of its more ordinary phenomena. It has made a home for itself in the lighter magazines, and the columns of the daily papers are only too frequently occupied by some of its most unwelcome and repulsive aspects. Men know of it by the hearing of the ear at any rate, if not by personal and practical experience. It is in their mouths, whether they regard it as an occasion for jeering at the folly of its professors, or as a sign of the times, or as a fact that yet waits for its explanation.

Yet with all this there is a lull in the production of new phenomena—even in the recurrence of the old. How is this? Assuming the truth of the accepted theory of the Spiritualists that these phenomena are the work of Spirits who desire to reach and influence humanity, the outward and visible signs of a great Spiritual movement, it might be anticipated that, the minds of men having been aroused to attention, the supply of evidence would be forthcoming in increased quantity; that the unseen agencies who seek to give us proof of disembodied or unembodied life, would hail the opportunity to demonstrate their case, and would reiterate their proofs till conviction ensued. The antecedent improbability of such phenomena occurring has been to a great extent removed. They have occurred so long, so repeatedly, in the presence of so many witnesses, under such unimpeachable conditions, that men, whose judgment is sound, are usually prepared to admit that, to say the least, "there is something in Spiritualism." Here then is the grand opportunity. Why is it not utilised? Is there any reason apparent to us why there should be such a lull as we discern, instead of the steady supply of evidence that is so much needed?

It would be idle to attempt to define the reasons that may influence Spirits in their actions among men. It would be necessary to go far back in the argument before we could lay reasonable grounds for such speculations. Many of our readers might possibly decline to follow us in any such theorising. They might allege that we have no sufficient evidence of any coherent plan on the part of Spirits; and that if there be such an organised plan for the benefit of humanity, it is not a little curious that Spirits do not agree among themselves as to any of

its principles or details. Others would, no doubt, allege that the scientific method knows nothing of such speculations: that it concerns itself with facts, and with them alone, leaving even theories that seem to grow out of them till a time far ahead of the present, when the facts are established, demonstrated, reproduced, classified, and tabulated into something like order. Until that is done, so long as we cannot reproduce even a rap, or say how and why the simplest phenomenon does or does not occur, our work, they will say with much show of reason, lies in the realm of fact and not in the shadowy domain of Spirit.

If it be understood that this attitude is adopted towards Phenomenal Spiritualism, and that the subtler manifestations of spirit, whether in the body or out of the body, which do not present themselves as manifestations on the plane of matter, are excluded, this is sound sense. Leaving speculative inquiries alone, and accepting the attitude of our hypothetical interlocutor, let us ask whether there be anything in the inherent nature of the phenomena themselves, or in the practice of public mediumship, or in our own methods of investigation, or in the general attitude of opinion to Spiritualism, that may account for the lull of which we speak.

In the inherent nature of the phenomena there is nothing to make it impossible that they should be dealt with on scientific principles of investigation. They are susceptible, many of them, of verification by mechanical methods which preclude self-deception or fraud. They can be observed, classified, and their variations recorded. It is only when we come to attempt their reproduction that we need fail, and then simply because we have to reckon with an unseen and unknown agent over whom we have, and apparently can get, no control. So far as the phenomena are concerned there is no reason why they should not come under the laws of observation which human knowledge, *i.e.*, Science, has found applicable to other investigations. Until the domain of mind and spirit in man is reached, so long as these phenomena occur in such a way as to impinge on our senses, or to leave their effects on our material surroundings, there is no conceivable reason why they should not be investigated according to the strictest scientific methods. "Science," says Professor Williamson, F.R.S., in a very striking paper in the current number of the *Contemporary Review* on "Pyrrhonism in Science," "demands as a primary condition the absolute verification of the alleged facts with which it has to deal. . . . If statements are made that appear to contradict the whole tenor of preceding observations, Science demands that such statements shall be supported by a weight of evidence that must increase in proportion to their improbability. Faith can have no place here."

In the inherent nature of the phenomena called Spiritual is there any reason why this method should not be applied? We know of none, unless it be that we cannot command them at pleasure, and must, therefore, wait until they spontaneously occur. But various scientific investigations are beset with similar difficulties, and yet they have advanced conspicuously during late years, when Specialism has been somewhat of a hobby among men of science. It is true we have Mr. Crookes's researches of inestimable value from this point of view. We have Professor Zollner's work, the experimental part of which, as given in Mr. C. C. Massey's translation, is admirable. Some private investigators have given us, in the various magazines which deal with Spiritualism, sporadic records of their experiments, and one or two have classified the phenomena observed. The journals devoted to the subject contain various accounts, more or less valuable, of séances at which striking phenomena have been observed. But, when all is admitted, there remains the plain fact that little attempt at patient, consecutive investigation, and really scientific arrangement of results, has yet been made. And even the existing records are rendered far less valuable than they otherwise would be by tendency to slipshod and inadequate observation, to enthusiastic and inaccurate

recording, and to the toleration of conditions which render anything approaching to trustworthy observation impracticable.

We leave out of view the family circle. To introduce there methods of observation suitable to rigid scientific analyses, would be as unwelcome as it would be undesirable and even impossible. Few private mediums are sufficiently developed to endure such testing of their powers, and sufficiently disinterested to sacrifice all to the conviction, possible, but by no means sure, of some scientific pyrrhonist. And even if the medium were fired by this ill-regulated zeal very few private circles would consent to risk, by any such method of procedure, the interruption of cherished and almost consecrated intercourse with those whom they, rightly or wrongly, believe to be their best friends, long mourned and now restored to them. This is not the place nor are these the fair materials for scientific investigation. The cross-examination necessary to establish the claims of those who return there, to be what they pretend, would be as harrowing and repellant as the *post mortem* investigation into the cause of death, were friends expected to assist at it.

But we have mediums who have grown hardened by contact with generations of sceptics, and who devote their powers to the service of investigators. They are callous to tests; inured to suspicion and doubt; patient of what might easily be construed by a sensitive mind into insult; tolerant even of ropes and wires, and handcuffs. Why has no real system of investigation been carried out with one of these?

A LITTLE CHILD'S MONUMENT.*

Perhaps there is no sorrow known to the human heart so exquisite in its pathos and purity as that which is occasioned by the death of little children. They are so helpless in the cold hands of death, so ignorant of what the very name means, that we watch their guileless spirits depart in a keen agony lest they may be "lonely" as they wake into another life; and no faith, however strong, can save the heart from being wrung at the thought that "perhaps everyone will seem strange to them." "A Little Child's Monument," a small volume of most touching verse written by the Hon. Roden Noel, in memory of his son, will re-awaken sorrowful yet comforting thoughts in many a heart. The following lines are from "The Lament":—

"I would lie asleep, darling—
With thee lie asleep,
Unhearing the world weep, darling,
Little children weep;
O my little child."

And these from "O lead me where the lily blows":—

"Angels planted in my garden,
A vain pleassance of ill weeds,
One white Lily, and the Warden,
With sweet air from Heaven feeds.
Ah! one night my Lily died,
And I mourn him night and day,
'For the bosom of my Bride,'
The Lord saith, 'He was borne away.'
Then I wandered through the world
To find the flower de luce I lost;
And my wings will ne'er be furled,
Summer-poised or tempest-tost,
Till my lily of the valley
Somewhen, somewhere my spirit find,
In a sweet celestial alley,
Far from our lost human kind;
Ah! my lily of the valley!
Lead me where the lily blows.
I would wear it in my life;
Weary of world-soil and strife;
Oh! lead me where the lily blows."

The little work is full of the tenderest passages, and of the most true-to-nature touches also. In "Music and the Child," we have an example of what we mean:—

"Baby lies upon the bed,
And our hearts with him lie dead;
Baby lies with fair white blossom
In his hair and hand and bosom.
* * * * *
And while we cower smitten low,
By our baby boy's death blow,
Draws again the organ near,
Ah! Baby never more may hear."

Should some consider such reading too pathetic, to many others Mr. Noel's book will recall the holiest and sweetest, though perhaps the most sorrowful, experiences which this life has brought to pass for them. S.

* By the Hon. Roden Noel. Kegan Paul and Co., 1881.

THE DOCTRINE OF RE-INCARNATION.

At the Fortnightly Discussion Meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists, held at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., on Monday evening last, Miss Arundale gave an admirable address on the subject of Re-Incarnation.

Adverting to what she called the "great theory of the present age—namely Evolution," which she defined as "the theory of the physical development of all organised beings in the order of the complexity of their organs, from the lowest and simplest form of life to the human organism," Miss Arundale suggested that this theory of Evolution is not limited to the physical but includes within its compass the development of the mental and moral nature of man. Proceeding yet further, she contended that it might fairly be inferred from analogy that the "spirit" of man also forms no exception to the same great law, and that—co-existent with matter and manifesting through matter—the spirit has a corresponding development with its physical exponent. Thus the theory of physical Evolution meant the development of organisation, while on the other hand spiritual Evolution meant the development of spirit through successive embodiments or incarnations. Re-Incarnation was, in fact, the culminating point of spiritual Evolution. Turning to history, to the traditions of the ancients, Miss Arundale cited abundant evidence that the idea of the plurality of earth existences for the spirit had been extremely prevalent—as she thought, almost universal; and she contended that in our own sacred writings (the Bible) there was much that would be found confirmatory of the doctrine of Re-Incarnation:—

"In the Old Testament there is no teaching on this subject, but this can hardly be considered as an objection, for likewise in the Old Testament there is no direct teaching of the doctrine of immortality. On the contrary, Moses, the great law-giver to the Jewish people, nowhere mentions a future life, but holds out temporal reward and punishment. It is not difficult to understand why this should be. Knowledge, religion, the human race itself is progressive, and the revelation of Moses was given to a primitive people. In the same manner the idea of the Divine as portrayed in the Old Testament was the only idea conceivable to a nation so completely in a state of infancy, but how inferior is it to the higher and more spiritual teachings of Jesus! That the doctrine of Re-Incarnation was held by the Jews there is abundant proof; it was this belief that made them say that 'Jesus was Elias or one of the prophets.' Mark viii., 28. Jesus Himself, speaking of John the Baptist, said: 'If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.' Matt. xi., 14. And in another place, when His disciples asked Him, 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.' And in the following verse it is said, 'Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.' Matt. xvii., 10-13. Again, the disciples meeting a man which was blind from his birth, asked Jesus, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' John ix., 2. Jesus expressed no surprise at their question, which was evidently founded on the idea of pre-existence. Herod, when he heard of Jesus, believed that it was John risen from the dead. The teachings of Jesus to the multitudes were principally confined to parables and moral lessons; to the disciples He often explained Himself more fully, but even to the disciples it is said 'that He could not tell them all things then, for they were not able to bear it,' but that the Spirit should lead and guide them into all truth. Many of the Fathers of the early Christian Church negated eternal punishment; St. Clement taught universal redemption, St. Gregory the same; and in the present day there are many, and a gradually increasing number, who believe in the doctrine of universal progression. Most Spiritualists are prepared to believe that the future state of man is not irrevocably fixed at death. Doubtless the teachings from the other side of life have to be received with caution and considered with deliberation, but where we find a widespread unanimity of doctrine we may at any rate receive it subject to the judgment of reason, and the perfectability of spirit is almost universally taught by the Spirits, however much they may differ as to the manner in which perfection is to be gained."

In the spirit teaching in this country Re-Incarnation admittedly held but a subordinate place, and the progressive development of spirit was relegated to the spheres of Spirit life; but it was far otherwise amongst foreign Spiritualists. This discrepancy was, the lecturer thought, easily accounted for by the fact that Spirits often held, for very long periods after passing into the other life, the same opinions that they had held in earth-life, and generally returned to those with whom they were most in sympathy. Adverting to the objections to the theory of Re-Incarnation, she said that the two principal ones were "The absence of memory of the fact," and the question of identity:—

"With regard to memory we must notice that it is a faculty

dependent on physical organisation. It is a nervous process, gradually acquired by development, and common alike to the human race and the animal creation. We do not remember the early years of infancy, but that is no proof that we have not passed through them. The *knowledge* acquired in those years is remembered; the details by which experience was gained are forgotten, but the experience remains, and in this form the memory of those years may be said to be retained. And is there not a trace that children possess this memory of experience, that they have what has been termed 'innate ideas,' that which Plato speaks of as 'reminiscence'? Far from being the blank that some have supposed, the child may indeed be called the 'heir of all the ages.' It is an eternal being that has already lived and has an existence before and after the present, which is only one link in the great chain of life; the past life is essentially contained in the present, although not as actual memory. It must also be remembered that man is a triune being, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. Body and soul are intimately connected; they constitute the outer man, and exist through the vitalizing power of the spirit. Spirit is the interior soul, and body the exterior. Man in his normal condition is unconscious of his spirit. The spirit may remember past lives, but has not the power to impress the outer man, except under peculiar conditions. The brain, as a physical organ, registers the experiences of earth-life, that are the means for the education of the spirit. Thus does spirit pass from life to life, each life adding its quota to the sum of its experience. I think that the recollection of past lives would be incompatible with free action in the present. The other objection is then often given, that where there is no memory there is no identity; but this objection has but slight weight, for if this were the case disease and decay of the body would be potent to change identity. Has the old man lost individuality or identity from the fact that his memory of past life has failed? How often after severe illness has the patient entirely lost all recollection of the past! And in some instances this has been so much the case that even all knowledge previously acquired has been entirely obliterated. But individuality remained; it is not a product of the memory, is not dependent upon, and in its essence has no connection with, it. The man has the same identity as the child, although the manifestations may differ widely; and, indeed, which one of us, looking back say ten or twenty years, but must feel that a vast change has taken place in thought, feeling, and opinion? The *Ego* is the same, but the mode of expression of that *Ego* truly has altered. In the same manner, in plurality of lives the personality of the man may change, but the identity of the spirit remains."

As to those objectors who say that if earth-life is for expiation of faults committed in a previous existence, this expiation, to be profitable, must be conscious, Miss Arundale thought it might be answered that earth-life is not expiation, but progression. The faults of one life will be corrected in the next, through the law of progress, as the spirit develops, in the same manner that the student passes from class to class, in each class conquering the appointed tasks and working through the experience gained in a previous stage. But how account on any of the usual theories for the great diversity of character and experience which we see around us?—

"There cannot be two opinions on the subject of the moral and intellectual inequality of the human race. It is a fact patent to all. There are beings who possess such a small amount of intelligence that it is almost impossible, even with great culture, to elevate them to the level of those who have had no culture. There are also unfortunate creatures whose characters and dispositions are so debased that their lives are one long course of error from the cradle to the grave. It is useless to say that this depends on physical organisation, and is hereditary: we must search deeper for the reason. Although the nervous organisation may be inherited, and physical causes may modify and limit the manifestation of spirit, yet the developed organisation is the means and not the cause of the developed action of spirit. It is not matter that forms the spirit, but spirit that manifests through matter. From the intimate connection of the two, spirit and matter, it will be evident that there can be no independence of action on either side—spirit always manifesting in accordance with the development of organisation and its ruling causes, race and age. The inequality that exists between a savage and a Newton is not due to the physical organisation alone, nor to the conditions of birth. To say that the savage needs but the like conditions to rise to the same elevation is contrary both to reason and knowledge, for however much the children of primitive nations are trained they never rise beyond a development in harmony with their race. Also, in the same family, side by side, subject to the same educational conditions, are to be found children who from a very early age shew a marked difference both in morals and intellect. If this inequality in morals and intelligence does not proceed from the circumstances that surround the child, shall we affirm that it proceeds from the essential quality of the spirit—that it has pleased the Supreme Intelligence to create some but 'little lower than the angels,' and others with dispositions that render them only equal, if not inferior, to the brute creation? No! Notwithstanding what St. Paul may say on this subject there is, unless overshadowed by

bigotry and creed, an innate sentiment of justice in the human mind that forbids the thought that Supreme Justice and Goodness should create some of His creatures endowed with knowledge and virtue, and leave others in ignorance and vice. What then is it that causes the minute particles of nitrogenous matter to develop so differently? In the theory of pre-existence the only satisfactory solution of this difficulty is to be found. If the spirits of men have already lived for a greater or lesser number of times on the earth, the fact that some are further advanced than others fully accounts for the inequality we see around us. How incomprehensible is the justice of God without this theory! The premature death of children, vice triumphant and virtue suffering, the unequal division of riches, the infirmities with which some are afflicted, idiocy and disease, the varied grades of civilisation, and the gifts of genius—all these problems of life, the why and the wherefore of which have so often shaken the faith of man in the goodness of the Creator, are explained, and life becomes no longer a vexed question between justice and chance. Each life is the outcome of a previous existence. Birth is not the commencement, nor death the end; they only signify a change of manifestation. The spirit brings to each existence the degree of development that it had previously acquired, and thus the justice of God works through His own immutable laws of evolution and progression. The great and good ones of the earth, those whose lives have been given for the good of humanity—who by their virtue, their knowledge, the self-sacrifice with which they have devoted themselves for the benefit of their fellows, have become the saviours of their race—are not beings more highly favoured by God than others. Those great souls, so richly endowed with Divine love, have passed along the same great path of progress that we ourselves are passing. Have we not sometimes envied them? Has this life fulfilled the aspiration of the spirit? Have we not felt at times that we also possess latent powers that have as yet had no opportunity of development? Have we gathered all that earth-life can give? If earth-existence is for the purpose of perfecting the spirit, one existence surely is not sufficient. It requires many, with the variety of conditions afforded. We cannot be complete without the development of trial. We may have withstood the temptation of riches; should we have been equally faithful in poverty? If humiliation left us unscathed, should we have been equally fortunate in the pride of power?"

(To be continued.)

MR. TOWNS' MEDIUMSHIP.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I be permitted to say a few words with reference to Mr. Towns, for I think a *séance* with him would interest many of your readers, and that those who wish to learn the real fact of the inter-communion between the two worlds could not do better than go to him to seek evidences, for I have never met with any one who gives closer tests as to relationships, and on business points I fancy he is unequalled: but if visitors go to him they had better not have any dark spot or he is likely to search it out. At various times I have met him at Spiritualistic gatherings (not *séances*), and he has *always* given me, most unsought and unexpectedly, names and tests of my friends on the other side, as well as of other matters yet farther from the usual ken of most of the clairvoyants I have met. This has given me an inclination to have a *séance* with him in my own home, and on Monday last that was arranged for me by Mrs. Tebb's coming here to meet him, when we had a most interesting evening; and in the first instance, when entranced, he entered into the particulars of an event in Mrs. Tebb's life of which even I had never heard a word, and which she said was true in every detail. He afterwards mentioned many of my relatives, by name and affinity, who were present, and most especially gave a very sweet account of a little grand-nephew of mine, who had passed into the Spirit world about a year and a half ago in Java, telling his pet name, and that he was crowning me with flowers, mentioning also a signal he was giving me, which I had felt for several days previously, but had not made inquiry as to whom it was from.

But my chief reason for writing is that I feel him to be such a very genuine man that he is an honour to the cause. His present address is 126, Liverpool Buildings, New Station-road, Highbury, and I do hope my testimony may lead many to seek him out, as it will assuredly be to their own advantage.

Believe me, yours sincerely,

20, Delamere-crescent, W.

GEORGINA HOUGHTON.

March 6th, 1881.

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sésances.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

If there be any wavering Spiritualists, it would be well that they should read Mr. Frederic Harrison's paper in the *Nineteenth Century* on "The Creed of a Layman." Mr. Frederic Harrison is, as every body knows, a Positivist, and his object is to shew that the system of Auguste Comte supplies all the defects in the old orthodoxies by substituting for their creeds the belief in Humanity. But there Mr. Harrison leaves a *hiatus valde defendus* on his own account. We believe in Humanity too; but it is not the cold, dead, abstract Humanity in which Mr. Harrison believes, and to which Dr. Congreve most incongruously prays every Sunday, at his School in Chapel-street. Our Humanity is the living humanity of those gone before; and a belief in that does not cut us off from, but binds us more closely to, all that is best in existing religious systems. Spiritualism is, in fact, Religious Positivism.

With reference to the Church for Christian Spiritualists—or, as we believe they will be called, Christian Mystics—it is possible that we have been somewhat premature in naming the exact locality of such an institution; but we have the best authority for stating that the arrangements will shortly be completed. The clergyman in question has definitely decided on opening, and already a large and influential congregation have promised him their support. The organist, too—one of the most talented in London—is engaged in selecting his choir, so that all is making satisfactory progress; and even should the building we named not be the one eventually decided on (which we do not assert to be the case) the position of the church will be quite central. Public services will be at 11 and 7, and will consist of the Church of England offices slightly modified and considerably abridged; but there will also be numerous services of a more private nature during the week. Volunteers for the choir, or those otherwise interested in the scheme, may address the minister of the church, under cover to the editor of this paper, if they wish to do so; but this will scarcely be necessary, as in all probability the definite announcement will appear in our advertisement columns very shortly.

A communication of some interest and importance was made at a recent meeting of a religious circle. The members were harmonious, the conditions declared to be good, and the medium was one who usually commands manifestations without delay. The devotional services having been concluded the Spirit voice was heard, but it was exceedingly faint, and evidently there was great difficulty in establishing rapport. By the advice of the intelligence a double concentric circle was formed; but even this change failed to make the conditions quite satisfactory, and the communicating Spirit was only able to add to a general expression of approval his advice that the number of sitters should be limited. Even when all are devout believers, as was the case, and entirely sympathetic and harmonious, the size of the circle should bear proportion to the dimensions of the room. We mention this because we think it very likely that the non-observance of a rule thus sanctioned by common sense as well as convenience may form the rationale of many failures to obtain communications.

Miss Arundale's address on Re-Incarnation, delivered before the members of the British National Association on Monday evening, was a very able defence of the doctrines which that lady has so earnestly espoused—so able, indeed, that the Chairman, Mr. Desmond FitzGerald, deemed it prudent to caution the audience against allowing themselves to be carried away by her eloquence and forgetting the question whether the arguments adduced were sound and logical. But there was no need of this advice. In the brisk discussion which followed her positions were vigorously attacked, and almost as vigorously defended. But the balance of expressed opinion was evidently against the essayist. We shall be glad to have the views of such of our readers as have given thoughtful attention to the subject.

Mr. Alexander Calder, who has for several years occupied the position of President of the British National Association of Spiritualists, is called away by important business to India and Ceylon, and has therefore temporarily severed his connection with the Association. It is a matter for congratulation, however, that in doing so he gives the assurance of his unabated interest in its work, of his continued sympathy and help, and of his hope to rejoin the Association when he comes back to England. By his courtesy, urbanity, and liberality Mr. Calder has won the very high esteem of his co-workers, who will all accord him their best wishes on his journey, and a hearty welcome on his return. Mr. Calder will start very shortly, and will be absent, in all probability, for six or eight months.

We are requested by the founder of the Guild of the Holy Spirit to say that he is in some little difficulty as to the admission of persons to those meetings of the Guild at which others than members are present. The attendance is sometimes in excess of the accommodation at the oratory. He is, however, most desirous that all earnest Spiritualists should have the opportunity of being present and seeing what is done, should they desire to do so; and the regular members of the Guild would in many cases be ready to forego their own attendance in favour of visitors. The founder would, therefore, be greatly obliged if those who desire to be present would communicate with him beforehand, allowing sufficient time for him to send a reply. Members of the Guild now sit at home in very many places at remote distances, as nearly as possible at the time when the meetings are being held in London; and on Saturday last a lady who had never been at the room before, but had seen it in vision, called there, and was quite struck with the minuteness with which the place had been clairvoyantly presented to her mind. She had forgotten for the moment that there was, so to say, a room within a room, until she came to the place and the sight of it recalled this peculiarity to her remembrance.

A *conversazione* will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on the evening of Thursday, March 31st, the anniversary of Modern Spiritualism, when the Soirée Committee hope to present an unusually attractive programme. Particulars will be given in future issues of "LIGHT;" but we mention the day now, that our friends may be able to keep themselves free from other engagements.

ASTROLOGY.—It appears that among the signs of the times which shew that 1881 is of necessity a more fateful year than any which has been known for ages, the most significant is to be found in the aspect which will be presented by the planets next month. Visible to the naked eye even now is the daily approaching conjunction of the three most important of the planets—Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn. Next month, though not visible, this conjunction will be closer than ever; and we are told that the malignant influence of Saturn upon the other two planets—but more especially upon Jupiter—is such as to strike those who look to the stars for their guidance with absolute terror. Jupiter and Saturn will almost touch—a thing unprecedented, and full of evil foreboding to kings, rulers, generals, and all in authority. If we mistake not there is also a fourth planet concerned in the mischief—Uranus, to wit—but whether he is admitted to have any influence upon mortal affairs is doubtful. . . . Besides the sinister conjunctions spoken of, we have to fear much from a close approximation of Mars and Mercury, indicating revolutions and turbulence among the dangerous classes. It would not so much matter were these things written in the stars alone, for we have endured that evil before, and might, perchance, bear it again; but the mischief is that, astrology or no astrology, they are actually happening upon the earth.—*Evening Standard*.

CONSCIOUSNESS UNDER ANÆSTHETICS.

Of a truth great is the power of *fact*. So great that there is but one power greater—the mind, to wit, that sees the *fact*. At a time when Dr. Wyld and the Theosophists are appealing to the phenomena of consciousness observed by those under the influence of anæsthetics in support of their philosophy, it may not be unprofitable to note that another philosopher has drawn from similar facts conclusions which are not those of Dr. Wyld and the Theosophists. They believe that when the avenues of the external senses are closed by the inhalation of nitrous oxide and the like, the inner body—or, as they term it, Soul—in which consciousness and will actually inhere, seeming only to inhere in this visible body, is released from its fleshly prison, and may even stand outside it, and perceive, together with many other things, how the deserted body fares; and they appeal to a certain observed exaltation and difference of consciousness in support of their view.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in *Mind*, for October, 1878, gives a description, furnished to him by a patient, of his sensations under chloroform, and draws from the described phenomena corroboration of his theory of the genesis of consciousness set forth in the "Principles of Psychology." The description, which is written in glowing and picturesque, if somewhat vague language, is much too long to quote here in full; it runs somewhat to the following effect:—With the complete closure of the external senses, the patient loses all recognition of the external world; he is aware only, and that dimly, of a certain distinction into parts within the body. He retains, at first, an exaggerated and painful consciousness of the movements of his lungs, and of a "chaotic roaring" in the brain, and of "innumerable drums" beating in his ear. These latter sensations—due, apparently, to the pulse of the arteries supplying the head—remain when the commotion in the lungs has ceased. He then feels only—but with a terrific concentration and hyperbole of feeling—the throbbing of his heart, and the "huge thudding" at his ears. At length, this too fades away, and in the stage immediately preceding complete annihilation he remains, without limbs or parts, or consciousness of self, simply an all too conscious heart that beats with burning energy against the walls of the prisoned dark. In the return to sentiency he is aware, at first, only of self, and of something which is not self, over against it, and causing the consciousness of self to be one "massive, pulsating pain." Then in a further stage of enlightenment the pain gets itself defined and localised "up on the right," and he begins to know "other parts" by the feeling of resistance to the overagainstness. Thence by quick degrees he comes to the full light of self-knowledge.

Mr. Herbert Spencer sees in this disintegration and reintegration of consciousness, what the anatomist sees in the development of the embryo, but reversed. We begin with the complex organism, and we strip it, one by one, in strict historical sequence, of the aftergrowths from time to time grafted on to it by the changing environment during its long life-progress, until we reach at length the primordial germ of sentiency—the knowing that I am I, only by the simple, vague contrast with the outer dark that is not I. The history of consciousness, in this view, is the history of an organic development; it is a process of evolution, where feelings, and not tissues, are the factors. But Mr. Spencer's summary will bear quoting *in extenso*.

"It is significant that impressions from the special senses, ceasing early, leave behind as the last impression derived from without, the sense of outer force conceived as opposed by inner resistance: for this we saw to be the primordial element of consciousness. (Principles of Psychology, § 347.) Again, the fact that the consciousness of external space disappeared simultaneously with the consciousness of external force, answers to the conclusion drawn that space-ideas are built out of experiences of resistant positions, the relations among which are measured by sensations of muscular effort. (§§ 343, 348) Further, there is meaning in the fact that a vague sense of relative position within the body survived; since we concluded that by mutual exploration, there is gained that knowledge of the relations among the parts of the body which gives measures through which the developed knowledge of surrounding space is reached (§§ 344, 345). Once more we get evidence that the Ego admits of being progressively shorn of its higher components, until, finally, the sensations produced by the beating of the heart remain alone to constitute the conscious self; shewing in the first place that the conscious self at any moment is really compounded of all the states of consciousness, presentative and representative, then existing (§ 219), and shewing, in the second place, that it admits of being simplified as far as to lose most of the elements composing the consciousness of corporeal existence. Whence it is inferable that self-consciousness begins as a mere rudiment consisting of present

sensations, without past or future. Lastly, we have the striking testimony that there exists a kind of consciousness lower than that which the lowest kind of thought shews us. The simplest intellectual act implies the knowing something as such or such—implies the consciousness of it as like something previously experienced, or, otherwise, as belonging to a certain class of experiences. But we here get evidence of a stage so low, that a received impression remains in consciousness unclassified; there is a passive reception of it, and an absence of the activity required to know it as such or such." (op. lit., p. 558).

Now, of course, it is by no means clear that these two points of view are opposed. The evolution of consciousness *pari passu* with the evolution of cell and tissue, and its occasional degradation into its constituent elements—seeing that neither Dr. Wyld nor Mr. Spencer can any the more explain what consciousness is—may be compatible with the supposition that consciousness inheres in an inner body, which is not the body that we see, and can occasionally be separated from that body as an indissoluble whole—and as something more than the whole which we at present know. It is noticeable that Dr. Wyld's patients appear to have been under the influence of laughing-gas, but that Mr. Spencer's subject had inhaled chloroform, and it is possible that different anæsthetics operate in diverse modes; and there may be a double mind, as the Theosophists think there is a double body, the one to be taken to pieces by chloroform, like a child's puzzle, the other to be set free by similar agents as an organic and indissoluble whole. But, at least, if neither theory is to be confuted, or summarily thrust aside, some process of reconciliation is needed. Meanwhile, *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit*.

FRANK PODMORE.

London, March 6th, 1881.

SOME FACTS IN REGARD TO RAPPINGS.

After a lapse of many years, Mr. Irving Bishop has renewed the attack which now 25 years ago was fiercely sustained in the United States against the truth of the actual occurrence of Spirit rappings. The favourite theory, and one which has found countenance in the present day, is the *knuckle-joint theory*. The sounds, according to this hypothesis, are produced by the medium by means of the toes and ankle joint cartilages, which are rubbed together and produce the cracking sound all are familiar with whenever a sprain or unusual strain is put upon a joint. I need hardly add that this explanation has found great favour with the sceptical public. A few facts which have occurred in my presence and in that of some friends who examined into those rapping manifestations, I think may tend to disprove this notion. In my presence, in clear daylight, I have frequently heard raps and felt the vibration on the pane of a plate glass window. The sounds of loud raps have a hundred times been heard by me on the panels of a door, both in my own house and in the houses of friends; abreast of the medium or occasionally higher than the head. On one occasion, Lord —— had a piece of thin plank screwed into a stand or iron frame used for photographic purposes, quite four feet off the ground. On this piece of plank rappings were heard; clear, sonorous, and in a clear light, in the presence of the host and others. I have heard raps loudly audible emanating from the surface of a basin of water; overhead on the ceiling of the room; on many occasions against the book shelf in my library, a distance of ten to twelve feet from the medium. Mr. W. Crookes, anxious to satisfy himself of the impossibility of self-deception, induced Mrs. Jencken, then Miss Kate Fox, to place herself in a swing attached to a cross-beam in his children's playroom, raised three to four feet off the ground, and loud raps were heard on the floor beneath, the boarding of the floor slightly vibrating. Another gentleman, Mr. H. C. Pennell, whose scepticism appeared all but unquerable, induced Mrs. Jencken to submit to a test. He introduced her into a room he had hired for the purpose, and induced her to stand on four tumblers; rappings loud and continuous rewarded his perseverance. The hundred and one tests to which the Fox girls were submitted in the early days of the inquiry are matters of record; but, I may mention that loud rappings happened whilst Katie Fox, then a mere child, lay asleep in the lap of Mrs. Florence Greely, both the surroundings and positions of the child rendering deception impossible. The genuineness of these manifestations was admitted by the American Committee of Investigation; and the report of that committee, subscribed by Dr. McDowell, of St. Louis, and other medical men of St. Louis, gave at the time an immense impulse to the belief in Spiritualism.

Whatever may have taken place since, the fact remains that

the Rochester knockings, as they were termed, became accepted as proved beyond doubt, as actually occurring without the aid of the toe or knee joints. I will not weary you with an account of the painstaking care with which these investigations were carried on. Every appliance science could call to the aid of the medical staff who took part in the inquiry was resorted to, not omitting the stethoscope and the isolating chair. All these matters are recorded in the report of the Investigating Committee, and may be easily referred to. Nor will I further detail instances that I have personally experienced, but I submit that the occurrence of knockings under the circumstances as stated by me, if explained by the "knuckle-joint theory," are far more inexplicable than if accounted for by the theory of the action of unseen beings, who avail themselves of the ability to use the mysterious power of a medium to communicate to men in the flesh by means of rapping telegraphy.

H. D. JENCKEN.

7th March, 1881.

EXPERIMENTS IN THOUGHT READING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "G. F. G.," began with rather a difficult experiment, for a first trial, in selecting a card out of a pack, to be named by the person who went out of the room; but if he will persevere he will find, after a few evenings' practice, that the failures will be the exception. In my lecture on this subject I gave a pretty full and detailed account of a long series of experiments, which occupied two or three evenings a week for four or five months, pointing out the best mode of proceeding, and describing—as well as I could get at it—the precise mental process that takes place in the mind of the "guesser," by attending to which he is able to make answer with very little doubt as to the correctness of his reply. But, of course, a newspaper report could only give one or two of the more prominent facts, without describing the precise method by which they were obtained. However, your correspondent, and those who will try the thing for themselves, should begin by selecting objects in the room, which are to be named by the persons who leave the room while the selection is being made; and then take names of towns in England, foreign countries and their capitals, &c., proceeding afterwards to the more difficult task of naming cards and repeating sentences in various languages, totally unknown to those who are required to utter the words.

Buxton.

A. M. CREEERY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent "G. F. G.," gives as the result of his first experiment in thought-reading, two correct answers out of eight, and concludes with the observation that "possibly better and more conclusive results might be obtained with a mesmeric sensitive." I have had some experience with "mesmeric sensitives" in clairvoyance, the results being highly satisfactory and conclusive. For instance, I have seen Horatio Eddy, when securely blindfolded, describe photographs of persons, and delineate the character as well, and also describe objects that were held before him. The most perfect experiment of the kind, however, was with Mrs. Jennie Potter, a professional medium, residing in Boston, U.S.A. At a materialising séance, a Spirit, John King, standing in the room in good light, told us he wished us to remain after they "had got through," as further experiments were to be made. Accordingly, when the Spirits had all appeared and disappeared, Mrs. Potter, who was one of the company, was controlled by her guide, Alice, and requested each person to write on paper a sentence, and place it in an envelope. The necessary writing materials being provided, we each wrote a sentence with a pencil, unknown to one another, and securing it in an envelope, placed it on the table, where they all lay in an indiscriminate heap. The medium now drew up to the table, and speaking under the influence of "Alice," engaged in a little conversation with the company. She then took the envelopes, one by one, and placing them on her forehead, read their contents in a slow manner, but without any hesitation, and each person admitted the correctness thereof. Here, then, was an experiment that certainly had no element of guess-work in it,—very different to the thought-reading experiment, where success only resulted twice out of eight trials.

In the experiments of which I have given an account, the operators were "mesmeric sensitives" or mediums, and the effects produced were admittedly the work of outside intelligent personalities, the one being a certain "French Mary," and the

other "Alice." Is thought-reading an imperfect form of the same kind of clairvoyance, or is there clairvoyance proper—a latent faculty of the soul? For my own part I am inclined to think that all results of a clairvoyant character are due to the action of outside intelligences, and I have never witnessed anything to lead me to hold a contrary opinion.

I have just received a letter from Mrs. Julia M. Carpenter, a well-known American medium, and who obtains results of the character I have described. Deeming Mrs. Carpenter's letter of interest and *apropos* to the subject of this communication, I subjoin a copious extract from the same. I must premise by saying that Mrs. Carpenter's husband is a very successful exhibitor of mesmeric phenomena in public, and that at the time of writing they were at New York. Mrs. Carpenter says:—

"Our success here has been very flattering in every respect. Nearly all the prominent physicians here have taken instructions in methods of operating from Mr. C., and mesmerism has become quite the fashion here. Half a dozen doctors have begun to use it on their patients as an anæsthetic with most excellent results. Among those most enthusiastic are Dr. George H. Board, and Dr. Wm. A. Hammond, both of whom are known to you, I think. Dr. Beard, who has always stoutly denied the fact of clairvoyance, and declared it to be fraud and humbug, has now become very modest, since through my humble self he has received absolute demonstration of the power. We have met Dr. Gunn, whom possibly you may remember as Dr. Tanner's physician during his fast, and like him very much. I have attended for the first time a circle given by the Eddys. You may remember that I am very sceptical in the matter of materialisation, but I am very positive that I saw a dear old friend, Uncle Thomas Haskell, of West Gloucester, at the Eddy séance. There is an excellent 'slate writer' here, a Mr. Phillips, through whom I received messages written upon slates which I bought on my way to visit the medium, and *they were not out of my hands until the message was written.*"

"JULIA M. CARPENTER."

The Drs. Beard and Hammond referred to are physicians of repute, and have made themselves notorious by their opposition to everything Spiritual. Mr. Sargent, in his "Scientific Basis," says of them: "There are grave doctors of medicine, such as Richet, Hammond, and Beard, who declare persistently, through the *Popular Science Monthly*, one, that no well-demonstrated fact has ever permitted us to conclude that such a thing as double sight or clairvoyance exists; the other, two, that there never was a case of clairvoyance in the world's history." Now that they have had evidence of the fact it is to be hoped they will have the manliness to "own up."

I remain, yours truly,

ROBERT COOPER.

Eastbourne, March 6th.

AMERICAN ITEMS.

From our American contemporary, the *Banner of Light*, we learn that Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond is holding very successful meetings in Chicago. Those held on Sunday mornings take place in the parlours of a friend of the cause, the evening meetings being at Fairbank Hall, where large and appreciative audiences assemble at all the services. An increased interest in Spiritualism is stated to have been manifested in Chicago as a result of Mrs. Richmond's labours.

The same journal also states that "A number of Spiritualists in St. Louis, Mo., have joined in an organisation to be known as the 'Harmonial Mutual Benefit Society,' the object of which is to render aid to its members, whether in health or sickness, and to forward, by lectures, séances, &c., the investigation and propagation of the Spiritual philosophy and phenomena in all their purity."

Miss Lottie Fowler, the American clairvoyante, who practised here so successfully some years since, is, we learn from the Norwich (U.S.) *Bulletin*, at present in that city.

THE TOMB AND THE ROSE.

(Translation from a short poem of Victor Hugo's, "Voices of the Within.")

The Tomb thus on the Rose did call,—
 "The tears of morn that o'er thee fall
 What dost thou with them? Flower of Love!"
 The Rose thus also asked the Tomb—
 "What dost thou, in thy dismal womb,
 With the fair prey that fills the grave?"
 "Oh! sombre Tomb!" the Rose replied,
 "The dews that in my chalice hide,
 I turn to sweet perfumery."
 The Tomb rejoined—"Ah! plaintive flower!
 The beautiful souls that I devour
 I render angels, in the sky!"

J. P. T.

MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

From the earliest times and in all countries some degree of what has been called asceticism has been connected with spiritual development. "Fasting and prayer" have gone together in the East and in the West. The Brahmans, the Egyptians, the Pythagoreans, the Hebrew Prophets, and the early Christians alike abstained from the indulgences of diet and drink—from "the fleshly lusts that war against the soul." The hermits of the desert lived on wheat or barley or pulse, probably lentils, and drank water. The founders of all the religious orders kept perpetual Lent. When disorders arose and monks ate flesh and drank wine, reformers came who, like St. Theresa, restored the original rules of temperance and abstinence.

We have at this day a distinct movement in the same direction in connection with Spiritual manifestations. Mediums are impressed or instructed by their guides to observe a pure diet and abstinence from intoxicants and narcotics, as a needful condition of the higher forms of manifestation. The best medium I know has not eaten flesh for forty years, seldom takes wine and never tea or coffee. I know a good physical medium in America whom the Spirits tried to break of a bad habit of smoking tobacco. They had a serious fight over it. One day he said, "If you will take my cigar out of my mouth, I will leave off smoking." The cigar was suddenly pulled from his lips and went from him and out of his sight. But it is hard to break off such habits. He persisted in using tobacco and drink until his medial power was taken from him.

One of the best mediums I have ever known for many forms of manifestations went through a serious training by his Spirit guides to break up bad habits, purify his life, and fit him for his mission. He was young, with a voracious appetite, which undermined his health. He was required to abstain from flesh, tea, coffee, tobacco, and to be very moderate in the use of butter, milk, and salt—the three last for special reasons, connected with the condition of liver, kidneys, and skin. When he was disposed to break over the rule loud knocks on the table at which he was eating warned him to desist. If he still persisted the table would rise in opposition, and sometimes the direct voice of his guide would warn him against breaking the rules. He came to good health, and had marvellous manifestations.

Tobacco was one of his most subtle temptations, as it is to so many. Once, at sea, the conditions and companionship of the voyage seduced him to smoke a cigar. In his next séance on shore he was well punished. He was thrown senseless on the floor and a large piece of a cigar thrust into his mouth, so that he became disgusted and nauseated. I do not think he has touched tobacco since.

It seems reasonable to me that the higher orders of Spirits should require in those whom they wish to penetrate, influence, and make use of for the benefit of others, a physical purity akin to their own. Gross eating, animalism, intoxication, diseasing habits and vices must be unfavourable to the higher spiritual influences. It does not, therefore, surprise me to find that the most interior circles should have a rule which may be called ascetic, and to which many are unwilling to conform; but I am also not surprised to find that those who will purify their lives by conformity to such a rule are abundantly rewarded by a higher health, more equable nervous power, and higher forms of Spiritual manifestations. I knew, many years ago, a man of admirable gifts, and a warm good heart, who brought himself into serious and painful disease, and to an early death, by his indulgence in food and wine. It was, no doubt, in a considerable degree the fault of his progenitors. It is hard to resist ancestral habits and present associations. Now he often comes to me, and is one of my most earnest exhorters to perseverance in habits quite the reverse of his own. He tells me that he is still suffering for his faults—not, as I understand, in the way of arbitrary punishment, but as an inevitable consequence of violated law. It is but reasonable to believe that those habits and practices which debase and disease us here, may affect us in the future life, we know not how long. We cannot expect that a man who dies in a drunken debauch wakes up the next instant a glorified Spirit, in a state of angelic purity and bliss unspeakable. Sudden changes are not in the order of nature, and the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory is consonant with experience. In this life, where the will is changed, habits are not quickly conquered, and the consequences of vicious indulgences are slowly overcome. No doubt there are what seem rapid changes, sudden cures, in this life; and in the life to come,

where the central will is pure and good, we may hope that earthly contaminations will soon be washed away—but the law remains. Suffering is the penalty of sin. It is better to do right than wrong.

To those who desire high spiritual communion, spiritual gifts, and the manifestations of, and communications from, high and pure intelligences, I cannot doubt that great purity of the physical life is an important condition. Brain and nerves come nearest to the Spirit life, and it is probable that the finer, more ethereal brain and nerve matter is used for Spirit manifestations. Spirits seem to gather and use the human nerve element. If I sit quite passive, my force seems to be used by the medium or with that of the medium, in speaking or writing, but if I begin to use my brain force in following out some train of thought, the communication is suspended. I have observed this a hundred times, and can always stop a writing medium, for example, by using up the brain power myself. Is it not reasonable to believe that if I had injured that brain element by gross feeding, or some narcotic poison or intoxicant, a Spirit would find a difficulty in using it? Is it not probable that such food as will make the purest blood, and, therefore, the purest nerve matter, will afford the best conditions for my own spirit, and for communication with Spirits no longer in the flesh?

Thus Spiritualism not only teaches, but for its highest development demands, the highest morality and the greatest purity of life. Moral purity rests upon physical purity. That cleanliness is akin to godliness has passed into a proverb. That intoxication, in all its degrees, and by whatever means, excites and distorts the mental and moral faculties, is a matter of observation. Even the athlete, the marksman, the mechanic, the surgeon, knows that his brain is clearer and his nerves steadier when he abstains not only from alcohol, but from tea, coffee, and tobacco. Can it be doubted that the purity of our own spirits prepares us for communion with the purest and highest Spirits which have gone before us to that Spirit world which we are so rapidly nearing?

It seems to me an entirely reasonable belief, and it is the teaching of the purest Spirits I know, that purity of life best fits us for communion with, and enjoyment of, the world of Spirits.

T. L. N., M. D.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR SPIRITUALISM.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you allow me, through the columns of your journal, to make an appeal in behalf of Spiritualism in the coming trial of Mrs. Fletcher? Let me be understood. I do not write as her defender; I do not enter on the merits of the case; and I distinctly see that the public opinion of Spiritualists must and ought conscientiously to be formed at the time when the evidence for the defence as well as the prosecution comes clearly forward.

I have not been altogether an idle Spiritualist, and have availed myself of more than one opportunity of speaking and writing in behalf of the general phenomena, and also of the higher truths with regard to which, and quite independently, I have of late found much in common with the Fletchers. I have had many opportunities of becoming acquainted, not only with their ideas, but their characters, not open to the general circle of their friends, the results of which may one day be made known in the course of work to come. Those who know me are well aware that, although I am a medium and, therefore, sensitive to surroundings, I am a somewhat critical reviewer of everything that comes under my observation, holding it as I do to be the duty of every Spiritualist to act and think according to his own conscience, and to claim the inalienable right to judge dispassionately, justly, and calmly of everything with which he comes in contact.

What my estimate of Mrs. Fletcher's character may be is, however, of no moment at the present time; I only wish to point out one or two facts in connection with this case, and then to appeal to your readers in behalf of our cause, which so many of them think is being dragged in the dust. If so, they can rescue it.

First, then, I would point out that Mrs. Fletcher returned to England, knowing she was going to be arrested. She came—this I have heard from an independent source—at the risk of her life. In Boston she had been very ill, and had begun to spit blood, and on several occasions she fainted from exhaustion and emotion.

Secondly, she came with the idea of obtaining a fair hearing, while so far little more than one side has been listened to.

Thirdly, had Mrs. Fletcher been a Baptist, or an Irvingite, and not a Spiritualist, a civil suit is the utmost that could have been brought against her. To put it in another way, public opinion would not for a moment tolerate the flagrant injustice of putting any man in prison in a case like this, because he had a particular religious belief,—even though he obtained his living by it,—and even though he had written one or two foolishly enthusiastic

letters to friends in the ardour of a long private correspondence. This touches us all. Although not professional mediums we may, if we are Spiritualists, get into trouble for receiving anything, no matter upon what grounds, because of "undue influences" or "fraudulent representations." That we are not thus involved is perhaps due to no special virtues of our own. The world "does not believe in Spirits," and we get very much provoked with it because of its scepticism, a scepticism which influences law and public opinion against the best mediums, and which, till it is overcome, will always be taken advantage of by the public or private foe of the medium, and drag him and the cause with it through a fire.

What is to prevent our shaking this scepticism to its foundations? Nothing; except that the journals of the day will not lend their columns to the truth, and most persons judge of Spiritualism from their pages. But they will print evidence in a public trial, and we have at last, owing to the apparently disastrous fact of a well-known medium being arrested and tried on a criminal charge, a chance of being fully heard. No matter what Spiritualists think of Mrs. Fletcher's friendship with Mrs. Hart-Davies, no matter what the law decides. Let them use this occasion in their own interest. The court-room will be a thousand times better than any lecture-hall, and the Press will be at our service. If Spiritualists will take advantage of this somewhat marked opportunity which has been given them, Mother Shipton's prophecy that the world will come to an end—the old world of materialism and materialistic religion that is—may come true after all. The best slate-writing would not accomplish this; clairvoyance and Spirit-materialisation will. The public interest would be enormous and a great pressure on us removed.

Is there *esprit de corps* enough among Spiritualists to muster a hundred clear-headed witnesses, and do the work once for all? If so, this year will be a marked one for our cause.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,
SUSAN E. GAY.

25, Torrington-square,
March 5th.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

A meeting of the Council of this Association was held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Tuesday evening last. Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, one of the vice-presidents, in the chair. The other members present were:—Mrs. FitzGerald, Miss Withall, Miss Houghton, Mr. Desmond G. FitzGerald, Mr. E. T. Bennett, Mr. R. Pearce, Mr. M. Theobald, and Mr. C. Reimers.

The Secretary read a letter from Mr. S. C. Hall, acknowledging the vote of condolence passed by the Council on the decease of Mrs. Hall, and the letter was ordered to be entered on the minutes.

The Secretary reported the reception from Mr. Farmer of two copies of his work, "Spiritualism as a New Basis of Belief," and from Mr. Fahrig, of Southampton, of a set of his new copying apparatus, and a vote of thanks was passed to the donors.

One resignation of membership was accepted, and three new members were elected.

An engrossed copy of the memorial to the Home Secretary in favour of an alteration of the law as affecting mediums was brought up by the General Purposes Committee; and it was resolved that the President be requested to sign it on behalf of the Council, and that it be then forwarded to the Home Secretary.

The Soirée Committee reported that arrangements were in satisfactory progress for a *conversazione* to be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Thursday, March 31st, the anniversary of Modern Spiritualism.

The Chairman said it was with very deep regret that he had now to announce the reception of a letter from their esteemed President, Mr. Calder, temporarily severing his connection with the Association. Urgent business would necessitate Mr. Calder's almost immediate departure for India and Ceylon; and as he would be away from this country for six months at the very least, and possibly for a longer time, he asked to be relieved of the care and responsibility incident to his connection with the Association. However much the Council must regret it, they had no alternative but to accept his resignation.

Mr. Theobald said he had had some chat with Mr. Calder, who assured him of his continued warm attachment to the Association, and his hope to rejoin them on his return to this country. There was now so much cohesion amongst the members that he (Mr. Theobald) was satisfied they would remain firmly united until they had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Calder on his return to this country.

Mr. FitzGerald said that the Association would continue to regard Mr. Calder as really their president still, and would look forward with pleasure to his reappearance amongst them.

A resolution was then adopted accepting Mr. Calder's resignation with regret, thanking him very cordially for his long-continued and valuable services, wishing him a safe and prosperous journey, and assuring him of a hearty welcome on his return.

DALSTON.

On Thursday evening, the 3rd inst., the adjourned tenth annual meeting of the Dalston Association was held at their rooms, 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, at 8 p.m., the President in the chair. The report showed that the Association is in a satisfactory condition financially, being free from debt and having a balance in hand. Among those elected as life members during the past year are:—Mr. James Mylne, India;

Signor Damiani, Naples; Mr. E. B. Florence, Mr. James Smyth, and Mr. A. T. T. Peterson, all of London. The register of members shews a satisfactory increase over the return at the previous annual meeting. The report referred to the memorial to be presented to the Home Secretary for the purpose of obtaining an alteration in the law as affecting mediums, which is being promoted by the B.N.A.S., and it was stated as a desirable and useful matter for all Spiritualists to consider. The various officers and Council were re-elected, and, in addition, Mesdames Erwood, Nicholls, Macaulay, and Rice were placed upon the Council at the earnest request of the meeting. A marked and feeling tribute of esteem towards Mr. T. Blyton was embodied in the report, and elicited subsequently a warm expression of opinion concerning Mr. Blyton's energetic and sustained labour in the interests of the Association. Mr. J. J. Morse was invited with unanimity to re-occupy the presidential chair for the ensuing year, to which he assented. The general meeting was preceded by a session of the Council, when, among other matters, the following were elected members of the Association: Mr. and Mrs. Whitby, Mr. G. Wray, and Mr. M. Pattison.

CARDIFF.

On Sunday evening last, at the weekly meeting of this Society, Mr. Haines in the chair, a reading was given by Mr. M. Williams, from a pamphlet by Professor Denton, "A Sermon from Shakespeare's Text," after which Mr. Paynter lectured on the Bible, replying to the objections to the authenticity of its various books which had been made a few meetings ago. The lecturer traced the history of the books of the Old Testament down to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, explaining when and where the revisions, probably, took place, and by whom they were revised. Comparisons were made between the Bible chronologies and those of the Chaldeans. The four Gospels were next dealt with, and a large number of undoubted historical allusions to them by early writers were quoted, names and dates being given. In conclusion, the lecturer, while abandoning the idea of the Bible being a full, perfect and complete revelation from God, pronounced it valuable as a reflex of man's ideas of God and spirit from the birth of the Hebrew nation, and, as such, worthy of study. To the thinker a thousand years hence our present ideas will doubtless appear quite as crude and undeveloped as the ancient Hebraic idea appears to some of us now. Such thoughts should teach us the great spiritual truth that we are but on the threshold of the Courts of Wisdom.—W.P.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

The services on Sunday and Monday last at Weir's Court terminated the fifth annual engagement with the N. S. E. S. of Mr. J. J. Morse. On Sunday morning, at 10.30, which was the first and opening morning service of the Society, the guides of Mr. Morse delivered an interesting and effective address upon "Spiritualism—its Priest," to an audience of about fifty persons, which is a decided improvement upon the attendance at the late afternoon lectures. In the evening he delivered the twelfth and concluding lecture on "The Elements of Spiritualism: The Spirit's Destiny." The address was listened to by a large, attentive, and appreciative audience, and was characterised by the Chairman, Mr. Jno. Mould, "as one of the most capable he had ever heard delivered." He spoke of the pleasure with which he ever listened to Mr. Morse's guides, and said that "the address that night was as fresh and original in matter and method as the one he had listened to the first time he heard the controls, eight years ago." On Monday evening the guides entertained us with a serious and thoughtful address upon "Night," which was much and deservedly appreciated. At the conclusion the Chairman, Mr. Jno. Hare, called upon Mr. H. Burton to propose the usual vote of thanks annually accorded to Mr. Morse and his guides for their spiritual labours during their twelve visits. In a few pointed and appropriate remarks Mr. Burton placed before the meeting his estimate of the great qualities of the controls as moral philosophers and spiritual teachers. Many, he said, might and did consider their addresses to be great and capable efforts of reason, but thought that in their high intellectuality they necessarily lacked that emotional feeling which many called spirituality. He (Mr. Burton) thought otherwise; the highest wisdom is the highest spirituality, inasmuch as we have contained therein the essence of spiritual truth, as a profound and beautiful presence, delicate, subtle, and poetic, which lifts us higher, and draws us nearer to God, than is possible with a preaching that appeals distinctively to the emotions and passions. Mr. T. Dawson seconded the vote of thanks in a few warm and pithy remarks, which were well and earnestly supported by Mr. H. A. Kersey, hon. sec., and Mr. W. C. Robson, vice-president. The Chairman, in putting the vote to the meeting, expressed a strong desire that Mr. Morse might be long spared to come to Newcastle, as heretofore, to lecture and labour for the cause, with the efficiency, capacity, and disinterestedness hitherto manifested in his long term of engagement with the Spiritualists of the North. At this remark the meeting responded with repeated rounds of enthusiastic applause, and the proposed vote of thanks having been put and carried unanimously, Mr. Morse expressed himself feelingly upon this the last and concluding "professional" engagement with the Spiritualists of England, stating that he was ever willing to labour to his utmost when his services were desired and appreciated.—NORTHUMBRIA.

Spiritualist Societies.

Secretaries and Presidents of Societies will oblige by informing the Editor of LIGHT of any alterations that may from time to time be necessary in the following list:—

METROPOLITAN.

- British National Association of Spiritualists. 33, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C. Mr. Thos. Blyton, Secretary.
- Brixton Psychological Society. 6, Akerman Road, Brixton, London, S.W. Mr. H. E. Francoes, Hon. Secretary, 22, Cowley Road, Brixton, S.W.
- Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston Lane, Hackney Downs, London, E. Mr. J. J. Morse, President.
- Goswell Hall Spiritualist Committee. 290, Goswell Road, E.C. Secretary, Mr. W. Towns, 1, Albert Terrace, Barnsbury Road, N.
- Ladbroke Hall, Notting Hill, London, W. Mr. F. O. Matthews, Manager, 11, Torrington Square, W.C.
- Marylebone Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. Quebec Hall, 25, Great Quebec-street, London, W. Mr. J. M. Dale, Hon. Secretary.
- South London Spiritual Society. Mr. J. G. Robson, Secretary, 8, Bournemouth Road, Rye Lane, Peckham, S.E.
- Spiritual Institution and Progressive Library. 15, Southampton Row, Holborn, London, W.C. Mr. James Burns, Proprietor and Manager.

PROVINCIAL.

- Ashington Spiritual Society. Mr. G. Scott, Secretary, Ashington Colliery, Northumberland.
- Batley Carr Association of Spiritualists. Mr. Joseph Armitage, Secretary.
- Birmingham Society of Spiritualists. Mr. J. Kennedy, Secretary, Oozells Street Board School, Birmingham.
- Birmingham Christian Spiritualist Society. 312, Bridge Street West. Mr. John Colly, Hon. Secretary.
- Bolton Spiritualist Association. Mr. D. Cordingley, Secretary, Bath Street, Bolton.
- Cambridge Association of Investigators into Spiritualism. 7, Fitzroy Street. Mr. James Harpley, Secretary.
- Cardiff Progressive Library of Scientific and Spiritual Literature. 157, Bute Road, Cardiff. Mr. George Saddler, Proprietor.
- Cardiff Spiritual Society. 3, Angel Street, Cardiff. Mr. W. Paynter, Hon. Secretary, 10, Bute Crescent.
- Darlington. Mr. J. Hodge's Rooms, High Northgate.
- Durham District Association. Mr. James Dunn, Secretary, 68, Simpson Street, New Shildon.
- Excelsior Society of Spiritualists. Scotland Gate, near Morpeth. Secretary, Mr. G. Hall, Choppington Colliery.
- Gateshead Spiritual Society. Temperance Hall, High Street.
- Glasgow Association of Spiritualists. 164, Troungate Street. Mr. John Mc G. Monro, Secretary, 33, Daisy Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.
- Great Yarmouth Association of Investigators into Spiritualism. 3, Waterpark Terrace, Southdown Road. Mr. R. E. Dale, Secretary.
- Halifax Spiritual Institution. Peacock Yard, Union Street, Halifax. Mr. C. Appleyard, Secretary.
- Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire Association of Spiritualists for Inquirers. 2, Caroline Street, Hull.
- Keighley Lyceum. 51, Worth Terrace, Keighley. Mr. J. Tillotson, Secretary.
- Lancashire District Committee of Spiritualists. Mr. Charles Parsons, Secretary, Hume Street, Mill, Rochdale. Mr. Johnson, Secretary, 15, Mottram Road, Hyde, near Manchester.
- Leicester Spiritualist Society. President, Mr. E. Larrad, 10, Edwyn Street. Secretary, R. Wightman, 35, Cranbourne Street, Leicester.
- Leigh Spiritualists' Association. Brown Street, Leigh, Lancashire. Mr. G. F. Turner, Secretary.
- Liverpool Psychological Society. Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. Morris, 35, Cobcun-street, Everton, Liverpool.
- Lowestoft Spiritual Society. T. Dowling, Secretary.
- Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists. Mr. S. Hayes, Hon. Secretary, 12, Bond Street West, Macclesfield.
- Manchester Association of Spiritualists. Temperance Hall, Grosvenor Street, Hulme, Manchester. Mr. Braham, Secretary, 323, Strutford Road, Manchester.
- Midland District Spiritualists' Committee. Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. W. Wallis, 38 St. Ann's Well Road, Nottingham.
- Millom Society of Spiritualists. Holborn Hill, Millom, Cumberland. Mr. J. E. Sharp, Secretary.
- Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society. Weirs Court, Newgate Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. H. A. Kersey, Hon. Secretary, 4, Eslington Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- Nottingham Association of Spiritualists. Secretary, Mr. W. Yates, 39, Lower Talbot Street.
- Oldham Society of Spiritualists. Psychological Meeting Room, 186, Union Street. Mr. T. Kershaw, Secretary, 8, High Street.
- Ossett Spiritual Institution. Ossett Green, near the G. N. R. Station. Mr. C. Hallgath, Secretary.
- Rochdale Spiritualist Society. Mr. L. Firth, Secretary, 16, Equitable Street.
- Salford Spiritualists' Society. 263, Chapel Street, Salford. Mr. J. Campion, Secretary, 33, Downing Street, Manchester.
- Sowerby Bridge Spiritualist Progressive Lyceum. Mr. W. Walker, Secretary, Lyceum Buildings, Hollins Lane, Sowerby Bridge.
- Yorkshire District Committee of Spiritualists. Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. Poole, 28, Park Street, Barker End Road, Bradford.
- Walsall Spiritual Society. 16, George Street, Walsall. Mr. Thos. Blinkhorn, Secretary.

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