

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:

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"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

Published every Saturday

BY THE

Eclectic Publishing Company, Limited.

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.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1881.

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THE LULL IN PHENOMENAL SPIRITUALISM.

No. II.

Public Mediumship and Promiscuous Circles.

In a recent article we set ourselves to inquire whether the apparent lull in phenomenal Spiritualism is to be explained by anything inherent in the nature of the phenomena themselves. Stating our surprise that so few attempts at really scientific research in this direction had been made, so far as published records shew, we endeavoured to discover whether anything in the phenomena precluded scientific treatment. We concluded that nothing in the nature of the facts impeded a course of the most rigid scientific scrutiny. Percussive sounds, whether normally or abnormally made, are readily tested. Psychography lends itself to most careful investigation. It is only when wilful perversity abandons conditions when observation is practicable, that difficulties commence.

It may be expected, no doubt, if we judge from history, that there will be a certain ebb and flow in these phenomena. Experience shews that they occur more frequently at certain times than at others; that they have a tendency to grow in strength, if not impeded by persecution; and that the inveterate tendency to prosecute and persecute the possessors of abnormal powers does very greatly retard the steady development of these phenomena. The witchcraft persecutions dealt a blow at mediumship which has been felt up to recent days; and it is but now that the powers, which then meant to the unfortunate possessor of them constant misery together with sudden death under frequent circumstances, are being again manifested amongst us. There is, alas, evidence that old methods, slightly varied in accordance with the spirit of the age, are being again resorted to, and the reflux may be in some measure due to this cause. It is certain, however, that in the inherent nature of the phenomena there is nothing that will account for the present lull.

We must approach the inquiry from another side. The production of the physical phenomena, so-called, depends on the presence of a medium, and usually of a circle. On the harmonious relations between medium and circle, and again between the various persons of whom the circle is composed, the result chiefly depends. If the medium be at ease in mind and body, harmoniously related to the various elements of the circle, it is to be expected that the manifestations of Spirit power will be easy, regular, and even rhythmical in their evolution. If, on the contrary, there be but a single element of discord, from whatever source it proceed, the phenomena will occur, if at all, fitfully, and with spasmodic and unpleasant vehemence. In the former case the presence of a pure and elevating influence can be discerned by the sensitive; the air is calm and full of peace, and the more progressed intelligences can approach and bring with them their own blessed atmosphere. In the latter case all is black and lowering; the very air seems full of menace, and the phenomena, when they occur, are characterised by an angry vehemence and even by a malignant spitefulness, more suggestive of the hells than of the heavens of Spirit. They are full of illusion and delusion; if watched, the suspicious element is manifest in them throughout. It is from such circles, so constituted, that there come the falsehoods and false deeds, the frauds and exposures, that have brought ridicule and contempt on the very name of

Spiritualism among those who know nothing more about it than what they hear or read in the public journals.

If this be so, it becomes a very grave matter for investigators to see that their circles are properly constituted, and that they conduct their inquiry with due precautions. These unruly Spirits must be excluded, or they will dominate everything, and render all attempts to arrive at truth futile. These violent manifestations which, when probed, so often have in them an element which genders suspicion in the mind, are not of a character that any calm observer desires to witness, unless, perchance, on a single occasion, and that for the purpose of satisfying himself once for all that there is a spiritual agency at work—an agency that is self-confessed as undeveloped, untruthful, and malicious in many cases, and yet one that wields a power that he cannot gauge, and uses it in a way and for a purpose that he must view with alarm. Once satisfied of this, and the experience will not need to be repeated. It will take place among the permanent convictions of his life.

How, then, are these undesirable results to be avoided? It is pretty clear that they have some not inconsiderable share in causing the lull of which we speak; for they are at the root of many a fraud, many a falsehood, and are largely concerned in producing in reflective minds a feeling of dread, lest there may, perchance, be in this phase of Spiritualism a diabolic element with which men meddle at their peril. The public hear or see this phase only. There are various degrees in it, ranging from such scenes of angry vehemence as we have alluded to down to the ineptitudes and Puck-like frolics of an ordinary promiscuous circle, where no pains have been taken to select the members, and where darkness gives added opportunity for bewilderment. How in such circles are dubious and deceptive results to be avoided? The question is one full of interest to Spiritualists, who know what comes from attention to methods of investigation, and who blush with shame that what to them is so full of holiness and beauty should be known to most men only by this travesty, in which fraud and folly, credulity and buffoonery, seem to jostle each other in a very carnival.

We confess to some difficulty in framing an answer. It is not easy to do so with due regard to the future of Spiritualism, and to what is practicable as well as desirable, without seeming to undervalue what has been done by public mediumship, and to make light of the evidence so gained by some—by many, who, but for these circles, would never have been able to come into personal contact with the evidence for which they sought. We are very far from making light of the benefits so conferred by public circles. Some men have gone to them in search of conviction, and have found it. Others have gone hungering and thirsting for some proof of immortality which might drive from their minds questionings that had become intolerable. They have been met with some piece of buffoonery, something that looked like deceit, and which, without much thought, they have taken at its surface value, and they have come away disappointed, soured, bitter against what they have decided to be a sham. Others, who have been more patient, have found that the evil is mingled with the good there as everywhere else, and have concerned themselves chiefly with speculative attempts to sift the wheat from the chaff. These attempts are usually unsuccessful, and the observer lapses into that state of Pyrrhonism of which Professor Williamson writes in the article already referred to. "It is an inherent feature of the human mind," he says, "that the same evidence produces different measures of conviction. . . . Men may be divided into three classes. There are those who accept, those who reject, and those who are undecided whether to accept or reject such theories as may be propounded. Both the first and second of these groups contain men who decide on grounds other than scientific ones. Their knowledge of the subject is in inverse proportion to their positiveness. But there is another and a very different order of men who regard the solution of scientific problems as approaches towards

the attainment of the knowledge of the true, and with them such attainment constitutes the highest duty of man. They yearn for a fuller understanding of the secrets of Nature. They crave, with Faust, to

‘Get to the root of those secret powers,
That hold together this world of ours.’

Longing to escape from doubt, uncertainty, yet they are critical as to the soundness of the foundations upon which their trust has to repose. Doubt in such men is surely commendable.”

This utterance with reference to the attitude of many men to scientific theories applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the attitude of many a thinking Spiritualist to the various theories that he hears propounded to account for phenomena that seem to him, from his dark circle experience, to be too fleeting and illusory to serve as a foundation for any such pyramid of speculation. He is in the midst between his friend who has “not seen and yet has believed,” who only thinks he has seen, and whose convictions and conclusions are of faith, valuable to himself possibly though by no means certainly, but quite valueless to all the world beside; and his still more positive friend who has seen (or thinks so) and has arrived by leaps and bounds, or rather by one magnificent jump, at the conclusion that the whole thing is one monstrous fraud, rendered possible only by the folly of his fellow-creatures, respecting whom Carlyle’s estimate commends itself to his mind. It may be that the one man has gained a conviction, however unscientifically he has set about it, that will serve to ennoble him and given him an enduring faith. It may be, but also it may not be, for if the faith be false its fruit cannot be good. He may be under a delusion, led to believe a lie; under a glamour from which he will wake to wonder at his want of perception. The other two classes, far larger and more considerable, do not derive from their experiences any great share of truth or comfort.

Do we, then, conclude that in promiscuous circles, as at present conducted, no “approach towards attainment of the knowledge of the true” is to be had? We are far from committing ourselves to any such dogmatic utterance. We would prefer to leave the question of the exact amount of good so to be derived, and turn our attention rather to the consideration of possible methods whereby the good may be increased and the evil minimised.

STONES THROWN BY UNSEEN HANDS.

The *Revue Spirite*, which has just entered upon its twenty-sixth year, gives in its current number several instances of the throwing of stones—in the Dutch East Indies, the Indian Archipelago, the Molucca Islands, Paris, and The Hague. An official report from the Dutch East Indies, dated 1831, states that Mr. Van Kessinger, then residing at Reanger, suffered inside his house at Sumadan a veritable rain of stones, lasting sixteen days. The report bears the signatures of the Governor-General, J. C. Band; his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Michiels; Mr. Ermanlinger, ex-inspector of coffee plantations, and other official persons. It says that, although everyone in the house was ordered out, and the residents of the neighbouring houses were assembled and watched by the police in an open square, Mr. Van Kessinger and his wife alone remaining inside, all the doors and windows being hermetically closed, stones fell from all directions, some falling apparently from or through the solid ceiling, although no aperture existed or was caused by their entrance. The shower usually commenced about 5 a.m. lasting until about 11 p.m., and some of the stones weighed as much as nine pounds. About a thousand stones per day came into the house, and a peculiarity connected with the phenomenon was that they seemed to be so directed as to follow a young Javanese girl. The report is in the Royal Archives of Holland.

If an offence come out of the Truth, better is it that the offence come than that the Truth be concealed.—JEROME.

The voice in my soul in which I will have faith, and for the sake of which I have faith in all else, does not merely command me generally to act, but in every particular situation it declares what I shall do, and what leave undone; it accompanies me through every event of my life, and it is impossible for me to contend against it. To listen to it, and obey it honestly and impartially, without fear or equivocation, is the business of my existence. My life is no longer an empty play without truth or significance. It is appointed that what conscience ordains me shall be done, and for this purpose I am here. I have understanding to know and power to execute it.—FICHTER.

PSYCHOLOGY AND ANÆSTHETICS.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Podmore’s interesting contrast between the evidence as to the psychological effects of anæsthetics, as furnished by Mr. Herbert Spencer and myself, I think the explanation is not difficult.

The effects produced depend on the extent to which anæsthesia is pushed.

1st.—A moderate administration of nitrous oxide produces mere confusion of mind from the loosening of its concentrative faculty.

2nd.—A larger administration may expel the soul from the body, as it were, to the circumference; so that, as in my own experience, the soul perceives itself and its human body at the same time.

3rd.—The soul may be so swiftly driven out of the body by an excessive dose as to ascend beyond the reach of the body, and thus exist as an independent spiritualised being; and thus, as those who have experienced this condition assert, “I passed into eternity, where the past, present, and future were revealed to me, and behind the curtain, and saw the secrets of nature.”

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

A DEATH-BED SCENE WITNESSED CLAIRVOYANTLY.

The following reaches us from an intelligent and reliable correspondent:—

But recently my revered father passed, at an advanced age, to the higher life.

A few days previously to this occurrence I was clairvoyantly forewarned of this coming event by my Spirit guides, who commenced filling my physical body with a superabundance of the bright golden aura possessed by the denizens of the higher grades in Spirit-life. I became fully surrounded by this vitalising essence, which permeated every part of my body, rendering me highly clairvoyant.

At about four o’clock on the day of my father’s decease, while standing at the foot of his bed, where he was lying on his side profoundly unconscious of all external surroundings, I perceived clairvoyantly a perfectly transparent luminous vapour issuing from the nape of his neck. As it poured forth it took the form of an elongated pear. The upper and wider portion of this pear-shaped luminosity gradually ascended towards the ceiling, the lower and pointed part remaining still attached to the neck. My inner vision was opened twice or thrice whilst this action was going on, which enabled me to witness the escape of the Spirit before the final separation. At the same time I was clairaudiently directed what to do for the furtherance of the speedy release of the Spirit. One injunction was not to approach too near the bed, as the presence of other influences would tend to retard the Spirit’s departure.

At seven o’clock the same evening, whilst conversing with members of my family in the adjoining room, I perceived clairvoyantly this same luminous vapourous form approach my mother, it having passed through the wall at about an altitude of a yard from the floor. Clairaudiently I distinctly heard her name plaintively called out more than once when the luminous form gradually ascended and disappeared. I had time to observe its construction generally, and could trace the outline of the Spirit as yet not fully expanded to the form Spirits attain after inhaling the purer ether of the Spirit-realm.

The last flicker of life passed over my father’s face at about eight o’clock. From what I had thus far witnessed, it would appear that the Spirit had already left the physical body some short time previously to the final dissolution, and that the breathing, which continued to the last, was simply automatic. Nevertheless there may have still existed some imperceptibly fine link connecting soul and body until the last, when the final separation might really have taken place.

A few days after this event I saw clairvoyantly my father’s fully developed Spirit bright and radiant. A test of identity accompanied his presence.

During my father’s illness, my inner vision had on several occasions been opened, and I noticed from time to time how much brighter the spiritual essence surrounding him gradually became. He possessed all those inherent virtues qualifying him for a happy future.

“MOONSTONE.”

March, 14, 1881.

THE DOCTRINE OF RE-INCARNATION.

Address delivered by Miss Arundale before the British National Association of Spiritualists, March 7th, 1881.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 75.)

"As regards that great portion of the human race, children, who pass away before arriving at maturity, it is difficult, without the doctrine of plurality of lives, to understand the purport of such short earthly existences. Even supposing that progress may be equally possible in the spheres as on the earth, would God be just to weight one spirit with a life-time of crime, and to accord to another such a brief sojourn in earth-life as would render it incapable of accomplishing either good or evil? It is impossible, without Re-Incarnation, to understand why some spirits but enter life to leave it, while others have to endure long and painful trials. God may, and does, as the poet says, 'move in a mysterious way;' but, before all things, He is just, and each spirit must receive a like treatment through the operation of impartial laws.

"This theory of the gradual evolution of spirit throws a most comforting light on the sufferings of animals. Evil and suffering are the pathway of progress, the necessary consequence of imperfection, and if we consider development as consisting of a series of progressive lives, more or less imperfect, we shall see that God does not condemn any of His creatures to needless suffering. Animals have long been supposed to have no future before them. Born to live, suffer, and die like us, their participation in the gift of immortality has been denied; but in the theory of evolution they hold their place in the upward course of spirit to humanity. Each atom is endowed with the Divine life. The blade of grass 'which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven'; the violet, which gives forth its sweet perfume and fades away; the birds that carol forth their blithe songs for a few brief seasons; the patient, toiling animals of our civilised life; all these are links in the great chain of spiritual life, and each in different degree is a step on the onward path of Spirit. All are immortal, and in each stage the spirit manifests according to its development. The degree of perfection acquired in each life determines the future life. There is always a tending to a greater happiness, a greater perfection—the spirit, in virtue of its infinite capacity, ever reaching onward to the infinite and supreme perfection.

"There are many who reject Re-Incarnation for the reason that they dislike the thought of a return to earth conditions. Of such it might be asked—If earth existence is given for the perfection of spirit, do they consider that the few short years of trial have been sufficient to bring them to the end in view? And if they feel, as there must be but few who do not, that spirit has yet an infinity of progress before it, is it not more reasonable, if earthly existences are schools of development, to infer that each spirit should receive in that school the utmost that can be given?

"There is another point that to many is equally a subject of repugnance, namely, that Re-Incarnation is regardless of sex. It is true that under this aspect Re-Incarnation may seem difficult and distasteful, but it must be remembered that if spirit is to receive progress through experience, it must pass through the trials of each condition of life. Of the nature and quality of spirit we can form but a slight idea. Sex is but the accident of physical organisation, and often is contrary to the characteristics of the individual. The various gifts, qualities, and lessons belonging to each phase of life must be appropriated by the spirit, and the same law of justice that necessitates return to humanity necessitates that that return should be regardless of sex.

"If we stop now for a moment to consider the various points in favour of Re-Incarnation, we see that tradition, and the philosophers and teachers of antiquity, do not contradict this theory, which also finds support in the following facts. Intelligence and morality are unequally distributed. Many are afflicted with disease and misery through no fault of their own. Many lives are cut short without the spirit gaining a full earth-life experience. Crime revels unpunished and virtue suffers. Beyond this there is the vast gradation of civilisation, extending in infinite diversity through race and age, from the savage to the philosopher. The doctrine of pre-existence and Re-Incarnation for the human spirit can alone explain these undeniable facts. It is a doctrine in conformity with the present state of human knowledge. There is nothing in the teachings of science that contradicts it; on the contrary, it forms one with the great theory of Evolution. In this belief humanity may rest, recog-

nising the equality of the human race, passing ever onward and upward, knowing no effort to be lost, no suffering borne in vain. With this belief man will have a greater charity for the sins and failings of his fellows, for are not all equal? Have we not all to pass through the same stages of development, and shall we look with unkindness on those who have not as yet advanced as far as ourselves on the path of progress? All are on their way to the same great end although some may be less advanced than others.

"I have elsewhere mentioned that Spirit communications must be accepted with great reservation. This is doubtless owing in great measure to the difficulty that Spirits experience in clothing their ideas in earth language, and also to the fact that all communications are more or less tinged by the mentality of the medium through whom they are given. Nevertheless, I can hardly close this paper without noticing a few of the principal points in the Spirit utterances on the subject of Re-Incarnation. Most Spirits that entertain this doctrine seem to agree that they have the power to re-incarnate according to choice; that there may be intervals of longer or shorter duration between the incarnations, during which the Spirit reflects over the past life and forms resolutions for the future; that during these intervals Spirits generally possess the memory of past existences and always do so when they have risen to higher planes; that during the sleep of the body or when entranced, the Spirit has the full knowledge of itself and its former incarnations; and that at such times it is possible for a Spirit to manifest at a séance in the personality of a previous incarnation. There are many Spirits that speak of the possible extinction of spirit, that is to say, the extinction of individuality. Eugène Nus, in his work entitled 'Choses de l'Autre Monde,' gives many interesting fragments of Spirit communications, among which the following may be cited as bearing on this subject:—

"'Death initiates the soul [or as we should term it spirit] to a new existence; trust yourselves therefore to a fate which will be your own work.'

"'Life [*la vie*] is perpetuated or lost according to merit or demerit.'

"'All Spirits do not retain the remembrance of their material existences; this remembrance is the prerogative of just Spirits, who continue to exist individually.'

"For my own part, I cannot follow either in feeling or judgment any theory that involves a loss of individuality, although such minds as Hegel, Richter, Pierre Leroux, and many others, have held this doctrine under various forms. Spirit that has once acquired individuality cannot lose it without becoming annihilated; however much the essence that animated one being may return in another,—if, as spirit, it is unconscious of anterior existence, there is no individuality. It is the same as complete extinction and annihilation, and this appears contrary to the law of progress.

"There are many other points that might be noticed, but I feel that I have said enough on this subject; for the great diversity in Spirit teaching shews that it is impossible to form a clear judgment from the communications from the other side; but if the present physical and spiritual nature of man has been formed through the countless ages by a continuous chain of progressive lives; if the past of spirit be so great, what may not the future unfold? May not that progression extend through the boundless realms of space? Who that has ever beheld the wonders of the midnight sky but must have felt that that starry phalanx has been created with a definite purpose; that the life principle that surrounds and penetrates the earth, one of the smallest of the planets, surrounds and penetrates also the remotest star of the Milky Way? Those who recognise the great unity of creation in the progressive series of physical life, and in the vast chain that extends from the lowest intelligence to the highest, will also admit that there remains yet a great expanse of creation that may also form a series for the further development of spirit. Is there anything to prevent those countless worlds that science unveils to us from being the abodes of humanity in a higher and nobler stage of manifestation? May not this earth be one of the lowest of the 'many mansions' of the 'Father's house,' and may not the great aspirations of the spirit find satisfaction in new pathways of progress? What a glorious future is thus opened to humanity, what a grandeur in the Divine plan of creation! Those distant worlds are not objects rolling in space without aim or use; they form part of the great universal progressive life, and may be the future home of the spirit. From the tiny atom to the highest orb in space, all are alike animated by the same Divine vitality. How perfect is the great whole! Each created being fulfils the work of development, and passing to a higher stage advances towards, although never obtaining, absolute perfection.

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 séances.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The "Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle" contain abundant evidence of the transparent sincerity and deep religious earnestness of his character. His love for his father was intense, and the admiration he entertained for his sterling honesty and integrity is very marked. As he speaks of him, his thoughts go forth beyond the trammels of earth, and he gives voice to the unconscious spiritual belief that exists deep down in every good man's heart. "*Perhaps my father, all that essentially was my father, is even now near me, with me.* Perhaps, if it so please God, we shall, in some higher state of being, recognise one another. The possibility, nay, in some way, the certainty of perennial existence daily grows plainer to me." And then he adds this exquisite and touching thought: "I can see my dear father's life in some measure as the sunk pillar on which mine was to rise and be built."

At the Fortnightly Discussion Meeting of the B.N.A.S., to be held on Monday evening next, at 38, Great Russell-street, Mr. Frank Podmore will read a paper on "Serjeant Cox's 'Psychology.'" We cannot be quite sure of what Mr. Podmore's views are upon the subject; but we do know that Mr. Podmore is a gentleman of no mean literary ability, and of such intellectual discernment, that whatever he may have to say will be most certainly well deserving of serious and candid consideration. The attendance at these meetings has of late been exceedingly gratifying; we trust that it will be not less so on Monday evening next.

Spiritualists ought to be very much indebted to a writer in the *St. Matthias' Parish Magazine* (which, no doubt, does duty for a good many other parishes as well). The author—clearly a parson—says: "I was invited last autumn by a Spiritualist, with whom I had come in contact while he was mesmerising a friend, to attend a séance, or meeting, at which I should see some of the appearances we have heard so much of. I declined the invitation for the reasons given in the following letter. If I had gone, I should have announced myself as a Catholic Christian; and fortifying myself with the Christian's armour, I should have endeavoured, by challenging the medium as to his belief in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, to follow the beloved disciple's advice (1 St. John, iv. 1), '*Try the spirits whether they are of God,*' and I should, I doubt not, have witnessed their exposure and discomfiture." It is a pity he did not try; but he continues with the utmost naïveté: "Not caring, however, to see with my own eyes the phenomena with which we are all familiar, I wrote a letter stating," &c. What he states is, of course, of no import at all, since he puts himself out of court by confessing that he knows nothing about the matter. His letter, under the circumstances, is naturally a very long one, and is "to be continued" in the general-utility magazine. It affords an excellent instance of the common run of objections to Spiritualism. They are based on voluntary ignorance.

On the vexed question of automatic writing and unconscious cerebration a story was recently told by a clergyman, who said that on Christmas-day his little children were amusing themselves with "Spirit-writing," and one of them, a girl who could barely write English, wrote rapidly down in good Latin the angelic

salutation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." On her father being called to see what the little one had put down the pencil again moved rapidly, and the child wrote, "*Tua fides est credula.*" This could scarcely have been in the child's mind—at least, not in Latin.

It would be obviously improper to comment on the merits of the Fletcher case *pendente lite*, or to speculate as to its results while it still looms in the immediate future. But it is quite allowable, and highly important, to draw attention to Dr. Nichols's letter on the ninth count of the indictment against Mrs. Fletcher. That does not affect her only but is levelled at Spiritualism *per se*. It clearly infringes on the liberty of the subject and takes us back to those old times when personal liberty was not so much prized as it now is. According to this virtually obsolete enactment it is actually illegal to devote one's self to the study of psychology. It draws an arbitrary and utterly inexplicable line among the ologies. You may study theology and make as much money as you can by its practice too. But study psychology, even as a pure science, and you break the law. Surely this is a state of things which makes one ready to exclaim: "It's Oh! to be a slave, Along with the barbarous Turk!"

But there must be surely some deep significance in this recourse to an obsolete Act. We had thought that Mrs. Fletcher was to be tried for fraud, or for an attempt to defraud. Whether she has been guilty of so heinous an offence is a very proper question for a jury to determine. If she has, she must expect to suffer, and no Spiritualist will complain. Spiritualists, as a body, have no desire to see the cause which to them is so sacred dragged in the dirt by any who would use it for purposes of evil. If Mrs. Fletcher has so used it, let the fact be demonstrated, and let her bear the consequences of her acts. The question at issue, so presented to the jury, would be simple enough, and would afford ample means for vindicating the claims of justice, if justice has really been violated. Why then is the case to be complicated by the introduction of a count charging the defendant with pretending to exercise divers kinds of *witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration*? What consideration has instigated this new departure and what is its significance? If Mrs. Fletcher is acquitted on all other counts she may yet be found guilty on this—though she has practised Spiritualism ever so innocently—if a jury can be induced to believe that modern Spiritualism is synonymous with the pretence to exercise the witchcraft and sorcery of bye-gone times. To secure this decision, and thus to put down Spiritualism by force of law, seems, then, to be the purpose which the Crown prosecutors are seeking to accomplish.

But surely the purpose is too absurd to be realised. There are thousands of Spiritualists in this country in every rank of life, all of whom *know* that Spiritualism has nothing in common with witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration; and Spiritualism, therefore, can never be thus forcibly repressed. We give on our last page to-day a list of eminent men who have satisfied themselves of the reality of the phenomena. What say those who would put down Spiritualism by the strong arm of the law to the testimony of men like these? Would they have the world believe that eminent divines, statesmen, authors, and scientists—even Royalty itself—have been so foolish or so wicked as to dabble in devilish arts, under the belief or pretence that they were investigating psychological laws? And will the Spiritualists of Great Britain, now that the attempt is made to subject them to pains and penalties, hesitate to avail themselves of the opportunity to vindicate their cause from an unjust aspersion? They will shew themselves cowards if they do. They may believe Mrs. Fletcher innocent of fraudulent practices, or they may believe her guilty. But these considerations are wide of the mark in the present crisis. Plainly, the duty of those who accept the phenomena of modern Spiritualism—and especially of those whose position in the world would secure respect for their opinions—is to tender their testimony in defence of the facts on which their convictions are established.

We remind our readers again that a conversazione, in celebration of the thirty-third anniversary of Modern Spiritualism, will be held in the rooms of the British National Association, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., on Monday evening, the 31st inst. We believe that the musical programme will be specially attractive, and will include the names of Miss Katharine Poyntz, Mr. Frank Quatremayne, Mr. A. L. Tamplin, and Mr. E. Tietkens. Further particulars will be given in our next.

ENGLISH MYSTICISM.*

It would be manifestly out of place, in reference to the volume with which we propose to deal, were we to quote the adage which gives it out that straws shew the way in which the wind blows. But it is possible to vary, or rather to expand, the simile, and say that when the breath of public opinion is setting strongly in one direction, it is possible to make a very confident "meteorological forecast" by noticing how surrounding objects, especially the books which emanate from the press, acquire a bias in the same direction, just as trees, no less than blades of grass, bend before the advent of the rising gale. We do not flatter ourselves that the particular form of Mysticism in which we are interested is going to become fashionable to-day or to-morrow; though we should not be in the least surprised if we woke up any morning and found ourselves famous, or rather found ourselves fashionable. We have no wish for such a result, because we think it very likely that our troubles would then only have begun in real earnest. But we are quite sure that it is by no accident such books as Canon Overton's biography of Law and the third edition of Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics" issue simultaneously from the press. Supply simply answers demand in these matters.

And indeed, we are somewhat at a loss to know why Mysticism is not fashionable in England: why the roll of the *mystagogi* as given in Canon Overton's biography and in Vaughan's history comprises scarcely an English name. Transcendental as the subject of Mysticism seems, it is really, whether we regard it from the so-called Catholic or the Protestant side, the only religion of pure reason. Faith and Sight mingle on the common ground of mystical religion, just as on the platform of Quietism is found a *locus standi* for the adherent of Rome and Geneva, the follower of S. Theresa or of Robert Baxter. One would think that your hard-headed Englishman ought, in direct proportion to his solidity of cranium, to be a mystic directly he crosses the boundary line between the Church and the world. To construct a lay creed out of elements which ignore the subject matter of all creeds, as Mr. Harrison has tried to do in the *Nineteenth Century* for the current month, is in the highest degree illogical.

Canon Overton, whose book is before all else singularly fair, starts this question himself, as to why Mysticism is not more popular—in the best sense of that word—in England. "It may naturally be asked," he says, "how is it, if Mysticism really be what it has been described as being, that it has not found more favour with a people so religious as the English, on the whole, decidedly are? The question requires an answer. It will have been observed that in the foregoing sketch, the name of not one single Englishman appears. The sketch, it will be remembered, was confined to those mystics exclusively who influenced William Law; and though there were many Englishmen of a mystical tendency, who would come under the category, and who will, therefore, be noticed presently, there was assuredly not one who could be called a mystic proper." (pp. 200-201.) Among those of modern times whom he mentions are John Keble, and—some of our readers will be astonished to hear—Charles Kingsley. It is quite true, however, that, not only as the reviewer of Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics," but from his own proclivities as well, the Broad Church Canon of Westminster came near the confines of Mysticism, as did his friend Frederick Denison Maurice, whose appreciation for William Law was deep and sincere.

It is naturally on Chapters X. to XIV. inclusive, that our regards particularly rest, because it is in these chapters that the subject of Law's mysticism is principally handled. But there is not a chapter or a page of Canon Overton's book that does not amply repay perusal on the part either of the general reader or of one who, as is confessedly the case with ourselves, reads it for a special purpose. As Canon Overton says of Dean Waddington, so we have already said of him, and would repeat it here with emphasis in his own words: "He has made it his laudable effort to be fair all round." The biographical portion of the work is as interesting as a life history by Izaak Walton.

Law was born in 1686 at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire, a place which we are told is still redolent with memories of him.

*William Law, Nonjuror and Mystic: author of "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," &c., formerly Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. A Sketch of his Life and Character. By J. H. Overton, M.A., Vicar of Legbourne, Non-residentary Canon of Lincoln Cathedral, formerly Scholar of Lincoln College, Oxford, and joint author of "The English Church in the Eighteenth Century." London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1881.

At Cambridge he was an exceptional student as the "Rules for my Future Conduct" (p. 6.) shew. He lost his fellowship at Emmanuel and his hopes of preferment for life by his nonjuring. He was one of those clergymen whom the Church of England in all its history has felt able to waste by letting lie idly on the shelf. It drove the Wesleys out of its communion, and left William Law to rust all his life. It is as a nonjuror and author of the "Serious Call," that Law is chiefly known. That work was written during Law's residence at Putney in the family of the Gibbons (grandfather and father of the historian). It was not until seven or eight years afterwards that Law fell under the influence of Jacob Böhmen, and became, as Canon Overton terms him, "The English Mystic." When introducing the subject of Mysticism in Chapter X. (pp. 145 *seq.*), Canon Overton makes the following admission:—

"In one sense, Mysticism is as old as mankind. There is a mystic element in every man's nature. For who has not sometimes felt a tendency to turn from the world that is without him, and is no part of him, to the world which is within, and which is the very centre of his life? Who has not sometimes thought that there is something in this outer world more than meets the eye, something that is but a type of the invisible? So far as a man follows these tendencies, so far he is a mystic. The Christian mystic would certainly assert that he owed his Mysticism to no human teacher, but that he was taught by none other than by God himself; by God speaking both internally to his soul and externally through the Holy Scriptures."

Law's orthodoxy—save in so far as affected by his nonjuring—was unimpeachable. To the last limit of his long life he attended his parish church, *en laïque* of course. The only offence he gave the clergy, was by his so-called indiscriminate almsgiving. Mysticism was to him (as we know it to be to ourselves) the key that unlocked the Bible and made Church ceremonies cease to be mere formalities. If Mysticism be a sin, we are content to be classed in the same category as S. Bernard, Tanler, Thomas à Kempis, Fénelon, Madame Guyon, Jacob Böhman, Swedenborg, and William Law. It is something to have the testimony of a beneficed, nay a dignified, clergyman such as Law's biographer, to the fact that the tenets of Mysticism in no way impinge upon orthodoxy. As a fact, we know that many clergymen in the Church of England are openly avowed Swedenborgians or Spiritualists; and Canon Overton says:—

"When Law's 'later theology' is spoken of, in contrast with his earlier system, it must not be supposed that he diverged, consciously at least, a hair's breadth from any one of the doctrines to which he was bound as a clergyman of the Church of England. If he had done so, there can be no manner of doubt that he would at once have renounced his Orders. For of all the characteristics, both of Law's moral and also of his intellectual nature, there is none more conspicuous than his thorough and downright honesty. He was totally incapable of any quibbling, moral or intellectual."

We must close our necessarily imperfect sketch of this charming work with the touching memorial which Miss Gibbon has left of Law's last hours. We may well draw attention to this as evidence of how the mystic can die. It is surely something to have familiarised ourselves, so to say, in the earth-life with that state to which we pass when the corporeal husk is laid aside and the spiritual body gravitates to its fit sphere.

"This death-bed," writes Miss Gibbon (as quoted by Canon Overton), "instead of being a state of affliction was provisionally a state of Divine transport. The gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth were all love, all joy, and all Divine transport. After taking leave of everybody in the most affecting manner, and declaring the opening of the Spirit of Love in the soul to be all in all, he expired in Divine raptures." "One of his last, if not his very last act," adds his biographer, "was actually amid the throes of death to sing with a strong and very clear voice, a hymn called 'The Angels' Hymn. Almost immediately after, his soul was with the angels."

It is impossible to over-rate the importance of such a work, especially since it appears at a moment when we are canvassing the clauses of Mr. Harrison's lay creed, or plaintively re-echoing the demand of that *ductor dubitantium*, Mr. Mallock, "Is Life worth Living?"

ECCLECTIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.—We are requested to state that letters of allotment in this company were posted on Tuesday last.

The *Revue Spirite* gives a translation from a mediumistic communication through the late W. N. Rose, a very distinguished Dutch savant and architect, purporting to describe the missing link between animals and man.

MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

The article under this heading in the last number of "LIGHT" treats upon a subject which is deserving of serious attention, much more than it has hitherto received. At the same time it seems to me we are in danger, if we do not take care, of misleading ourselves very considerably.

All true life, growth, progress, comes from within and works outward. The external is the result of the internal. It is in vain to attempt to purify the soul by inflicting fasts and penances on the body, if it is in any way imagined that the purification of the former will follow the mortification of the latter, as effect follows cause. When the soul has become alive to the nature of a Spiritual life it becomes instinctively conscious that its development is hindered by what it feels to be an undue indulgence in carnal pleasures. But we ought, I think, to be careful, however strongly we may feel for ourselves, how far we lay down for others, what are "carnal pleasures" in this objectionable sense.

It will, I think, be admitted that it is quite possible for a man who totally abstains from flesh, wine, tobacco, tea, coffee, &c., to be really more carnally minded as regards "the pleasures of the table," and to be hindering his spiritual growth more thereby, than another man of generally abstemious habits, who perhaps takes a little flesh or wine every day of his life.

It is in the attitude of the mind towards eating and drinking in themselves, rather than in the exact nature of what is eaten or drunk, that the true spirit of fasting consists. Therefore, while fully agreeing with the writer of the article referred to, that gross indulgence in the coarser forms of eating and drinking is incompatible with high spiritual communion, we must not discourage those who cannot go to the same extent of abstinence, or induce them to think that they will receive great benefits by giving up those things in the use of which they do not feel condemned.

There is a fasting, a self-denial, a "crucifying of the flesh," which brings its exceeding great reward, and which will aid us in our desires for "high spiritual communion, spiritual gifts, and the manifestations of, and communications from, high and pure intelligences," but this does not consist in the observance of any set of rules which we may make for ourselves or others.

E. T. B.

ASCETICISM.

The article by "T. L. N., M. D.," upon "Material Conditions of Spiritual Manifestations," suggests a few remarks. This writer lays great stress upon a vegetable diet, and abstinence from alcohol, tea, coffee, and tobacco, as conducive to physical purity, whereon rests moral purity. Now I have sufficient leaning towards the doctrines of which "T. L. N." is such an able and eloquent expounder to wish to see them supported only by sound arguments, and it seems to me that there is a great deal too much "begging the question," by the use of epithets, in all the writing one sees on this subject. Flesh diet is called "gross feeding." A "pure diet" is abstinence from flesh, tea, coffee, tobacco, and all intoxicants. Such abstinence, we are told, is conducive to physical purity, to that cleanliness which is next to godliness. These oft-repeated assertions and their converse are, standing alone, simply a *petitio principii*. Each one of them may be challenged in a hundred ways, and that which is the very gist of the question should not be taken for granted.

For instance, how would "T. L. N." set about proving that the wing of the chicken was *impure* food, and a Spanish onion, or an equal weight of garlic, was *pure* food? It is undeniable that flesh is the natural food of many birds and beasts, and to them it must be *pure* food, if there is any distinct meaning in the expression. Surely "T. L. N." does not mean to imply that all foods can be separated into two distinct categories, *pure* and *impure*. If this were possible theoretically as regards an individual at any given moment of time, it would not apply to him at every moment of his life and in every situation. Still less could a hard and fast rule be made to apply to a whole race for all time. If the theory of evolution be true, animal life is constantly being modified by its ever changing surroundings, and, therefore, I cannot see how any rigid rule can be laid down as regards the best diet, either mental or physical. Perchance, in the remote future—and everything seems to point to such a conclusion—flesh-eating and intoxicants will be abandoned. So, also, in a future more remote, solids of any kind may be looked

upon as *unclean*; but I think we push theory too far in recommending the "diet of the future" to the offspring of 20 generations of beef-eaters.

The "spirit" of asceticism consists in cultivating the supremacy of the will and higher instincts of our nature. The "letter" often means denying ourselves all the comforts and little harmless enjoyments which make life endurable. It is a trite saying that temperance is more difficult than abstinence. On this ground, I recommend it to the *spiritual* ascetic as the better exercise. The best regimen for the man (whatever it may be) is also the best regimen for the medium. G. F. G.

LEWIS CORNARO.

As "LIGHT" bears upon its title the words "devoted to the highest interests of man both Here and Hereafter," a reference to this remarkable man and his life may not be inappropriate or uninteresting. A new edition of his short autobiographical essays, translated from the original Italian, has recently been published under the title of "How to Live a Hundred Years. By one who has done it."

The writer describes how, after going through a severe illness when between 35 and 40 years old, he was induced to make the preservation of health his special study. The conclusions at which he arrived were that the most important points consisted in great moderation as to quantity, regularity of habits, and general simplicity of living; and of these three the first he seems to have considered the chief. It does not appear that he was either a vegetarian or a teetotaler, though the probability is that seeing he lived between three and four hundred years ago, the wine which as an abstemious man he would drink in those days, was not much more than the natural juice of the grape,—and the animal food would not be the highly-fed, more or less diseased, products of modern civilisation.

Cornaro also tells us that he found his mode of life conducted not only to physical health, but also to mental cheerfulness and serenity. Speaking of "melancholy, hatred and other violent passions," he says:—"I have discovered this fact, that these passions have in the main no great influence over bodies governed by the foregoing rules of eating and drinking."

It is, of course, impossible to ascertain at this distance of time whether Cornaro did actually exceed the century or not, but there is no doubt that he enjoyed an extended old age of remarkable length and vigour. The different chapters of his little book are stated by himself to have been written at the ages of 81, 86 and 95. In the last, after expatiating on the continued and varied enjoyments he experienced, he says:—"I must further add, that at this age, I appear to enjoy two lives; one terrestrial, which in fact I possess, the other celestial, which I possess in thought; and this thought is actual enjoyment when founded upon things we are sure to attain; and I, through the infinite mercy and goodness of God, am sure of eternal life. Thus I enjoy this terrestrial life in consequence of my sobriety and temperance, virtues so agreeable to the Deity, and I enjoy, by the grace of God, the celestial, which He makes me anticipate in thought; a thought so lively as to fix me entirely on this subject, the fruition of which I hold to be of the utmost certainty. And I further maintain that dying in the manner I expect is not really death, but a passage of the soul from this earthly life to a celestial, immortal, and infinitely perfect existence. Neither can it be otherwise; and this thought is so pleasing, so superlatively sublime, that it can no longer stoop to low and worldly objects, such as the death of this body, being entirely taken up with the happiness of living a celestial and divine life. Whence it is that I enjoy two lives; and the thought of terminating this earthly life gives me no concern, for I know that I have a glorious and immortal life before me."

He concludes by saying:—"Since length of days abounds with so many favours and blessings, I, not by theory, but by blessed experience can testify to it; indeed, I solemnly assure all mankind that I really enjoy a great deal more than I can mention, and that I have no other reason for writing but that of demonstrating the great advantages which arise from longevity, and such a life as I have lived; and I desire to convince men that they may be induced to observe those excellent rules of constant temperance in eating and drinking, and therefore I never cease to raise my voice, crying out to you, my friends, that your lives may be even as mine."

The little volume is edited by Mr. C. F. Carpenter, of Bishops-Teignton, Devon, and published by Simpkin, Marshall and Co. E. T. B.

A TRIAL FOR WITCHCRAFT IN 1881.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that every Spiritualist medium in England, and every person who by attending a séance aids or abets such medium, may be indicted and tried for witchcraft, under some antiquated statute which Parliament has forgotten to repeal.

Mrs. Fletcher now stands indicted by an English grand jury, and is to be tried next month at the Central Criminal Court, for the high and horrible crimes of WITCHCRAFT, SORCERY, ENCHANTMENT, and CONJURATION. These are the words of the indictment, and such an indictment may be brought against every medium, Spiritualist, or investigator.

To make the matter clear I copy the ninth count of the indictment:—

"Ninth Count.—And the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present that the said Susan Willis Fletcher, John William Fletcher, and Francis Morton, on the day first aforesaid, and on divers other days thereafter, in the county aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction of the said court, unlawfully did pretend, to wit (to the said Juliet Anne Theodora Heurtley Hart-Davies), to exercise and use divers kinds of *witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration*, against the form of the statute in such case made and provided, against the peace of our said lady, the Queen, her Crown and dignity."

This is the indictment which an intelligent British grand jury, sworn to do justice, has found in 1881, and which a petit jury, equally intelligent one may hope, will in a few days be empanelled and sworn to try. Whether Mrs. Fletcher be a witch, a sorceress, an enchantress, or a conjurers, in the legal signification of those terms, is left for the jury to decide, and it would be irregular for me to express an opinion as to her guilt or innocence of such charges; but I may express the astonishment which all your readers must feel that the trials for sorcery and witchcraft which blackened the seventeenth century should be revived in the metropolis of England so near the close of the nineteenth, with Mr. Gladstone for Prime Minister and Sir William Harcourt for Home Secretary.

It is to be observed that the object of this pretence to witchcraft, sorcery, &c., is not in question. The things themselves are against the statute, and any person practising them or aiding or abetting such practice is liable to such indictment. Mr. Crookes; Professor Zöllner, had he been in England; Mr. Wallace; Mr. Varley; and all the scientific investigators of Spiritualism are equally liable to be prosecuted under the statute in accordance with which this indictment has been found. The trial will, therefore, be interesting not only to all Spiritualists, but to all who are, or may be, investigators of psychological phenomena.

32, Fopstone-road, S.W.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

WITCHCRAFT.

"Pretending to exercise witchcraft is an indictable offence under 9 George II., cap. 5, sec. 4, having taken the place of actual witchcraft, which, imaginary as such offence is, was down to that year punishable with death (*vide* 33 Hen. VIII., cap. 8; 1 Jac. I., cap. 12). 'These Acts,' says Sir W. Blackstone, 'long continued in force, to the terror of all ancient females in the kingdom; and many poor wretches were sacrificed thereby to the prejudices of their neighbours, not a few having, by some means or other, confessed the fact at the gallows.' When the offence of pretending to exercise witchcraft took the place of this superstition, it was classed among the offences against God and the Christian religion; but as any such pretence is really only likely to be put forward for the purpose of petty fraud, the offence, if committed, may be punished adequately under the summary provisions of the Vagrant Act (5 Geo IV., cap. 83, sec. 4)."—*Extract from A Draft Code of Criminal Law and Procedure (E. D. Lewis, 1879), pp. 445 and 446.*

FREE TRIAL BOX OF CHARCOAL DIGESTION PILLS.

The new cure for INDIGESTION and its terrible train of Diseases. BILIOUS and LIVER COMPLAINTS, Habitual Constipation, Piles, Rheumatism, Epilepsy, Worms and all affections of the Chest and Kidneys. Recipe for preparation and use of Pure Vegetable Charcoal, together with a trial box of CONCENTRATED CHARCOAL DIGESTION PILLS, sent free on application. Enclose Stamped Addressed Envelope to "Manager, Medical Carbon Company, Nottingham." Dr. Hassall says: "Your Charcoal is pure, well carbonised, and being prepared with great care, is well adapted for medicinal purposes."—*Adv.*

ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

This short extract I have taken from an old French book on philosophy, whose date I omitted to note, but it was of the seventeenth century. I unearthed it from a circulating library that I frequented in Paris when I was not engaged in my studio work with M. Carolus Duran. It was called "L'Antiquité Devoilée," and was excessively interesting. The orthodox Roman Catholic who wrote it failed utterly and naively in his endeavours to bring out the truth and supernaturalism of Christianity, in contradiction to his efforts to prove the contrary of Paganism. He was, however, sublimely unconscious of his special pleading, and settled the whole matter of the modern religion of his time by simple assertion, which no doubt was highly satisfactory in his time.

In speaking of the ancient "mysteries," he says—quoting Plutarch—"These all taught that life was one of passage, and a post which no one could quit without the will of God." "Aristides said that these mysteries were not made to give tranquillity of spirit during life, and that the knowledge of them could not deliver men from the accidents of this life; but that their object was to ameliorate the fate of man after death, and to prevent souls being plunged in darkness, and the mire of impiety. 'Happy is he,' says Euripides, 'who having been judged worthy of the revelation of the mystery of the gods lives a holy life, for these mysteries hold all that is holiest and most sacred.' 'They have,' says Plutarch, 'relation to the future life, and the state of the soul after death. The outward representation of these mysteries is only a shadow of the reality, a feeble image of those future glories, the contemplation of which is reserved for those who are virtuous while on earth.' 'The vulgar imagine,' says Plutarch again, 'that after death there is nothing left of man and that there is for him neither good nor evil; but we (sages) know the contrary well; a family tradition, as from hand to hand, has taught us differently. Besides, initiated as we are to the religious mysteries of Bacchus and witness of his holy ceremonies, we are therefore instructed in the grand truth that the soul is imperishable, and that there is a future life for man.' Socrates, Aristophanes, Diodorus, Plato, all spoke similarly."

This short extract hints of a different state of things to the present—now the "vulgar," or unlearned and ignorant, are instructed in belief, whereas the "learned" teach doctrines that will soon be subversive of all belief, unless some still higher teaching will renovate the world.

ISABEL DE STEIGER.

AMERICAN ITEMS.

Mr. Thomas Gales Forster, whose visit to England will be remembered by many Spiritualists in this country, has recently been the recipient of a marked compliment in the form of a public reception tendered him by the Spiritualists of San Francisco, concerning which we learn from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, that a large company of prominent Spiritualists and mediums assembled to do honour to the guest of the evening. Mr. Forster's admirers will be glad to hear that the publication of a selection of his inspirational addresses is contemplated.

Our Chicago contemporary also announces the appearance of a new work, entitled "Religion as revealed by the Material and Spiritual Universes," from the pen of Dr. E. D. Babbitt, whose book on the "Wonders of Light and Colour" created such an interest in American Spiritual circles some time ago.

A friendly and courteous greeting is extended to "LIGHT" by our San Francisco, U.S., contemporary, *Light for All*, in its last issue, and, speaking on the question "What is Spiritualism?" the same paper remarks that it is "A belief in the immortality of the soul, as proven by the return of our Spirit friends, and their communication with us; a belief proven to us by every Spirit with whom we have held converse, that we must commence our reforms at home; that we must learn to make ourselves good before we try to teach others how to become so * * * Then we can look for better children, and, gradually, a better world."

From the *Banner of Light* we glean the following notes:—Dr. J. V. Mansfield, the celebrated medium for answering sealed letters, is confined to his rooms by serious indisposition. The Boston Spiritualists are pushing forward vigorously their arrangements for the thirty-third anniversary celebration on the 31st inst., the Music Hall, capable of seating 3,000 people, being secured for the occasion; and Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond, of Chicago; Mr. J. W. Fletcher, and Mr. J. Frank Baxter, of Boston; and Mr. J. W. Colville, of England, have engaged to address the meetings. Our good friend, Dr. J. M. Peebles, is also expected to be present. A correspondent, writing from Chicago, says that the lecture, "The Day After Death," given through Mrs. Richmond, "has received more encomiums from the public, especially outside of Spiritualism, than any lecture I know of." The *Sunday Times* (Chicago) speaks also most appreciatively of Mrs. Richmond's labours.

DALSTON.

On Tuesday evening last Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Morse held a "house warming" reception at their residence, 53, Sigdon-road, and a numerous company assembled to wish them happiness in their new home. Music, vocal and instrumental, a dance, and light refreshments enabled the visitors to pass a very pleasant evening, while the warm welcome given to each by hostess and host materially assisted in adding to the pleasure of the occasion. Among the guests were Mr. Thomas Shorter, Mr. J. Bruce Gillon, Mr. Thos. Blyton, Mr. M. H. Spear, of Philadelphia, U.S., Mr. J. Swindin, Mr. Frank Everitt, Mr. R. Bodmer, F.C.S., Mr. J. Towns, Mr. Greenwell, Mrs. T. Everitt, Mrs. R. Pearce, Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Nichols, Miss Samuels (the Cardiff medium), Miss Keeves, Miss Record, and many other members of the Dalston Association and personal friends of Mr. and Mrs. Morse.

LADBROKE HALL.

The services established by Mr. F. O. Matthews at this hall continue to increase in attractiveness, and the audiences grow larger every week. On Sunday last, in the place of Mr. S. Chadwick, who should have delivered the evening discourse, but was unavoidably prevented from doing so, the service was conducted by Mr. F. O. Matthews, to the pleasure of the assembled company. Various matters connected with the furnishing of the hall having been completed, including the erection and furnishing of a new platform, this place of meeting presents a cheerful and inviting appearance which greatly conduces to the comfort of the visitors. It is intended to dedicate the new platform on Sunday evening next, when a special floral service will be held, the speaker of the evening being Miss Samuels, the well-known Cardiff medium, whose powers as a speaker have called forth so many favourable comments. Mr. Knight-Smith will sing, "He shall lead His flock" (Handel) and we are requested by Mr. Matthews to state that he will be happy to receive contributions of flowers with which to decorate the platform and hall. They can be sent to his private address, for which see our list of Societies and Meetings.

CARDIFF.

At the weekly meeting on Sunday evening last, Mr. Brooks continued the subject commenced by him a few weeks ago, and on which various members have expressed their opinions at intervening meetings, "The Authenticity of the Books of the Bible." The lecturer in the course of his remarks gave voluminous extracts from translations of cuneiform writings unearthed at Nineveh by Mr. George Smith, Sir H. Rawlinson, and others, which shew that the Mosaic history of the Creation is identical with the Babylonian account (about 2000 B.C.) in the reign of Hammurabi.

KEIGHLEY.

On Sunday next, March 20th, Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, will deliver two lectures in the Temperance Hall, Keighley, the subjects by special request being, in the afternoon at 2.30, "Starved Souls," and in the evening at six, "Does Death end all?" Admission free. Collections.

WALSALL.

Proposed Bazaar.

The members of the Spiritual Society in this town have resolved upon holding a bazaar for the double purpose of reducing the deficit in their accounts and of assisting in the formation of a lecture fund. The Society has been in existence for over two years; its Sunday services have been attended by good audiences, but commercial depression has prevented the full substantial support needed to carry on the work. Friends desiring to assist in the intended bazaar are kindly requested to communicate, or send such articles as they may desire to contribute, to Mr. J. Coates, Stafford-street; Mr. J. Venables, Mount-street; or, the Secretary, Mr. Thos. Blinkhorn, 16, George-street, of whom all particulars can be obtained.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. A.—The paper was sent to the address you gave at Hamilton, N.B.; but has been returned through the Post Office.

"A FRIEND."—We cannot give your statement unless duly authenticated.

J. D. (Old Shildon).—Thanks for your kind note. Papers and cards sent you as requested.

MR. E. WALLIS, the well-known trance lecturer, is about to remove from Nottingham to London. He anticipates leaving for America on a lecturing tour early in September.

It will be seen, from an announcement in our advertising pages, that an anniversary meeting is to be held on April 4th, in Steinway Hall. We are informed that admission to the meeting will be free.

The Prussian people must not forget that it is only in the strife of opinions that the truth breaks forth; and that, in order to maintain freedom, every opinion should be freely and justly expressed.—FREDERICK WILLIAM, KING OF PRUSSIA. (Speech to the United Diet, at Berlin, April 2nd, 1848.)

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITUALISTS?

The following is a list of eminent persons, who, after careful investigation, have fully satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism:—

Archbishop Whately; the late Lord Brougham; the Earl of Dunraven; the late Lord Lytton; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain; the late William Howitt; the late George Thompson; the late Harriett Martineau; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

The late Abraham Lincoln, President U.S.A.; the late W. Lloyd Garrison; the late Hon. R. Dale Owen, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Naples; the late Hon. J. W. Edmunds, sometime Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; the late Professor Mapes, the eminent chemist, U.S.A.; the late Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry at Harvard University, U.S.A.; Bishop Clarke, of Shooe Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, of Washington.

William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medallist, and Member of the Council of the Royal Society; Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., the eminent naturalist, sometime President of the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President of the Royal Astronomical Society; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., long one of the editors of the *Journal of Science*; the late Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; the late Professor de Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; the late Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; the late Dr. Ashburner; the late Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; Professor, Ch. Cassal, LL.D.; Captain R. F. Burton, the celebrated traveller.

The late Emperor of Russia; the late Emperor Napoleon; President Thiers; the Hon. Alexandre Aksakof, Russian Imperial Councillor; the late Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein; His Imperial Highness Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; the late Baron L. de Guldenstübbe; Count A. de Gasparin; the Baron and Baroness von Vay; the Baron du Potet; Mons. Léon Favre, Consul-General of France; Victor Hugo.

Professor Friedrich Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physicist, author of "Scientific Treatises," "Transcendental Physics," &c., whose recent researches in this subject have attained a world-wide fame; Gustave T. Fechner, Professor of Physics in the University of Leipzig, also the author of many volumes bearing on the general subject of Psychology; Professor Scheibner, the renowned teacher of mathematics in the University of Leipzig; W. E. Weber, Professor of Physics in the University of Göttingen, and known as one of the main workers in connection with the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy; Immanuel H. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of the University of St. Petersburg; Dr. Maximilian Perty, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Berne; Dr. Franz Hoffman, Professor of Philosophy, Würzburg; Dr. Robert Friesé, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer; and many other members of learned societies in this and other countries, and a vast number of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, and in the ranks of social life, whose names we are not at liberty to mention.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS.—*Licht, mehr Licht*, in its number of May 16th, 1880, gave a letter from the well-known professional conjurer, Jacobs, to the Psychological Society in Paris, avowing himself a Spiritualist, and offering suggestions for the discrimination of genuine from spurious manifestations.

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bed-room, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation, is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, Dec. 6, 1877.

Spiritualist Societies.

Spiritualists 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. Frances, 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.
- Bakley 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 Colley, 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 Saddle, Proprietor.
- Cardiff Spiritualist Society. 3, Angel Street, Cardiff. Mr. W. Paynter, Hon. Secretary, 10, Bute Crescent.
- Darlington. The Lyceum of Psychology. Mr. A. O. Clark, President. 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, Trongate 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. R. 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, 153, Mottram Road, Hyde, near Manchester.
- Leicester Spiritualist Society. President, Mr. E. Larrad, 10, Edwyn Street. Secretary, B. Wightman, 58, Cranbourne Street, Leicester.
- Leigh Spiritualists' Association, Brown Street, Leigh, Lancashire. Mr. G. F. Turner, Secretary.
- Liverpool Psychological Society. Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. Morris, 35, Cobden-street, Everton, Liverpool.
- Lowestoft Spiritual Society. T. Dowsing, Secretary.
- Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists. Mr. S. Hayes, Hon. Secretary, 12, Bond Street West, Macclesfield.
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