

# Light:

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'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

No. 16. [Registered for Transmission Abroad.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1881.

PRICE TWOPENCE.  
By Post 10s. 10d. per annum.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1881.

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## "A WANING DELUSION."

It is instructive to note the various utterances of the Press on the Fletcher case; and it will, we think, be the fault of Spiritualists themselves if they do not take some hints from the widely divergent verdicts pronounced by the different organs of public opinion as to the subject in which we are all of us interested. In the first place it is rendered abundantly clear that the public mind is not yet made up upon the matter, for it may almost be said *quot homines, tot sententiae*, and, moreover, the great majority of writers in the public Press have recognised the gravity of the subject, and have set themselves to enlighten or to warn their readers, sometimes with conspicuous fairness, but mostly with some knowledge of their subject and some recognition of the hold it has taken upon the public.

There is, of course, no rule without exceptions; but really when one puts aside the lucubrations of those commentators who openly boast that they know nothing about the subject they treat, and the senseless guffaws of such as are content to stand on their heads and kick up their heels for the public delectation, there is a very remarkable consensus of opinion as to the magnitude of the matter which the writers supposed to be at issue in the Fletcher case. In point of fact the truth or falsehood of Spiritualism was never allowed to come to the surface of the trial at all; but in the popular estimation it was inevitable that it should do so, and the newspapers treated it accordingly.

We must unfortunately adopt a process of abstraction before we begin to generalise, by setting aside as thoroughly undignified the utterance of what is now called, in mere banter, the "leading journal." The *Times* puts itself out of court by entrusting the writing of a leader on the Fletcher case to a writer who, according to his own *naïve* confession, knows nothing of Spiritualism. "What Spiritualism in its higher phases may be," he writes, "we cannot pretend to say." But we venture to suggest that a writer who presumes to instruct others *does* pretend to say that he knows something about the subject of his instruction. Because this frank gentleman knows nothing about the matter, he forthwith proceeds to speak of Spiritualism as a waning delusion, and is for calling in the strong arm of the law to stop private séances. It was unnecessary for him to put his ignorance on record. It stands confessed in the sentence: "The delusion of Spiritualism is no new one, but happily it is now a waning one." A man must be very imperfectly acquainted with the subject or sophistically determined to make out a case, if, with the Fletcher incident full before him, he can commit himself to such a statement as that. The *Saturday Review*, on the other hand, whilst bound to follow its *métier* by trying to be smart, succeeds in being simply profane. We leave it to the good taste and feeling of religious readers to determine the character of a writer who, on Easter Eve of all days in the world, tries to excite a horse laugh by entitling his article "Spirits in Prison." The devil, we know, can quote Scripture for his purpose, but it is happily rare to find the Sacred History, at one of its most pathetic periods, pressed into the service of Joe Miller. The farrago of bad French and Holywell-street English which constitutes the *Saturday's* comment on the Fletcher trial is equalled only by some few details of that case which were judiciously subdued in the evidence of the plaintiff.

When, however, we pass beyond the limits of these outlying, and happily exceptional prints, we find a very fair body of criticism collected together, of course in opposition to Spiritual-

ism, but not directed to prove that it is a waning delusion. On the contrary, its importance is admitted. For good or ill Spiritualism is set down as a big thing. The larger number of newspapers, viewing the matter crudely enough, and with necessary imperfection of knowledge as to details, take it for granted that the system is bad; but they do not commit themselves to the absurdity of declaring that the alleged bad thing is no thing at all. The *Spectator*, to wit, makes no greater mistake than to consider that the Fletcher case covers the whole ground of Spiritualism. It says: "The case gives a curious glimpse into that Spiritualist world of which the public know so little. The witnesses produced for the defence shew that even now Mrs. Fletcher is not without those who believe in her; and if credulity can resist such damaging revelations as those supplied by this trial, it will probably be proof against anything." The fallacy of passing from the particular to the universal, and confounding belief in Mrs. Fletcher with belief in the whole system of Spiritualism, is, of course, palpable enough; but it is evidently adopted in good faith, and the conclusions arrived at never degenerate into mere diatribe. Nobody will suspect the *Pall Mall Gazette* of a leaning towards the mystical; but that journal is evidently scandalised at the false step taken by the *Times*, and says, sensibly enough from its own point of view: "The law was broken, and the law has been put in force. But to argue that because a sharper resorted to Spiritualism to plunder her victim penal laws should be enacted against Spiritualism, is almost as absurd as to make the conviction of a professor of the three-card trick a plea for prohibiting the sale of playing cards." Even more satisfactory is the attitude assumed by *Life*. At the conclusion of an article wholly hostile to Mrs. Fletcher in particular and to Spiritualism in general, the writer has the courage to add:—

"Countesses do not, as a rule, act as jackals to charlatans, and when they step forward and own that a particular manifestation dovetails with their personal experience, their evidence is accepted as being *pro tanto* conclusive; society is firmly convinced of the integrity and truthfulness of its prominent members, and, be it added, society is right. The other side of the question is that the said eminences may be absolutely honest, yet wholly mistaken, that their imagination may fill up the blanks of a purposely vague manifestation. Here we approach the prime difficulty of dealing with Spiritualism and Spiritualists. Believers of indisputable sincerity, such as the late Serjeant Cox, Dr. Maurice Davies, and Mr. Thornton Hoskins, all plead that the truth of Spiritualism does not depend upon the personal character of the mediums. We have, indeed, met men whose probity was unchallengeable, who had themselves gone off in trances and exercised the powers of a medium."

This is not, perhaps, very much to say; but considering the odium which is generally assumed as attaching to this "waning delusion," it does require a certain amount of journalistic courage to argue that its professors may be only victims of delusion, and not practitioners of collusion with the charlatans whose existence is presupposed as a matter of course.

Considering how largely the ranks of the *Daily Telegraph* are leavened with men posted up in the "waning delusion," we confess to having looked with some curiosity at the leader of Wednesday, April 13th, on the Fletcher case. It was, as we expected, but as is not generally the case with that journal, quite colourless. *Tacere tutum est*. The *Morning Post* is pretty largely tinctured with a Spiritualistic element in its staff too; besides, is not the waning delusion fashionable? And yet the fashionable journal said little more than the "Largest Circulation in the World." The *Daily News* characteristically, too, fell back on Mr. Browning's poetry and the Platonic philosophy. The following is a good specimen of cautious criticism:—

"Mr. Browning has applied to this case with even more than his usual force and subtlety the general maxim which Plato expressed in the form that the public is the great sophist. It was idle to complain of Protagoras, or even of Polus, so long as crowds attended their lectures with eagerness, and paid for

their instruction with equanimity. Mr. Sludge found his public, and so apparently did Mr. Fletcher."

As a rule, it is pretty safe policy, when you have not much else to say, to bring Plato well to the front. People generally do not understand him, so they cannot check you; and the same remark may be said without much reserve as to the author of "Mr. Sludge, the Medium."

For the rest, we may be well content to pass over the perfectly harmless comments of the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Morning Advertiser*. The latter would distinguish between Spiritualism as a subject for philosophical research and as a "professional art,"—whatever that may mean. But last, though far from least, comes the *Standard*, and the *Standard* is simply and sublimely oracular. Here is its peroration:—

"Spiritualism, in short, is disreputable, and its surroundings are disreputable, or even worse. No man who respects himself would allow his wife or his daughters to attend professional *séances*, or to habitually associate with professional Mediums. Beneath all the rubbish that is talked about 'spheres of spiritual existence' and 'odic power' there lies an ugly under-current, the nature of which any man of the world can at once determine for himself."

There is nothing more to be said, of course, in face of such a final utterance as that.

Or yes; there is one thing to be said, namely, that it rests with the believers in this so-called "waning delusion" to prove that it is not a delusion, and that the system so miscalled is not on the wane. Though the *Times* leader-writer knows nothing of the higher aspects of Spiritualism the readers of "LIGHT" do; and it will be well if these mistakes and misrepresentations make every Spiritualist feel it incumbent upon himself or herself to spread this knowledge. There are, no doubt, some persons so steeped in ignorance about Spiritualism as not to know there is any higher aspect than that of dancing tables and rapping Spirits and materialised forms. The whole delicate subject of spiritual impressions, for instance, is a thing undreamed of in their philosophy. The valuable assistance of Spiritualism to religion in general, rather than to any sect or schism in particular, they do not guess. If they did, they would willingly withdraw any aspersions they may in their ignorance have made. We submit that there is evidence in these extracts which we have given—with one or two notable exceptions—of such a feeling being abroad. It is not Spiritualism, but the false views about Spiritualism that constitute a delusion; and the sooner that delusion is on the wane the better for everybody.

#### MR. IRVING BISHOP AND THE "LEISURE HOUR."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Two or three years ago, a long article in two parts was inserted in the *Leisure Hour*, purporting to explain and expose Spiritualism.

I wrote to the editor, telling him that the writer must be either entirely ignorant of the subject or that he was knowingly bearing false witness against a large body of men and women, including many influential literary and scientific people. I begged him, in common courtesy and fairness, to allow me—or some one more competent—equal space in his paper to reply to these unfounded charges and to shew a little of the real state of things.

I received an answer from the editor, by which I knew that my letter was received by him; but he did not grant my request.

Only two years ago the papers were filled with accounts of this Mr. Irving's pretended "exposés" of Spiritualism, given in Glasgow and other places. His conduct at that time was such that one would have imagined a society established for the purpose of spreading "religious truths" would have been at least cautious in accepting communications for any of their religious publications from one whose conduct had shewn an entire want of sympathy with good "religious" work.—Yours truly,

F. J. THEOBALD.

Hastings, April 16th, 1881.

HEALTH IN RELATION TO MEDIUMSHIP.—Mr. J. J. Morse is preparing a paper to be read at the B.N.A.S. Discussion Meeting on May 16th, and he would be obliged if all who are mediums would correspond with him as to their experience of mediumship in its relation to health, both of body and mind. For convenience Mr. Morse has prepared a tabulated form, which will be sent post free on application. Address him at "LIGHT" office.

#### ART AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

A Paper read by Madame de Steiger to the British National Association of Spiritualists, on Monday, April 4th.

I must first say a few words in reference to my subject. It may seem to some a far-fetched one and also probably an unscientific and unphilosophical one. The latter especially it must seem, coming, as it does, like the foam on the sea, in contradiction to the researches into the depths of the sea of knowledge, made by the interesting and learned papers which I have generally had the pleasure and advantage of hearing. I can only say that my subject must be my apology, and its want of good treatment my fault only. It will seem also one more especially suited to artists, but then so few artists are Spiritualists, so I am somewhat hampered, and cannot expand my subject harmoniously without the risk of fatiguing those Spiritualists among you who are not artists, or those artists who are not Spiritualists. I fear, too, that my paper will not supply the needful material for an interesting discussion; but, such as it is, I will give it to you, trusting to your kindness and patience.

I am compelled to begin by using two words that are for ever used, and being abused. What is Art? and what is the Supernatural? The subject of my paper was suggested to me by a charming extract from a stray *Cornhill Magazine*, which I read during one of the last summer's months, so I venture to say a few words touching these matters; for, to my mind, the Art of the day and the Supernaturalism of the day both hinge on Spiritualism.

The idea of the writer in the *Cornhill* was that the so-called Supernatural had no place in Art; in plain words, ghosts, as he would call them, are not paintable. The writer's ideas were true, that a ghost, or, as we should say, wrongly or rightly, a Spirit, when presented to the eye painted on canvas fails in its mission to awe the spectator; that, in fact, the Supernatural could be only pressed into Art through a special exercise of the mind, by certain ideas being presented, and visions, therefore, suggested by those ideas in the spectator's mind; and he would conjure up the necessary ghost; the writer meaning to infer that all Supernaturalism ought to be and is entirely subjective, that no one can conjure up a ghost for any body else—only for himself. There is much truth in this, and it led me to think what part will Spiritualism play in the Art future of ours and other countries? It seems, of course, quite natural that ghosts will not sit as models, and that, therefore, when the popular idea of a ghost has even been represented by an artist, the attempt fails. Notwithstanding these failures, artists have not relinquished their occasional efforts to portray Spirits, but always with the same results. Note the effort made at last year's Academy to depict the Spirit of Saul!

What is the reason of this? What is the reason also that religious Art is really dead? For how inferior it now is, all must testify. What is the cause? Are the artists unequal to the task? Is it not because so many artists, here and abroad, bow down to the materialism of the day, and are entirely occupied with the imitation of nature's surface only? As Mr. Tyrwhitt, in his learned book entitled "Greek and Gothic," says, "Man cannot long be creative or poetic about bodily passion; it only repeats itself and palls by law of nature."

Very few artists are Spiritualists, and they naturally are therefore overtaken by the materialism of the age; and in spite of the clever and often lovely imitations of the outer beauties of nature, how many lack knowledge of the wondrous spirit in nature! Spiritualism teaches us that artists are more or less, according to their receptiveness, inspired by spirit power; and the very talent of painting is due to the overmastering desire an artist feels to arrest in their progress and express outwardly to other eyes the visions that crowd on his brain. At least, this ought to be the case, for I will not dignify with the name of artists persons who study Art simply because it is the fashion, or solely as a means of livelihood; though such people do, alas! exist. An artist must be a born one, and he begins at once in childish fashion to depict his youthful visions. As he grows older he finds that the more he labours and studies the beautiful science called the art of painting, the more easily is he able to express his ideas, and by-and-bye his work bears fruit and he arrives at the happy moment when his fingers obey his will, and he creates—or rather, according to an idea I heard recently expressed, I should say he compiles his ideas, for there is no such thing as creation; results are compiled—he externalises his inner sight. He desires that other people should see what he conceives, and he paints his picture, and lo! his ideas come to life; he realises what Bulwer says in "The Parisians": "In life, as in art, it is through discipline we arrive at freedom; moral aspiration has the same goal as the artistic—the attainment to the calm delight therein; the pain of effort disappears in the content of achievement." This, then, is the aim and meaning of Art—the outward and objective representation of inward and subjective ideas. It is also called Art because, as Goethe says, "it is not nature." It mimics nature. In a high sense it is an externalisation of spiritual ideas as well; in a lower sense it is a simulation or imitation of external surfaces in nature expressed by methods that are the result of manual dexterity from long practice.

Now were it not for Spiritualism, which leads us to understand what the old so-called dreams of a future and spiritual life are, there would be little left which would be a sufficient reason *per se* for artists ever to attempt any subject in which a so-called "supernatural" idea is introduced. As I have said before, hitherto they have failed. As an example, we all of us know those monuments in honour of the illustrious dead, in which the spiritual man is seen bursting from his tomb at the moment of the Resurrection, in which marble and bricks, reckless of gravitation, are flying about, while the struggling and revived corpse climbs out. There is such a complete confusion of ideas, and the sublime and the ridiculous are so inextricably blended, that we simply turn from these things with a sort of helpless sigh. Many true artists have felt this, and have held their hands from touching these subjects. They have realised the crucial test—the union of the spiritual and material—how to represent the two blending in unison.

The now famous artist, Blake, is one of the very few who have been seriously impressed and impelled to record all his visions. These, as all Spiritualists must know, were remarkably often objective, and he therefore simply drew what he saw. Most artists' visions are entirely subjective, and they flit too rapidly with the vague phantasmagoria of the mind's eye. In order to record them these artists must have recourse to the method of using material models to typify them as best they can. These models are arranged and draped, and they study them and paint from them, and gradually their ideas change somewhat, and modify or expand according to the inspiration they receive on the subject. Then their picture is completed. Blake, on the other hand, is the artist who was a happy exception. Ghosts *did* pose for him, and he literally drew (in most cases) what he saw with his external eye, which was possessed with the double vision of the clairvoyant seer. Naturally, as ordinary study, composition, and arrangement were out of the question with him, the results are mingled with a curious blending of sublimity and its opposite. One reason was that he had not, nor, unfortunately for himself, was he, disposed to have accepted that thorough discipline in Art through which alone, as I quoted from Bulwer, one arrives at freedom. He was always hampered really by his want of technical knowledge, though he denied this, and except in simple outline he was unable to carry out his sublime opportunities. His ideas also in many respects, from want of culture and expansion, were, as regards colour and technique, sometimes mischievous. Moreover, poor Blake was, to a certain extent, a victim of his time. He knew his visions were true, but he knew also that every one else of his general acquaintance thought them false and himself a madman. He, therefore, gave way to a kind of defensive and offensive spirit that was detrimental to him as a man and an artist. He was misunderstood, and could not get, neither would take, either advice or instruction. There were few who could understand the profound truths in his grand theories and ideas. He, therefore, turned with contempt from the many who could advise him in smaller matters, in which he seriously did require and ought to have taken counsel. Therefore, though Blake stands out to us an extraordinary exception in some respects, we have still yet to find the artist who will be able to spiritualise the present material imitation of nature called Art. If this is to be the only goal of art in the future, its duration is only a question of time.

However, as it is, there is already a faint flutter of anxiety in the atmosphere of Art-thought, and as artists become more and more capable in their fingers, the thing painted and the thing itself will be so closely resembling that at a certain distance the two cannot be distinguished. We shall weary of art, and, as a mere outward imitation of nature, we shall cease to care for it. If materialism is to reign triumphant in the world, Art will assuredly die; but mankind will languish without it in a world of mechanism and tangible realities. Happily, to my thinking, that drear period will never arrive. Spiritual ideas are thrilling the air with their inspirational tones, and telling us that the world is still young, and that there is a future to everything, and a grand one to the art of Painting as well as to its beautiful and, perhaps, more purely spiritual sister, Music.

Spiritualism teaches us, moreover, that what we formerly thought the highest conception of defunct man—that of his ghost—is really a low one, and that as ghost his spiritual status may be much lower than that of his former neighbour still in the flesh. Therefore, when they try to paint a ghost, non-Spiritualists are burdened with a confusion of ideas and insufferable difficulties of expression; but Spiritualists now know that what is called by us a materialised Spirit is a being made up, for the time, from the various molecules chemically employed in the body of a man by the will-power of some presiding or invisible Spirit. Therefore an objective ghost, if one wished to paint it, ought to be just like any one else. Naturally this ghost would not tally with our pre-conceived ideas at all, and the intention of the artists would be entirely defeated! Ordinary ghosts, we know, are simply earth-bound Spirits who would look just as they would do on earth, and, moreover, they would be clothed in ordinary fashion, the materialised raiment being chemically taken from the spectators. They would be, therefore, as far removed from our conceptions of saints or angels, or any spiritual beings, as are most of us

now. We know also, through Spirit intelligences, that those who have passed far beyond this earth plane cannot appear at all objectively in this mundane atmosphere. We also know that when the entranced spirit of man soars aloft, the visions that illuminate his spiritual eye are those of super-mundane truths, and the dreams of artists and poets, of saints and angels are, let us be eternally thankful for it, as real *de facto* as are real all the sights which meet the animal eye every way we turn it on this earth.

When Spiritualism is understood—as we hope it will be and shall be—then there may be an artist who with complete technical skill to obey his will—one who is master of his craft, and one also who is an understanding seer, and who reads intelligently the wondrous stories written in the astral light surrounding us all, the faint image of which still lingers in the mediæval idea of the nimbus and the aureole, and our ordinary simile of a halo of glory: one, who being taught understandingly, will know what real symbolism is, and that it surely *has* meant and *will* mean a little more than what is commonly understood now-a-days. For instance, I read in a criticism of today on one of Millais' earlier works, that there is much *symbolism* in the picture. The dove broods in a suggestive manner; the sheep, shepherds, flock from the green field and look with interest upon what is going on in the house. I look also with interest and search and entirely fail to see this "much of symbolism." It is an utterly material conception throughout.

The only other way in which symbolism is generally understood or expressed, except in some very interesting and beautiful works of Mr. Burne Jones, is that in use in Protestant churches, which is borrowed from more ancient sources, i.e., the Roman Catholic ones. These symbols, derived from the early Christians, were adapted by them from those in use and thus they have gradually lost their original esoteric meaning until they are now used with the utmost ignorance; such symbols as the cross itself, the fish, the triangle, the so-called monogram of Christ, the dragon, sacred letters, &c., &c. When the real teaching of these and still grander symbols shall be more truly known, artists may then see subjects for a great revival of Art. The true and various meanings of colour and its typical representations will be new knowledge. The power and symbolism of colour is yet only in its infancy. The artist seer will help upwards the birth of a new Art. He will make no more vain efforts through confusion of ideas by reviving the body, to produce a spirit rising to Heaven; and artists will no longer, in spasmodic efforts to preserve, as they think, the ideal, paint that sort of being, a cross between an ordinarily clothed man or woman and one merely swathed in a kind of white muslin; a kind of body without any inside to do the duty of a Spirit, which, as we know, is not to be seen by mortal eye. Earth-bound Spirits will be shewn as they are, and if a celestial Spirit has to be represented it will be in the right place and with right meaning, so that it will be sublime and can never be ridiculous, because it will be the objective reflection of a true vision depicted by no uncertain hand, as was Blake's sometimes when he saw the earth-bound Spirits round him, as Moses, Napoleon, &c., even to a man who said he was the Spirit of a flea.

The highest art will then (necessarily accompanied with perfect technical skill) infallibly be that which reveals and teaches most. Religious Art of the present day has sunk to the lowest ebb: and no wonder! Artists are no longer inspired by the same ideals, and even the inner vision of the subject denied them, *because* the old revelation is over, and men waiting for visions of the new.

If Spiritual Philosophy revivifies, as we hope it will, the material philosophy of the day, there surely will be this renaissance of Art; for, as the thoughtful author I have already quoted, Mr. Tyrrwhit, says in his "Greek and Gothic," "Art and religion must be connected, if apart both suffer." He, like many great, but if I may be pardoned a paradox, narrow minds, may deplore such a state of things, but they seem, like most Protestant Churchmen, able to throw but a tiny speck of light on the dull religion of the day. He says again, "Though from the earliest days to the present Art has ministered to religion, there is no doubt that modern times have separated them or that Art has fallen from its reasonable service." To revive, therefore, the Supernatural in Art religion must be revived, and this, we hope, will be done ere long through the Spirit powers coming to bless the earth once more. And now I will conclude with a lovely saying by Blake: "The only powers left to man of conversing with Paradise, that the floods did not sweep away, are these three, Music, Poetry, and Painting."

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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 séances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return postage.

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The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, paid in advance.

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Five lines and under, 3s. One inch, 4s. 6d. Half-column, 2l. Whole column, £2 2s. Page, 4s. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

In his recent volume, "Far Out," Colonel Butler ("The Great Lone Land" Butler) tells an excellent story that will interest many of our readers. On the banks of the great Mackenzie River, the vastest body of water—at least in volume—in the continent of North America, were two groups of wooden houses, occupied by some half-dozen white men, the only denizens of that mighty waste. In one of these huts, some 20 years ago, an old man—a Scotchman from the Isles—lay dying. It was the depth of the dead winter; and those who dwell in less rigorous climates can form little notion of its intensity. The whole waste of earth and water was locked in the embrace of frost and snow. As the old man felt himself going, he called to his bed-side a kinsman of his own—a young Scotchman from the Lewis—and made him promise solemnly that he would carry his body and lay it in the graveyard on the island at Fort Simpson. It was many a long day's journey, and the road was rough and, in winter, well-nigh impracticable. He promised, nevertheless, and the old fur trader died content as the sun rose. "Daylight," he said; "get the snow-shoes ready; the road is long; it's time to start." And so he died.

The promise must be kept. The dead body was placed on a narrow sled, wrapped in canvas; another sled carried necessary provisions, and eight dogs were selected for the long haul. The young Scotchman and his French-Canadian companion set out on their desolate journey. All went well till the seventh evening, when all the efforts of the dogs were unavailing to drag the heavy sled containing the dead body of their master up the steep hill that intervened before the camping-ground was reached. Precious time was being lost, and it was determined to leave the sled till daylight should enable the march to be resumed. What evil could happen to the dead in that vast solitude?

The camp was made, trees felled, snow cleared, and the evening meal was being prepared, when the young Scotchman ceased his work and listened, as though he heard some sound. "Gaudet, did you speak?" "No. What do you hear?" Before the other could reply there passed through the forest, as distinctly as human voice could utter the sound, the word "*Marche!*" a word uttered often enough in dog-driving, but said now in a tone of deep suppressed suffering, in an accent strangely familiar to both men. It was the voice of the old master, of the man whose dead body they were bearing to the grave. A third time the word was repeated in the same agonised tones, and the very dogs rose from their lairs in the snow, and listened with ears erect to the well-known sound. Instinctively the two men moved towards the river, and looked for the sled which they had left halfway up the hill. There it lay in the cold moonlight, and beside it was crouched a dark form that seemed to move at times along it. In the intense stillness a low crunching sound, as of the gnawing of teeth, was plainly heard. The two men were no novices in the sights and sounds of the wilderness. They recognised the presence of a large wolverine, whose sawlike teeth were busy in cutting the lines that bound the body to its bier. Startled by their cries it made off, and the cause of the weird order was manifest.

A third of the journey only was completed, and the remaining two-thirds were fraught with peril, and with dire scarcity of food. The distance had been under-estimated, and the dogs were so ill-fed that at length starvation drove them to a mad

intensity of fierceness. The twentieth night found the camp within 20 miles of Fort Simpson. The last morsel had been flung to the starving dogs, and all was quiet. It was about the middle of the night when a sharp cry echoed through the forest, and brought both men to their feet—"Marche!" "The same voice again," said the Scotchman; "something is wrong." As he listened he heard the snarling and snapping of teeth that told him the dogs had got something which they were tearing. It flashed upon him what had happened. The sled was empty. They had carried the body into the forest. Plunging down the steep, they drove the maddened beasts away, and found that it was even so. The canvas coverings had been torn to shreds, and nothing but the marble substance of the frozen flesh had saved it from destruction. The next day the fateful journey was accomplished, and the body of the old hunter, which his spirit had watched so well, was laid in the spot that he had selected.

Colonel Butler can find in his philosophy no explanation for that strange word that twice so opportunely broke the silence of the night. He is "content to leave the explanation of the story to other hands." "The world is made up of men who are ready to believe anything and men who are ready to deny everything. Alas! how little the breezes of denial or of asseveration can ruffle the great ocean of death! In the vast sea that lies outside this life the echoes of disbelief or of credence are lost ere they quit our shores. Yet from that dim ocean stray sounds are sometimes borne inland, and from the endless surges of Eternity, waifs, such as this warning word, are cast ever and anon upon the sands of time."

"Let no one doubt the faith of the man whose word has been my evidence. For many a wintry mile of travel he had been my sole companion. If man has a right to place trust in the spoken word of another man, I have a right to put faith and trust in the story of this lonely dog-drive, as it was told me by the Scotch clerk of by-gone days, now himself a veteran fur-hunter of the North." No doubt. The story bears on its face marks of genuineness, and has many a parallel in the records which are more or less familiar to our readers. To us it presents no sort of difficulty that the execution of the last wish should be watched by the man who made it; nor that the old Scotch fur-hunter should give evidence from the unseen land of the same care for his body that he had displayed before he quitted it. *He* was not dead. Death had wrought no change in him. What he wished when in the body, he wished still, and evidenced his wish by such means as were possible to him.

We learn from the *Chicago Tribune* of March 23rd, that a case of great interest to Spiritualists has been legally decided. Mrs. Annie Lord Chamberlain claimed at law the dividends on a policy for 10,000dols. assigned to her by Colonel Cushman. Her claim was resisted on the grounds that Colonel Cushman, being a Spiritualist, was insane, and that Mrs. Chamberlain exercised undue influence over him. The case was tried before Judge Tuley, who, so far as we know, is not a Spiritualist, though of his four colleagues on the bench two are adherents of that faith. The judgment went against Mrs. Chamberlain on the ground of undue influence, and a policy that had been specially kept up for her benefit was, therefore, lost to her. But the judge affirmed decisively that belief in Spiritualism of a very pronounced type is no evidence of insanity. "Prominent men," he said, "in various professions, whose integrity, intellectual ability, and perfect sanity would not be questioned, had testified that they had seen Spirits, had had communications with departed friends, and generally that they believed in the same spiritual phenomena as Colonel Cushman did. Such phenomena could not now be dismissed, as in the case of Lyon v. Home, with the remark that they were 'mischievous nonsense.' It was a notorious fact that men who stood high in science, judges who adorned the bench, attorneys and solicitors among the foremost at the Bar, clergymen, physicians, literary men of the highest ability, and, in effect, persons of prominence in every walk and profession of life, honestly believed in the truth of such phenomena, and it would be the sheereest nonsense to hold that such belief was any evidence of an unsound mind."

On the question of "undue influence" the judge laid it down that "when there existed any peculiar, confidential, or fiduciary relations between parties, the count would not be sustained

except on the fullest, clearest, and most convincing proof that the act was done apart from the bias or influence necessarily attendant on such relation of the parties. . . The doctrine that undue influence in cases of gifts should be presumed had been extended to cases of gifts to soothsayers, confidential agents, next friend, medical advisers, ministers of the Gospel, and *the reason of the rule would seem to require that it be extended to mediums.* The one absorbing thought of this life was to divine the mysteries of the life hereafter, and he or she who could unfold them to mortal vision, or who professed to do so, was more apt to acquire influence in that than in any other way. . . . *The burden of proof must rest on the medium to sustain the gift.*" From this it results that in America the medium is placed on the footing of confidential adviser; that the *onus probandi* of mediumship rests on the medium, and that the law requires proper evidence to rebut the presumption of "undue influence" in such case. It is plain that this is a very long step in advance. It is the first effort of modern jurisprudence to define the status of mediums. America is in the van as usual. When will England follow?

The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of March 26th has an account of a test séance with W. H. Powell, which is worthy of note. Mr. Powell, our readers will remember, is a medium through whom slate-writing is obtained, and also that even more remarkable phenomenon of causing writing on a slate by tracing the characters with the index-finger of the medium's, or, in some cases, of the observer's hand. The record of this particular séance is valuable on account of the conditions under which it was held, as well as from the fact that it was a prompt response to a challenge of one Dr. Catlin, who wagered a hundred dollars that he would put Powell under such conditions as should effectually prevent any psychographic manifestations. The conditions were these: Mr. Powell was placed behind a screen of cloth, which was wide and high enough to conceal him from view. In this screen were cut two apertures through which the arms of the medium were protruded. When the medium was entranced, Dr. Catlin held a slate near the apertures; *his right hand was taken by Mr. Powell's, and with its index-finger writing was produced on the slate so held.* It is satisfactory to learn that the doctor confessed himself convinced.

If this account be accurate, and we have no sort of reason for suggesting the contrary, one such result is worth five hundred obtained under equivocal conditions. It needs repeating again and again that the ordinary mind will not receive and assimilate records of such phenomena as transcend ordinary experience, if there be any loophole for escape. Even where there is none the tendency is to manufacture one; how much less, then, are the chances of conviction when the phenomena are produced under conditions which no scientific experimentalist would tolerate for a moment. Here, it seems to us, we have simple conditions that leave nothing to be desired: light; a slate held by the experimenter, who had shewn his scepticism by the sufficient test of backing it with a hundred dollars; a medium who *could* not use unfair means of manipulation even if he *would*; and writing caused by the experimenter's own finger. If those who possess this psychographic power would always exercise it under such carefully-guarded conditions the effect on the popular estimate of Spiritualism would soon be felt.

As a relief from the animadversions of the Press against the subject of Spiritualism in general and of mediums in particular, it will be agreeable to many of our readers to hear that there is an article on Daniel Douglas Home in this week's number of *Truth* which will well repay perusal. It is fair, temperate, and—in one appropriate word—truthful. It neither makes out its subject to be an angel of light nor does it set him down as a demon of darkness. It ought not to be a matter for surprise that a journal should be bold enough to publish simple fact on such a topic as this; but, knowing the amount of prejudice that generally exists, we own to being somewhat astonished to find that at this particular moment *Truth* sets it down that D. D. Home "has certainly converted atheists and materialists to have faith in God and the immortality of the soul." This is surely another fact for the Archbishop of Canterbury to make a note of.

One watch kept right will do to try many by; but, on the other hand, one that goes wrong may be the means of misleading a whole neighbourhood: and the same may be said of the example we individually set to those around us.

## MEDIUMS AND PURGATORIAL SPIRITS.

I think nearly all thoughtful Spiritualists will agree with me when I say that the conduct of professional mediums is from time to time such as to justify the language of our law judges and of the public Press when they denounce such conduct as "*low, vulgar, cunning, false, ridiculous, fraudulent, disgusting, filthy and criminal.*"

How comes it that this language can be truthfully applied sometimes to those whose mission it is to demonstrate the existence of a spiritual world, and thus save the present age from the subjugation to a hard and dead materialism?

It is not difficult to answer this question.

Swedenborg predicted that such would be the result of opening communication with the World of Spirits, and his belief was founded on his knowledge and experience.

He teaches that the Spirit World is broadly divided into three regions—the hells, the heavens, and the intermediate region.

He further says those from the lowest hells are restrained, and those from the higher heavens rarely communicate objectively with men, but that those from the intermediate state are forever seeking this intercourse.

If so, then it may be said that those Spirits who control our professional public mediums are, in the vast majority of cases, neither angels nor devils, but are idle, wandering, bombastic, lying, mischievous, ignorant and impure Spirits from the purgatorial regions; and hence the continual danger to bodily and spiritual health which public mediums experience.

If these statements are true, then it is surely most evident that all seeking after Spirits for amusement or idle curiosity is to be severely condemned.

On the other hand, spiritualistic phenomena not only at once refute the arguments of the materialist, but throw a light on the nature of matter itself, which, sooner or later, must result in discoveries in physics of the deepest consequence.

Possessed by these views, I would suggest:—

1. All attempts to popularise Spiritualism, or to make it a subject of social amusement, by arranging the formation of promiscuous Spirit circles, should be abandoned as foolish, disorderly, and often most dangerous.

2. As it is in dark séances that most of the frauds have been committed, all *promiscuous* dark séances should be discouraged, and dark séances only held when the circumstances are thoroughly suitable and expedient.

3. Having regard to the usually unreliable source of communications through mediums, let all such communications be received and submitted to the judgment of common sense.

4. Let those only enter on spiritualistic experiments whose motives are unselfish, pure, and truthful.

There is nothing new in these recommendations, for they have from time to time appeared in spiritual papers; but the present seems emphatically to be a time when it becomes all Spiritualists to set their houses in order and to watch and pray, lest "the light which is within us may become darkness," and the world, instead of "shining more and more unto the perfect day," be degraded into a pandemonium by the wholesale invasion through public mediums of the disorderly, lying, and impure Spirits from the purgatorial sphere.

THEOSOPHIST.

## THE TRIAL OF MRS. FLETCHER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is to be hoped that the recent trial which has just been terminated at the Central Criminal Court will prove a salutary warning to all evilly-disposed mediums who misuse the spiritual gifts given them for the purposes of testifying to the veracity of Spiritualism.

Deeply as every pitying mind must feel commiseration with Mrs. Fletcher under the circumstances, yet the substance of the evidence, as sifted by the keen discernment of lawyers, is of too glaring a nature to admit of any other solution in a reasoning mind otherwise than the verdict pronounced.

Spiritualists may congratulate themselves that a clear-headed judge would not permit the truths of Spiritualism to be dragged through the mud of a court of justice; truths which are accepted by so many thousands in this country, behind which the professional mediums often screen themselves for the purposes of carrying on a traffic for their worldly interests.

Spiritualists are too apt to allow themselves to be blindly led by mediums, becoming thereby so infatuated with their favourite high-priest that they will hear no word detrimental to

their idol, although the everyday acts of the medium whom they set up and at whose shrine they worship, are not what would be tolerated by them if performed by any other less favoured individual, proving how totally idol-worship has ensnared their minds, rendering them unqualified for discriminating upon the worth and manifestations of a medium.

Due allowance must be made for mediums who are continually surrounded by all sorts and kinds of invisible influences emanating from the physical as well as the spiritual world. Only a medium can understand the hidden power bearing so directly upon the mental organism, often resulting in eccentric acts on the part of the medium, tolerated by those inquirers who study these laws. Where a continuous series of circumstances occur, intimately connecting a medium with a planned, practical result, which, upon analysis, bears undisputed traces of dishonesty, it is just to attribute the "moving-power" to the medium, and not to outside influence, although the medium may have been very much helped by a certain class of Spirits in the invisible world to the accomplishment of the purpose in view. All Spiritualists must know, if they have studied this subject even superficially, that "Like attracts like."

For the welfare of Spiritualism it is as well to have the tares severed from the wheat, and the sooner this be accomplished the better for the furtherance of the sacred cause of Spiritualism. All true Spiritualists, who are not idol-worshippers, must practically help to bear this out and not shrink from allowing the supposed "idol" to be the object of public scrutiny.

At home circles, with non-professional mediums, the noblest results and highest phases will be attained.

ERNEST A. TIETKENS,  
President of the White Cross Society.

18, Oakley-square, N.W.

#### MRS. FLETCHER'S CONVICTION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I think you will grant me a little space for the expression of some individual opinions for which no one need hold you responsible. It is right that allowance be made for my personal interest in the case, but I think I have a right to be heard.

My personal interest is this. I am an American, though now for 20 years resident in England, and Mrs. Fletcher is my countrywoman, severed from country, friends, parents, husband, child. She is also my friend whom I greatly esteem for many talents and virtues—eloquence, wit, great kindness and generosity, heroic courage and unflinching fidelity. Believing in her thoroughly, I have stood by her side during this trial. It was a small matter to become one of her bail; a trifling inconvenience with no risk, because a woman who came across the Atlantic in mid-winter to meet an accusation against her, who left home, country, and safety, and risked penal servitude simply and only to meet and repel an accusation which she alleged to be false, was not likely to run away. This heroic attitude and action was not so much as mentioned by Mr. Justice Hawkins in his charge to the jury; nor has it been even hinted at in the leaders of the Press which have followed the conviction—torrents of abuse which take the place of the dead cats, rotten eggs, and worse, of the times of the pillory.

In many ways there has been a failure of justice. The whole case of the prosecution rested, as Mr. Justice Hawkins admitted, upon the credibility of one witness, and that was in no way tested. Her two husbands, relations, trustees, friends, were absent; Colonel Morton, who might have given important evidence, and who came from America to do so, was included in the indictment, so that his testimony was shut out.

The prisoner was not examined. Her story is yet untold. This is, in my opinion, a horrible feature of English criminal procedure. In other countries a person accused of crime can make his own explanations. I have seen a man convicted of murder in England, and then asked, *after* the verdict, what he had to say. His simple story convinced everyone who heard it of his innocence. Had the jury heard it, they would never have found him guilty. The judge went through the horrible farce of putting on the black cap and sentencing him to be hanged—and then wrote to the Home Secretary to get the other farce enacted of sending her Majesty's pardon to a man as innocent as herself of the crime of which he had been convicted.

In the case of Mrs. Fletcher no defence has been made. She has been condemned unheard. I see it stated that £1,200 were expended for the defence. For what? To

examine 120 feet of parchment, every line of which I am taxed to pay for; for a cross-examination which had no effect; for calling a dozen witnesses to character, whose testimony did not weigh a pin's head with judge or jury, or the public.

Testimony was offered to prove the reality of spiritual manifestations, and that the prisoner at the bar might, and probably did, act in good faith. All testimony to shew that the facts of Spiritualism are genuine was ruled out of court. It was assumed that every medium is an impostor, and every believer in Spiritualism a dupe. The logic of the trial, and the case put to the jury, was this: Every person professing to be a Spiritualist is either a knave or a fool. The accused are not fools, *ergo* they are knaves.

The efforts to injure the character of Mrs. Fletcher in respect to matters not within the jurisdiction of the Court seem to me very cowardly. What had a photograph in a fashionable dress, *not more objectionable than every one may see at any ball or dinner*, or in a hundred shop windows, to do with her guilt or innocence? How could a photograph handed to the jury affect the question of obtaining property by false pretences? So of the cruel insinuation that Mrs. Fletcher had promoted a criminal intimacy between her husband and the prosecutrix, for which there was no foundation, and with which the Court had nothing to do, but which was charged against the silent and helpless victim, who sat there bound and gagged, and who could neither answer nor resist. With some men the days of chivalry are ended.

It is said that Spiritualism was not on trial in this case. No, not on trial, nor was Mrs. Fletcher. She and Spiritualism were alike condemned without a hearing. I see now that it would have been infinitely better had she defended herself, and told her own story to the jury. It is a favourite saying of the lawyers that a man who pleads his own case has a fool for his client. But in this case Mrs. Fletcher could not have done less or done worse, and might have done much better. She would have had the satisfaction of telling her own story. As it was, the only words heard from her lips were "Not guilty, my lord." They were said fervently and sincerely.

As a witness I have something to complain of. I fear that I committed perjury. I feel myself forsworn. I took a solemn oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and I was allowed only to answer one question, which was not considered of the least importance. I could have given testimony which I think of great importance as to the character of communications from departed Spirits, and how they are affected by the characters of those who give them, and those through whom they are received; but after all my solemn swearing as to what I would do, I was only permitted to say that I had known Mrs. Fletcher for three years; that I had known her American friends; that I had in my possession her letters of introduction from high official persons in America to the Hon. James Russell Lowell, American Minister, giving her the highest character for integrity and honour; and that I had formed the same opinion from intimate acquaintance. But my mouth was stopped, and I was not allowed to give the testimony which I think ought to have been given.

For, had the jury believed that messages were, or even could have been, received by the prosecutrix from her mother, through the Fletchers, they would have been bound to acquit the prisoner. If such messages are ever received they may have been in this case. If Mrs. Heurtley could communicate with her daughter, she may have wished her to live with the Fletchers, and divide her property with them, or leave it to them "for the propagation of Spiritualism in its higher phases." It is a rule of law that an accused person must be considered innocent until proven guilty, and that if a juryman sees any reason to doubt, the benefit of such doubt must be given to the accused.

The fact that the jury took more than an hour-and-a-half to find a verdict shews that there was much doubt and hesitation—probably energetic bullying on one side, and weak surrender on the other. Few men have the firmness to stand by their convictions against a majority. We have read that "wretches hang that jurymen may dine."

This trial and its result carry us back to worse times, when witches were burned or hanged, and Quakers were imprisoned and whipped. Tender Quaker women were whipped from town to town chained to a cart's tail, in Massachusetts, stripped to the waist, and the lash cutting into their naked bosoms. For very light offences, or for none, women have been burned at Smithfield, at Tyburn, and at Newgate. We may be thankful for so much of progress as to have given Spiritualists milder punishments.

That Mrs. Fletcher is a martyr to Spiritualism no one can doubt. Had Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher been members of any other religious body, there would have been no criminal prosecution. The question as to property would have been settled in a court of equity. Questions often arise as to undue influence, wills are contested, but we do not hear of criminal prosecutions of either Catholic priests or Protestant pastors. Mr. Fletcher, Mrs. Fletcher, and Colonel Morton have been convicted because they are Spiritualists.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

## OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

## "The Spiritualist."

The last issue is largely occupied with the case of Mrs. Fletcher. The remarks of the judge, in delivering sentence, are quoted at length. The genealogy of Mrs. Davies is given; and a leading article, taking the case for a text, enables the readers of the paper to obtain the editor's opinions of both Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. The fact that Mrs. Davies called no witnesses among her family, or friends, to support her case, is attributed to her desire not to involve them in her troubles as a Spiritualist. Concerning Mrs. Davies' character, and position, in Spiritualism, our contemporary remarks:—"Her ruling motives were pure and noble, and most cruelly has her generosity been repaid. She is entitled to all honour and support from that movement which she entered intending to benefit; some few of the chief and other workers in Spiritualism have helped to sustain her through her recent troubles, with their friendly sympathy. She is in an analogous position to a friendly stranger entering a house and receiving gross ill-treatment at the hands of underlings in the hall." As the finding of the jury is, apparently, in effect, that the messages which Mrs. Davies received were false—mere pretences—and, as the article quoted supports that finding, our contemporary, by implication, contends, of course, that though Mrs. Fletcher "was a strong physical as well as trance medium," her trances, in this particular case, were pretences, and the messages frauds. Dr. James "Mack," to whom is attributed the credit of disabusing Mrs. Davies of her affection for Mrs. Fletcher, receives no notice, unless the opening article, "Future Work in Spiritualism," recommending the cultivation of healing mediumship, and giving some half-dozen reports of the doctor's marvellous powers, are to be accepted as recognitions of his share in recent events.

## "The Medium."

The Medium contains an abstract of a sermon preached by the Rev. C. Ware, of Plymouth, before the "Free Spiritual Society" of that town. After paying a glowing tribute to Jesus, and His mission, the sermon goes on to say:—"For a time His successors followed in His steps; they were truly 'spiritual teachers'; they were in direct communication with the Spirit world; and they were directed and guided by spiritual beings; of which you find abundant proofs in the Acts of the Apostles. But the light gradually died out, and for many centuries the world has been enveloped in spiritual darkness."

Speaking of Spiritualism, it is claimed that "a new spiritual dispensation has been inaugurated; gain the morning dawns; again the angel voice is heard, 'Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy.'"

Mr. James Holmes, late lecturer on Secularism, is in town, and notices are given of coming lectures at Ladbroke, Goswell, and Quebec Halls.

Continuing the subject of "Bible Spiritualism," the writer "Ouranoi" says:—"It is impossible to charge Bible Spiritualists with self-seeking. They lived not to themselves. Enoch, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Paul, and John, stand on lofty pedestals of universal fame and honour; but it is because of the moral completeness of their lives. . . . Can such men be multiplied? Can such Spirit-life be diffused on earth? That that might be, was why such men lived. They simply shewed the way to eternal life. That is the whole meaning of the Gospel of Christ, to multiply Christlike souls. . . . But these oasis men of Bible Spiritualism were pre-eminently loving men. They lived in love, and the refrain of all their teachings is—love one another. It is the life of the true heavens. Because these mediums supplied such fountain-hearts of love, the archangel bands could dwell and communicate with them."

## "Miller's Psychometric Circular."

This journal is full of interesting matters to the student of psychometry, and it contains a synopsis of a lecture upon that topic by Professor William Denton, the author of a remarkable work entitled, "The Soul of Things." Mr. Denton is reported as saying: "The psychometric power was discovered nearly 40 years ago, by Professor Buchanan, and it was the grandest discovery ever made on this planet—but it was too far in advance of the times, for the discoverer to be appreciated. He related the steps of the discovery as given by Professor Buchanan from his first experiment, discovering that an Episcopal bishop was so sensitive as to have the taste of brass in his mouth whenever he touched the metal; then experimenting on medicines, and finding a great number who could feel and realise the influence of any medicine contained in a paper held in the hands; and, finally, discovering that the most sensitive could give a perfect outline or description of a man's character and constitution, by holding his letter in the hand or on the forehead."

## "The Religio-Philosophical Journal."

The Index (U.S.A.) has distinguished itself by a bold stand against what it would denominate superstition, and in that it doubtless includes Spiritualism. We learn, however, from the

Religio-Philosophical Journal that it has admitted a letter from a correspondent, in which some very frank and pertinent remarks on the tendency of modern critics to treat Spiritualism unfairly are made. The close of the letter is worth quoting.

"The main point, to my mind, is here. Is there any valid proof that intelligence, other than that of the medium and sitters, is manifested? If there is, does not this prove the spiritualistic claim, without any regard to the quality of that intelligence? If I stand at one end of a telegraph wire and receive a message, this message may be puerile or badly spelled; but is not the proof conclusive that a conscious intelligence of some kind is at the other end? I see no present way of escape from this inference.

"Now glance at two or three claimed facts. A slate is prepared and held under the table; and, after it is fixed in position, Slade asks Prof. Zollner to say what he would like to have written. He replies,—the name just then, for the first time, flashing into his mind,—'Littrow, Astronomer.' He hears the pencil writing, and the name appears. If this is true, nothing but intelligent agency can explain it. Sargent tells of preparing two slates with his own hand—slates bought by himself and that the medium had never touched. He puts a bit of pencil between them, fastens them together, and a lady, living in his family, carries them across the room and places them on a table. After a few minutes, the same lady brings them back to him; he opens them and finds an intelligible message from a dead friend. The medium was twenty-two feet from the table on which the slates were placed; and, from the time when Sargent prepared them till they were returned to him, he, the medium, had not been near them nor touched them.

"Now, one or other of the following hypotheses must be accepted:

- "1. The witnesses lie; or
- "2. The mediums deceive the sitters; or
- "3. Both medium and sitter are the dupe of some unexplained phenomena; or
- "4. These things are the work of invisible, intelligent beings.

"It seems to me that, both for the sake of the wondrous nature of the claimed facts, and for the sake of the thousands who are believing in Spiritualism, these things are important enough to be investigated and decided on.

"There is no escape. There is a force. There is an acting intelligence. That proves the claims of Spiritualism. But what is the intelligence? That is by no means settled. Do not let us claim too much, but insist on the demonstrated fact of intelligence outside of a physical body."

## "The Banner of Light."

Lengthy reports of services in Boston in celebration of the thirty-third anniversary of Modern Spiritualism serve to shew that American Spiritualists are fully alive to the importance of the recent event. The principal celebration was held in the Music Hall, Boston. The exercises were arranged by the "Shawmut Spiritual Lyceum," of which Mr. J. B. Hatch is conductor. Captain Richard Holmes presided, and delivered the inaugural address, which was mainly devoted to a review of the position of the orthodox churches in New England, comparing their career and influence with those of the church of the new dispensation—Spiritualism—which the speaker said was honeycombing all varieties of orthodoxy in every direction. Mr. W. J. Colville then discoursed upon "What has Spiritualism done for the World in the past thirty-three Years?" in which he claimed that Spiritualism was the father of every religious system. Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond, expressly present from Chicago, entertained the meeting with an address, described "as beyond the usual grace and eloquence of this talented instrument," her subject being the past and future of Spiritualism.

The Children's Progressive Lyceum of Boston also celebrated the anniversary at the Paine Hall, among the speakers being Dr. H. B. Storer, J. P. Greenleaf, Dr. Richardson, John Wetherbee, Mrs. N. J. Willis, J. Frank Baxter (a celebrated test medium), and Dr. Joseph Beals, president of the celebrated Lake Pleasant Camp Meeting Association.

Mr. C. E. Taylor, writing upon "Spiritualism in the Carribees," gives an interesting account of an inquiry into Spiritualism in the island of St. Thomas, resulting in the development of slate-writing mediumship, &c.

## "The Herald of Progress"

Prints a discourse through Mrs. Richmond upon "The Sphere of Wisdom," delivered under the control of "Judge Edmonds," in Chicago, in 1877. Writing upon "The Perihelia," and the impending planetary conjunctions, Mr. E. Casael urges his readers to be most careful in matters of diet, especially between the years 1882 and 1885. He closes with the by no means comforting conclusion that there will be earthquakes, wars, and causes for mourning in profusion in this and other lands. The Newcastle Spiritualists intimate their intention of holding a large meeting for the double purpose of drawing together the friends of the Herald, and celebrating the thirty-third anniversary of Modern Spiritualism.

## GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday morning last, Mr. Wilson again took up the subject of "Comprehension," the basis of his remarks being "Colour and its Significance," which he treated in a highly interesting manner. I feel sure that if more of our friends would come and hear him and take part in the discussion, they would be satisfied with the results. In the evening we had the pleasure of hearing A. T. P. (Recorder of Historical Controls), who delivered a most interesting lecture on "The Present Position of Spiritualism," which he considered to be most satisfactory. The article in the *Times*, of a few days previous, on the late trial, and the writer thereof, were subjected to a severe and well-merited criticism. At the close of the lecture, the speaker favoured us by reading a most interesting control—said to be by a German professor of philosophy in one of our English colleges. I am glad to say that the audiences at this hall are increasing very perceptibly, which is most gratifying and encouraging to the committee.—J. N. J.

## LADBROKE HALL.

The many friends of Mr. F. O. Matthews, including numbers of his regular congregation, assembled here on Good Friday, to participate in a tea and entertainment which he had provided for the occasion, and by which he celebrated the thirty-third anniversary of Spiritualism, and the first anniversary of his committal by the Keighley magistracy for alleged false pretences. Over 70 friends sat down to an admirably served tea, and the hall used for the entertainment was comfortably filled by the time that part of the arrangements commenced. Mr. J. J. Morse having been requested to occupy the chair, opened the proceedings by a speech dealing with the celebration of the advent of Spiritualism, and the charge raised against Mr. Matthews a year ago,—reading a letter from a gentleman in Keighley which put an entirely different complexion upon the case to that stated in the police reports. He also paid a graceful tribute to the "Spiritual Evidence Society" of Newcastle, for the part its members took in promoting a memorial to the Home Secretary praying for Mr. Matthews' release, the statement being heartily cheered, as, especially, was the mention of the name of Mr. H. A. Kersey, who undertook the labours incident upon getting up the petition. An excellent programme of vocal and instrumental music, under the conductorship of Mr. J. Knight Smith, who was assisted by the Misses Knight Smith, and Miss Jennie Johnson, with an admirably rendered recitation, "The Artist's Dream," by Miss Allen, combined with a vote of confidence and sympathy to Mr. Matthews, moved by Mr. Kipps, seconded by Mr. Green, supported by Mr. Allen, and enthusiastically adopted by the audience, helped to make the evening a very agreeable one. Mr. Morse, who presided in his usual able and genial manner, was also accorded a hearty vote of thanks, which closed an evening that will long be remembered as a pleasant occasion by all who participated in its enjoyment.

## QUEBEC HALL, MARYLEBONE ROAD.

The Sunday evening meetings still continue to be well attended, under the conduct of Mr. J. MacDonnell. The service consists of a reading from the New Testament, a couple of hymns, and an address on some subject in connection with Christian truth and popular delusions. On Sunday last the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ were considered, when the light of modern Spiritualism was brought to prove their possibility, and the circumstances of the case were shewn to justify a belief in them. A most interesting discussion followed, in which the sectarian views of the several speakers were combated by the conductor in a friendly spirit.

## CARDIFF.

The adjourned quarterly general meeting of the Cardiff Spiritualist Society was held on Wednesday, the 13th inst. One of the members was controlled by his spirit guides, who gave a few suggestions as to the management of the public meetings, the suggestions being quite in harmony with the general tone of the meeting. At the same time, it was unanimously thought prudent to re-consider the subject on the Saturday following. The Society accordingly met on Saturday, the 16th inst., with the double object of forming a future policy and of welcoming Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, who had been invited to speak at Cardiff on Easter Sunday. After a general discussion, Mr. Morse spoke at some length in connection with the practical working of societies, and gave what was considered by the meeting highly valuable counsel. This was followed by a vote of welcome and thanks to Mr. Morse, and the meeting shortly afterwards dissolved. The chair was occupied by Mr. E. Adams, member of the Council.

The public mind in this neighbourhood has been considerably exercised with the trial and sentence of Mrs. Fletcher, and it was with no small surprise that the walls and posting stations of the town were seen covered with announcements that on Easter Sunday two orations would be delivered in the Town Hall by Mr. Morse, the use of the hall having been specially granted by the Mayor for the purpose. It was also notified that collections would be made for the benefit of the Cardiff Infirmary, the bare expenses of the meetings being deducted. The meetings were held in the Crown Court, the chair being occupied in both instances by the hon. sec. of the Cardiff Spiritualist Society.

Hymns from the "Spiritual Lyre" were sung, the organist (Mr. Adams) accompanying on a splendid American organ, kindly lent by Messrs. Cooper, Coutts, and Co., pianoforte warehousemen. The devotional character of the proceedings apparently surprised some of the public, who probably expected something different. The subject in the morning was "Spiritualism as a means of Grace," and in the evening "Three Physicians." The topics were most ably treated; the value of the truths of Spiritualism was plainly put before the listeners, and the firm rock of Spirit communion was shewn to be the basis of the Spiritualist's calm confidence in a progressive life beyond. The three physicians—"Work," "Culture," and "Religion"—were placed before the evening meeting in a most comprehensive manner. A few such orations delivered yearly in this town could not fail to produce a salutary effect. The poetic brilliancy of the morning was set off by the deep thought of the evening, and the purely practical basis underlying both services commanded the earnest attention of large and appreciative audiences.

## EASTER, 1881.

Winter's death, in all its grim reality,  
Has gone. The fields around put on fresh green,  
And spring, in all its ideality,  
In leaf and tree, in flower and field, is seen.  
The songs of happy birds that long ago  
In silence died away o'er southern hills,  
Burst o'er our fields and through our woodlands flow.  
Fragrance of flowers the balmy breezes fills;  
The splashing, murm'ring, merry brook now sings  
Adown the glen with graceful twist and turn,  
And o'er the rocks so blithely, gaily springs,  
Dashing soft spray o'er moss and early fern,  
That lately still and silent 'neath the weight  
Of ice and snow lay shrouded as in death.  
Say! What the power that so can change the state?  
Who gives the tree its life, the bird his breath?  
Oh, wondrous power, so far and yet so near,  
That out of death such life, such joy can form!  
Thy sterner works we, seeing, see with fear,  
And tremble when we hear the winter's storm.  
But most we fear the unknown change of death,  
The curtain that we long to raise, and know  
What is, when thou hast ta'en the breath,  
And we, or ours, in silence hence must go.  
Does that dark winter change to joyous spring?  
Will all thy creatures new, fresh life receive?  
Will hearts, now sad, with boundless pleasure sing?  
Will doubting souls know what they'd fain believe?  
Oh! Teacher of long centuries ago,  
Whose life so pure, so far all sin above,  
Into whose soul the life of life had shone,  
Who lived and died to lead our souls in love  
Unto the Father—Thou did'st die!—May we  
Remember all thy guilelessness and grace,  
Thy love and tenderness, thy thoughts so free  
From self, devoted to our race;  
But Thou did'st rise again! Oh, wondrous thought!  
The noblest of mankind, our brother, friend,  
Back from the darksome shade of death has brought  
Tidings of life, of life death does not end.  
Thy tidings we receive, with joy believe,  
For see! the winter is but passing change,  
And earth its own doth ever but receive  
To give it back with powers of nobler range.

BLOODSTONE.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"J. K."—Your communication is in type, and will appear next week.

"INDIA."—Thank. The parcels have been despatched according to order.

THE SPIRITUALIST CASE.—The following letter has appeared in the *Daily News*:—"Sir,—In your report of the proceedings at the Old Bailey it is stated that Mrs. Fletcher was at one time 'a shampooer at a Turkish bath.' So far as I know Mrs. Fletcher was never connected with any Turkish bath. The mistake is traced, I find, to my having said that she 'was what is called at Turkish baths a shampooer.' Mrs. Fletcher, I believe, was what Dr. Mack calls 'a Healing Medium,' but I preferred not to use the phrase, as I do not understand spiritualist language. May I beg of you to give publicity to this explanation, as I should be sorry to spread any sort of misrepresentation about a woman whom I have always considered one of the best and sweetest I have ever known?—I am, Sir, yours truly, MARY BOOLE, 103, Seymour-place, Bryanston-square, April 13, 1881."

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—London, April 24, Ladbroke Hall, 7 p.m.; Belper, Sunday, May 1; Goswell Hall, Sunday, May 8; Liverpool, Sunday, May 15; Northampton, Sunday, May 29; Keighley, June 19; Stamford, July (date not fixed).

**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.

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**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.

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