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DIVES AND LAZARUS—HELL AND HEAVEN.

II.

In resuming our remarks on this parable, we would suggest that it contains a dim reference to what we think will be a very important and very clear part of the teaching of Spiritualism. It is expressed in the words by Christ:—"And, beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." On these words the Church has based one of its arguments for the eternity of punishment. The human mind is subject to strange delusions, but how in the name of exegesis the Church has ever been able to get eternal torment out of this parable, we are at a loss to perceive. We object to men putting more into a passage than the author's words contain. Christ here simply says that there was a division between Dives and Lazarus and their respective companions, and that that division was not crossable. It is another thing whether that would always be so. We hold that it teaches no more than this—that as long as Dives in character remained as he was, there would be an impassable gulf between him and Heaven. It is a rough illustration of a great spiritual truth. In the other life locality is obtained by Spirit identity. You are not able to go just anywhere there, any more than you are here. You are not able to reach just anybody there, any more than you are able to reach just anybody here. The homely proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together," is the cast-iron law of the next world. There was no point of contact between the characters of Dives and Lazarus, and so there was no touch from the one side or the other. Character separates men into societies, and thus the heavenly kingdoms are built up upon the great law of affinity of soul dispositions. The division between Dives and Lazarus was made by the repulsion of the one character to the other. This is an important canon for us in Spirit intercourse.

We think, too, that the remainder of the incident is dead against the common doctrine of an eternal hell. Look at this man Dives. He in hell was clearly not the same character as he was on earth. There was remorse, penitence in fact, sorrow for a wasted, useless, selfish life; and that divinest of all feelings, the truest sign of a regenerated heart, sympathy for others. The man who in hell could yearn that his brethren should not come there, and could plead for their salvation, was far from a demon. We doubt not that there are abodes in those dark regions full of malignant demon hearts. It must be so, to be in accord with the facts of human life. Scientific men went mad at first over the doctrine of evolution. They find now that there is a counterfoil to evolution, which they generally call degeneration. There is descent as well as ascent in the scale of animal life. So there is in human life. History reveals evolution as a joyous fact; it reveals degeneration with a painful emphasis. Nations have not only gone up, but they have also gone down. That law must hold good in the Unseen, for man is free to act, though bounded, in the gracious mercy of God as we have seen, by the limitations of corrective law. Spiritualism has made far too much of the "sweetness and light" of the other life. We do not believe all that Spirits tell us about being so happy. It does not sound as it should be. They ought not to be superlatively happy, even if they are good, and they certainly are not if they are bad. If good, the thought of loved ones in sinful plight must check their ecstasies over their own safety,

and give them hard and earnest work to do. It is said that the angels rejoice over one sinner returning from his ways. We admire them for their holy, divine passion at such an event. But it is forgotten by church preachers that the correlative to that is that the angels are equally grieved when the sinner has not returned. That is human, and therefore true. A heaven of unsullied happiness, with a hell beneath their feet filled with men and women, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, is to us an impossibility and utterly incredible! If they can sing and play harps for evermore while "the smoke of torment" of their family members "ascendeth up for ever," in all respect we would deliberately say we think them flippant pleasurelings, not divine angels, and we for one would decline to associate with such a throng. It would jar our spirit as much as the Great Vance or Jolly Nash singing a music-hall song in the midst of a Gladstone's uttering of a magnificent oration over the sorrows of the famine-stricken Hindoo nation.

But Dives was not a demon, for he displays no emotion or thought of such a temper. He has all the qualities of an embryo angel. Now look at this very carefully, and see the dilemma a strictly orthodox theologian is in. Here is a man with every sign of a converted, regenerate soul, and shut up in an eternal hell! Here is a man who feels the right, and wishes the right; and yet to all eternity he must weep in hell torments! Such an idea is simply absurd. Nothing but the mass of paganism incorporated with truth, falsely assuming to itself the name of Christianity, would ever tolerate such a theory as that. Here is an angel—Abraham—talking to an inhabitant of hell, awakened to a sense of his folly! Strange that such an illustration should come from the lips of Christ, and that His modern disciples, jealous for His honour, should be found teaching a hell and a heaven as if the inhabitants of each were completely boxed in from one another. The whole incident is a beautiful, yet sad, piece of Spiritualism. May God pardon the Church for mangling such a hallowed fact by their blinded obtuseness! They may get out of their difficulties by calling it a "parable"; but they must remember that every parable was a scene of real life; it was a fiction founded on fact, as a moral or tale should be. We confess we like this man Dives after all. Wealth had deceived him, but it had not demonised him. If a life of luxury on earth had cast a glamour over his eyes, hell opened them and made him a true penitent.

Before we pass on to our concluding thought we would notice another. The incident clearly recognises the ministry of angel Spirits and their sympathetic contact with earth, for "it came to pass that the beggar died, and that he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We do not remember ever to have heard or read a sermon which brought out this point. Why? The Church does not believe it, and what is more, flatly denies it in the greater part of Protestantism. Say to our more orthodox friends that redeemed men and women come to earth, and they will call you a heretic, and lift up their eyelids and their hands, in pious horror, and pray for the safety of your soul. We know they say that the angels are another race, but nothing is clearer than this—that the angels were men. The Bible says it in many places. There is not a passage that speaks of another race of beings. The Church often brings up as a clincher against the heretic, the concluding verses of the Revelations—reputed to be an interpolation, by the way—of the curses against anyone adding to or taking from the Book. Very boldly and very vehemently we take up the challenge, and accuse the Church itself of having added to and deducted more from the Bible than any other class. If the Jews turned the Temple into a place of barter and of scheming thieving tradesmen, the Church has turned the Bible to the vilest of uses. It almost needs another Christ to cleanse the Augean stable. The Bible is a book of the loftiest Spiritualism; its teachers, well endowed and privileged, deny the very fact on which it is based. We heard a young minister preach on the devils of the New Testament. We asked him if next Sunday he intended to preach a pendant sermon on the

angels of the New Testament, and to our great amusement he treated that suggestion as a romantic myth. He could firmly believe in the ministry of hell, but he could not believe in the ministry of Heaven. As we told him, we thought it hard lines that God should allow legions of prowling furies without the opposing forces of beneficent blessed ones. So far as we observe nature, we observe God's process to be that, if nature contains the potencies of disease and ruin, there are always attendant the potencies of salvation and cure.

Equally false has been the exegesis of the Church in the interpretation of the reply of Abraham to the pleading of Dives. To us that reply is pregnant with profound teaching. It is one of the stock passages brought forward to prove the iniquity of holding intercourse with Spirits! Perhaps nothing fifty years hence will shew the childish mind of our time more than the idea of its being sinful to talk with the dead. The Church teaches as though a Spirit were not a man or a woman any longer. They have changed into another race of beings, and not simply into another sphere. There is just as much reason in saying it is wrong for Englishmen to talk with Hottentots. If at any future time the reach of discovery enabled us to travel to the planet Mars, and if we found people residing there, there would not be the slightest compunction of conscience in our minds about doing both the travelling and the talking. The fact is, God means us to know as much as Himself *if we can*. The only limit is that *can*. There is no holy of holies in all the Temple which He has built. He has no veil drawn between one space and another, except our limited abilities. You might just as well say to science, as indeed it was said, and that even in our own times, "You are prying into forbidden territories," as say to Spiritualism that it has no right to open the secrets of human being. Why in the world it was right for us to talk to our dearest friend while on earth and not right for us to talk with him now he is in Heaven, we cannot in the least make out.

Besides, the very entreaty of Dives shews that it was a possibility, and even a probability, for Spirit men and women to go to earth. The very nature of the answer made by Abraham shews that the great Saint of the Jews did not regard it as a sin but as an useless experiment at that time. Abraham knew the unbelief of the human heart. Earth would believe anything, and any hypothesis, however absurd, rather than believe that one rose from the dead. People would say it was "Magnetism," "Unconscious Cerebration," "Psychic Force," "Mental Hallucination," "Imposture," &c. In fifty years time the Royal Society will probably burst into a hearty fit of laughter when some Spiritualist, with a brand new discovery, taught and elaborated by Spirit guides, refers to the history of 1850-80, and mentions the opinions of the great F. R. S.'s of the time, such as Professors Huxley, Tyndall, Faraday, and Carpenter, that Spiritualism was all bosh. The most cultured intellect of Rome 1800 years ago called Christianity a superstition for the ignorant, before which superstition a Newton and a Faraday of modern times have bowed their heads in lowly faith and reverence. The fact is, science does not know its own vulgarity and superstition. No men are more trammelled by the fashion of the times than our would-be leaders of thought. We hope to shew in a future article that the greatest of all ignorances and superstitions is that which rules the scientific mind at present—Materialism. The question with Abraham was not whether a Spirit-materialisation would be wicked, but *cui bono*? We think it is abundantly proved that he was most wise.

One word more on this interesting scene, and we have done. Abraham says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." In our days the force of this reply is rather broken. It is only lately that men begin to leave the arbitrary commands of authority and fall back on the higher dictates of reason, conscience, and heart—in other words, man himself is the ultimate test of truth. We are not to believe a thing because another says it, but because our blended faculties say Amen.

But that was an age in which authority was the chief basis of belief, and Abraham adapted his reply to the prevailing spirit of earth. The real meaning may be put thus, as the reasoning of Abraham to Dives: "If the evidence of Moses and the prophets has not awakened their reason and conscience, nothing else will." The spirit of that age was unbelief in what reason ought to have fully approved. They were not likely to treat any larger evidence with more credence or respectful attention. That this is true is proved from the fact that no miracle of Christ ever succeeded in convincing the general Jewish mind.

No sign or wonder can ever prove truth apart from the exercise of reason. If you have not reason at work, all the wonders God Himself could do would excite no more human feeling than is created by a Hindoo juggler baffling us by his tricks of legerdemain.

After all, we have never much liked the idea that Spirit intercourse should be necessary as an evidence of Immortality. We have not much faith in the reasoning or heart powers of those who require such evidence. To our view it shews a deadness, or thralldom, of the human heart and mind, which will leave them after a séance as untouched for real good as they were before. We solemnly deny that Immortality requires any proof but the reflection of the human mind upon the facts of life and consciousness. It seems to us as absurd to believe that a human being can ever die as to suppose that God can. A flippant scientist has said in our day that religious faith is a disease of the human mind. We have never been abashed by the witty scathings of little minds when they did not accord with our own reason. We might reply with an equal sneer that Materialism is to us the sign of a morbid intellect, and our sneer would be, to say the least, quite as well based as that of our opponent. It is one man against another, and both are entitled to respect. We are devotees of Reason, and are no favourers of mere sallies of flippant wit, which are about as likely to settle the truth of a matter as the ancient system of tournament or the modern one of duelling. It is a mere test of which can cut the deepest.

Of course, Spiritualism is a proof of Immortality, or at least of a continued existence, but we like better that prior habit of mind which looks upon Immortality as the *natural* outcome of human facts, and Spiritualism as the inevitable sequence. To our mind it is a great reflection upon the intellect of our so-called culture that it boldly, we may say boastfully, and scornfully, rejects the truth of Immortality. It is a sign of its palsied weakness, not of its strength. The greatest condemnation that will yet be uttered upon the scientific men of our day, as great as we utter upon the preachers of 1837, who proclaimed railways to be the work of the devil, is their ridiculous and unscientific attitude to the facts of Spiritualism. It proves that their reason is limited in its power of comprehension, and small in its capacity to philosophise the facts of life. It was the habit of mind which Abraham discerned on earth in that day; it is equally potent now. Spiritualism, we hold, is not meant to be so much a fact to prove Immortality, as the fact that ought naturally to be looked for, and worked for, and used for the purpose of human advance.

THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

(From the "Daily News.")

"The approaching Church Congress to be held this year at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and opened with an address from the President on Tuesday, the 4th of October next, will be remarkable for the number and importance of the topics which are to come under discussion. Among these there is a noticeable proportion of subjects which may, perhaps, be best described as lying upon the border line between questions of a purely ecclesiastical kind and those which appeal more directly to the sympathies of the outside world. We do not remember whether the doctrines of what the initiated called 'Spiritualism' have hitherto engaged the attention of an assembly of Churchmen meeting to discuss ecclesiastical policy and the relations of the Church with the State and the laity; though the Spiritualists, it is true, number some adherents whose names are to be found in the Clergy List; and one very zealous apostle of this new faith, who takes his stand upon the old story of Lord Lyttelton and the apparition, and who, if memory serves us, has even exhibited a qualified sort of indulgence towards the Cock Lane ghost, is at this time the incumbent of a populous London parochial district. The organisers of the Newcastle Congress, however, are clearly of opinion that the time has come when the Church must look these phenomena or delusions in the face, to the extent at least of considering how to deal with the believers, were it only by some of those 'short and easy methods' by which the last century divines were wont to treat heretical opponents; for we observe that on the first evening of the gathering, after 'Secularism' has been discussed by the Archbishop of York, the Reverend Harry Jones, and other speakers, Dr. R. Thornton will read a paper upon 'The Duty of the Church in Relation to the Prevalence of Spiritualism'; upon which subject, also, Canon B. Wilberforce has signified his intention of speaking."

SPIRIT-COMMUNION.

Spoken by the Rev. J. Page Hopps on taking the chair at a Lecture on Spiritualism.

(From the "Truthseeker.")

I consented to take the chair to-night for four reasons, and I wish these reasons to be known.

First: I hold with John Stuart Mill that we are always in danger of doing an injury to ourselves and to the world at large if we shut ourselves up against strange facts and unfamiliar ideas. Every great thought, every great discovery, has at first been condemned as a heresy or derided as a folly; and the world has suffered much from its too prolonged opposition to things it deemed false or impossible only because they were unfamiliar. We ought not to give credence to every novelty, but we ought to be ready to give every earnest messenger a hearing. If he is in error, we shall find him out; if he brings us a new truth it is obviously our interest to entertain him. And surely it is the depth of unwisdom to think that we have exhausted all that is to be known about this marvellous universe, of which this globe itself is only a tiny part.

But I am here, also, because the subject of the lecture has already passed beyond the first stages of unfamiliarity, and is now ripe for grave consideration by even cautious and sober-minded persons. Hundreds of thousands of persons,—one might safely say millions of persons—in all circles of society, in America, in India, in Africa, in China, in Australia, in Russia, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in England, solemnly and pertinaciously declare that Spirit-communion is a reality. Professors of science in Universities and mechanics at the bench, clergymen and colliers, statesmen and shopkeepers, poets and porters, titled ladies and seamstresses, artists and hard matter-of-fact manufacturers, in all parts of the world, hold to the belief of Spirit-communion. Horace Greeley was a believer in Spirit communion, so was Lloyd Garrison, so was Abraham Lincoln, so was John Pierpoint, so was George Thompson, Robert Chambers, Archbishop Whateley, and William Howitt. So, it is believed, were Lord Lytton and W. M. Thackeray. So, I believe, is the poet Longfellow, so are men like Professors Scheibner, Weber, Hoffmann, Zöllner, and Fechner, in the Universities of Germany, Butleroff and Wagner in the University of St. Petersburg, and many men like our own Alfred Russel Wallace, William Crookes, C. S. Varley, S. C. Hall, J. L. Nichols, Professor Barrett, and Lord Lindsay. But, after all, these more modern men only echo what has been affirmed from the days of Plutarch, Tertullian, and St. Augustine to the days of Lord Bacon, Thomas More, and John Wesley. There is, besides, a varied, important, and cultured literature on the subject, with a mass of evidence that is positively overwhelming, whether from a scientific, personal, or religious point of view. It seems to me, therefore, that we shall do well to give a respectful hearing to any intelligent person who declares that he also has investigated and is convinced that this thing is true.

Another reason for being here has weighed a good deal with me. Investigators are under a cloud at the present time; and it is very difficult to be even an inquirer into the alleged phenomena. The way has been defiled by fraud and blocked by folly; and honest believers are having and will have a hard time of it. As the world goes, that would be a good reason for keeping clear of the subject; but seekers after the truth must resist the too common tendency to go with the stream or to join the multitude who are only too ready to trample down the wheat with the tares. It is only to be expected that fraud and folly will appear in connection with a subject like this: "where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." But that is only a reason why those who are not birds of prey, but lovers of the truth, should say *God-speed* to those who are brave unselfish seekers of it.

A fourth reason for being here is the interesting fact that the speaker for the evening has been long known as a secularist lecturer, and that his investigations, as an unbeliever, with others like himself, have been the happy means of bringing him to belief in an unseen world of life and intelligence. I regard that as a suggestive fact, and one that by no means stands alone. We are living in days when it cannot be disguised that belief in a future life is waning. The old bases of belief are giving way. Authorities, creeds, and texts carry less and less conviction every day. What is wanted is evidence: and the evidence seems on the way. During the last fifteen years I have seen in many ways the force of this remark, and the need

of an evidential basis of belief in a future life. As one among many indications of this, I may quote from a letter I have just received from a perfect stranger in London. The writer is evidently a man of culture, fine feeling, and good sense; and, speaking of certain sober views of Spiritualism, he says, "I find them most instructive and hope inspiring, lifting me from the gloom of a materialistic tendency of thought into a state of mind more akin to my first religious emotions when as yet the hard fields of thought lay untrodden before me." That I believe to be a typical case. Hundreds of thousands of earnest men and women, who are losing their hold of the future life, are waiting to be brought back by fact and experience.

I need go no further, though I could if this were the fitting occasion for saying what I myself know of this matter. What I have said will suffice to account for my presence in this chair. I will, however, say this much, that while I believe there is a disheartening mass of folly, cant, and fraud mixed up with the pursuit of this subject, I also believe that underneath the mud there is a solid rock of truth. I cannot call myself a Spiritualist, but I venture to give a word of advice to Spiritualists. I say to them,—If you are right, you are dealing with beings whose identity you have really no means of proving. You need, therefore, to be on your guard, and to keep fast hold of your own conscience and common sense. It is possible that you have come up with the greatest fact of this or any age: time will shew: but in the meantime the one urgent necessity is that you should be sober-minded and work. Rejoice, if you like, in your hearts: but be exceedingly careful not to lose your heads.

A SEANCE WITH MISS WOOD.

On Thursday, July 28th, I had the pleasurable opportunity afforded me of attending one of Miss Wood's form séances at the rooms of the Spiritual Evidence Society, Weir's Court, Newcastle. We had 22 sitters, who were in most part imbued with the importance of the subject investigated. A stranger and myself firmly fastened the screws into the cabinet, the construction of which is well-known to visitors, and through the columns of the Spiritual press. Moreover, I had the pleasure of observing the construction thereof during the time a non-Spiritualist was fixing it into the corner of the room, and with many others I can bear ample testimony to its genuineness. Scarcely had the light been put down when a small box which stands outside the cabinet, containing a bell, &c., was heard to move and the lid began to be knocked up and down with great violence. During this time, Pocha, controlling her medium, began to entertain us with her pleasant sayings and ready retorts to the various questions put to her. Presently a tall form appeared at the right of the cabinet curtains. It quickly retired, and then presented itself at the centre aperture and made an attempt to cross the room, which to some extent was successful. Crossing to the left it shook hands with two of the gentlemen, and took one of them by the fingers to the cabinet and retired. The next moment Pocha was heard to give forth broken accents from behind the curtains, and then presented herself. She stood about three feet high, whereas the other form would have been well on for six feet. After she had chatted for a while, and palpably enlarged the bulk of her garments while standing before us, she requested me to come forward and examine the screws, which I did, going partially between her and the cabinet, and I found them exactly in the same position as I had left them, the lower very tightly screwed to a certain position, and the higher one not quite so firmly fixed, but exactly as left. I asked her to kiss me. She consented, so I got upon my knees, and she took my glasses off, and then presented a little black face for me to receive her favour. That the face was black, to me, was beyond a doubt, and that they were palpably sensible warm lips I kissed, I positively know. She afterwards shewed a plump little black arm and hand, dispensed a few more favours, and retired. This concluded a pleasant, and to me a remarkably good, sitting. The stranger and myself found the screws exactly the same as when fixed by us at the commencement of the séance.

HENRY BURTON.

* Another letter, from a man who has borne and bears "the heat and burden of the day," says: "Sure I am that amongst all the religious teachers we have amongst us, and they are *Legion*, there is no teaching as yet so calculated to carry conviction to sceptical minds as this of *Spirit-communion* rightly used and comprehended. It brings man near to God, robs death of all her terrors, inflicted by orthodox teachings, and makes even earth-life more like a paradise for the sons of toil."

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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Our Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Dean Stanley's was one of the broadest and most Catholic minds within the pale of the Established Church. It is not given to many to have sympathies so wide, and friends so numerous, as were his. Every human interest attracted him, every seeker after truth found a sympathising friend in him. His knowledge of Spiritualism was slight, we believe, but we know from the tone and temper of his mind that this latest Voice of the Supreme speaking to man would command his reverent attention. Some of the evidences were brought under his notice, and our leaders will recall a proof of his interest in such matters in the form of a very remarkable Scotch story of the supernatural, which we summarised in one of our earliest issues. All he wrote had the special charm which a highly cultured mind, and a singularly graceful style, never failed to communicate. He had lived out his days, and has gone to a wider sphere of action and activity.

Mr. Campbell, some time since, proposed to instruct those who would sit at his feet in what he calls psychonomy. This he has begun to do in a pamphlet of a dozen pages,* modelled apparently in invitation of Mr. Ruskin and his "Fors Clavigera." The distance between the two efforts is immense, but the imitation is sufficiently apparent, not least in the violence of statement to which the writer resorts when he wishes to be impressive. There is nothing in the twelve pages which calls for any comment, other than a mild protest against one who, "during more than five years" only, and "keeping carefully outside of" the movement, ventures to come forward with utterances of more than priestly dogmatism, and with condemnation of more than theological arrogance. No doubt there is much in popular Spiritualism that needs reform—much that Spiritualists themselves deplore; but it will need other methods, and wider experience than Mr. Campbell's to set it right. He shews none of the qualifications requisite for an instructor, and should be learning rather than teaching. His attempt at "Scaling Heaven" is, in words of his own, "presumptuous" as that of "the giants of old."

It is a puzzling fact that so many who concern themselves with the fringe of Spiritualism, and are, rather in spite of themselves, impelled to a superficial interest in its phenomena, struggle desperately against the notion that it is anything else but a congeries of phenomena. It is so far from being a new thing that the Bible is full of it. Yet to treat it as a modern survival of an ancient and venerable method of intercourse between the world of cause and our world of effect, is to invoke ridicule and contempt in some quarters. Why should this be? We take it the reason is that such objectors have made acquaintance with the subject only superficially, or under disadvantageous circumstances. Their attention has been directed to the external presentation of the truth, and not to the truth itself: to the knocks and the noises that have attracted attention, and

* "Studies on Elementary Psychonomy." No 1. Scaling Heaven.

which stand to the inner truths that are being revealed much in the same relation as the gong does to the dinner to which it summons the guest. In time, we hope, they will leave off admiring the noisy gong, and go to dinner. A rich feast awaits them when they are ready.

Dr. Parker has published his reply to Ingersoll in the form of a pamphlet, and it must be admitted that the fragmentary reports in *The Fountain* did no justice to his argument. The sermons are full of blemishes, defiled by constant errors of taste; they shew throughout an inability on Dr. Parker's part to appreciate Colonel Ingersoll's standpoint, but they contain also a noble vindication of the life and work of the Christ which Ingersoll has been too slow to appreciate. The two men are looking at two sides of the shield, and the reader rises from a perusal of the reply with a feeling that a large part of the criticism has been left untouched. With much that Colonel Ingersoll says about conventional Christianity Dr. Parker agrees. He likes, as little as the free spoken freethinker, the accretions that have been piled around the simple teaching of Jesus Christ; but he does not see, as Ingersoll does, that till these are removed there is little chance of simple truth prevailing. Ingersoll, on his part, is iconoclastic. His eye is filled with the abuses of theology, and he attacks them, and "smites them hip and thigh."

In truth, Dr. Parker's is no real answer to the slashing criticism that it undertakes to meet. It supplies, no doubt, much that Colonel Ingersoll has overlooked or under-estimated. The estimate of the life and teaching of the Christ is truer, and especially in the later passages of his lectures, he shews a noble realisation of what Christ is and what He may be to those who seek to live the higher life. It is where he seeks to meet Ingersoll's direct criticism that he is most feeble. We could wish, indeed, that he had confined his reply, if it were necessary to make one at all, to the ground on which he is most successful, and had frankly admitted that the theological obliquities that Ingersoll so fiercely assails, are indefensible and unworthy of palliation.

There can be no doubt that Colonel Ingersoll is open to assault, as every man who deals in sweeping criticism is. There can be just as little doubt that he has fastened on many a blot, and that he is most effective in his destructive criticism. He is in himself a sign of the times.

RE-INCARNATION—

Explained by Compound Consciousness.

The following letter raises some points so "passing strange" that we are induced to print it, in order to learn what some of our readers may think on the subject.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—If you think the following statements of any value as leading to a clearer comprehension of what is called Re-incarnation, please print them.

1. The consciousness of man, and of all animals, is seated in the Spiritual constitution of the men and animals. There is no motive power capable of reaching the consciousness except by wave motion, akin to that of light and electricity. This wave-motion may be set up by impulses received through the physical senses, or by common thought processes, or by the impact of the volitions of another will, brought into contact with the Spiritual constitution of the owner of any physical body, under Spiritual Laws.

2. These Spiritual Laws may be set down as follows:—Somnambulant life is more intensely real than the physical life of men and animals. Every faculty of the constitution is more vigorously exercised in the *Spiritual mode* of such exercise, than during the normal physical expression of consciousness. The mode of consciousness in the Spirit, is the mode identical through all grades of Spiritual existence; and is wholly different from the mode of the normal physical consciousness. The difference is chiefly in the fact, that in the Spirit, consciousness is *compound*; i.e. the same sensations may be sensed through one organism by an indefinite number of individuals, while the consciousness of each is as perfect as though no other existed.

3. The modes by which this combination of consciousness comes into existence are many and various. The life of a married pair, when sufficiently harmonious, culminates to the extent of a perfect mutuality of sensations on the Spirit-plane; and are often projected from that plane to the external consciousness.

The mother, who has left her children in physical life, is in

all normal cases, so connected with them in the Spirit, that she can read their minds by feeling what they feel; can transmit to their inner consciousness and often to the outer consciousness at any moment inspirations which may be useful to them.

The Creator has ordered it so that through this compound consciousness a vast economy of his power is realised in the education or unfoldment of His children. There is, accordingly, no human creature born unto physical life through the process of parentage, but is connected with numerous personalities in the Spirit, all of whom have access to the consciousness; only with different degrees of perfectness, according as they are in affinity with the kind of sensations felt. Now this theory of Re-incarnation covers every class of facts adduced in favour of the Kardec theory. It does not violently contradict, as the Kardec theory does, all that we know of the psychology of parentage. It perfectly accounts for the large differences between children of the same parents born under identical external conditions; and renders the whole problem as simple as any other of the great facts of nature.

4. The outward and visible corroboration of this theory exists upon the bodies of all ordinary people now living on the earth, and has been recognised as present (though little understood) from very remote ages. I refer to the brown moles found upon the bodies of all human beings; not brown at birth, and not easily discovered then, but becoming very palpable through infancy and youth onwards. These are the points of contact where the magnetic attachment has been made before the birth of the individual, and quite early in the embryological unfoldment. Such attachment is usually made with the full consent (in the somnambulant state) of the mother of the new individuality; having always to pass through her psychological sphere. It is quite frequently made by one of the grandparents of the child, while the grandparent is still in the body, and perfectly explains the reason why some children are more like the grandparent than the parent.

The writer has at present two moles upon the forehead, both developed during the last ten years, and forming the points of contact for two females in Spirit-life. I have also knowledge of others having similar marks produced in clusters of six or eight thick brown spots all within a square inch, upon the wrist and elsewhere; these clusters being produced when about thirteen years of age. Also, in a case of levitation, when the young lady was "floated" to the ceiling along with the bed clothes, she was found to be covered on the breast and arms with scores of pale brown spots, which afterwards quite disappeared.

There is much astrological lore connected with moles, which runs parallel with the above, but which need not be set forth here. All the most perfect specimens of genius, appearing all down the ages, have been cases of compound consciousness, will, and memory; prepared for from before the birth of the individuals, and illustrating perfect Re-incarnation, just as the sleep-life of man illustrates by the inner consciousness the Spiritual life of man.

ROBERT HARPER.

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Birmingham.

THOUGHT-READING.—A correspondent of *Nature* writes:—"As having a bearing upon the hypothesis that in 'thought-reading' the information is transmitted by unconscious muscular exertion, allow me to state a modified form of the experiment I tried in the presence of two or three others with Mr. J. R. Brown, who, a few years ago, attracted considerable attention in various parts of the United States by doing precisely what is related of Mr. Bishop in your issue of June 23rd. After witnessing experiments of the same kind as those stated by Mr. Romanes and performed under the same conditions, I thought to vary them by using a flexible copper wire as a connecting medium. Selecting one, two or three yards long, I held one end in my hand, while Mr. Brown, winding the other end once or twice around his fingers, held it against his forehead, the wire being all the time kept slack between us. Here evidently there could have been no indications received through muscular movements. Yet in this way Mr. Brown would find things concealed or go to certain points determined upon, though apparently with not quite the same readiness and confidence as when the subject's hand was placed against his forehead. Once he partially failed, selecting, instead of a particular spot on the wall I had fixed my mind upon, a small object near it. The experiment in this form was tried with another as his subject, and with equal, if not better success."—GEO. B. MERRIMAN, Rutgers College, New Jersey, July 11th.

THE "POWERS OF THE AIR."

Interesting Record of Early Experiences.

"'Tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, or weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry; why the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills."—SHAKESPEARE.

Blackwood published some little time ago an interesting article entitled "Powers of the Air," in which the author, after glancing at some of the facts related to him in support of the professed intervention of "Spirits" in mundane affairs, goes on to say: "Can we learn anything at all from them, or by means of them? . . . Some affirm that Spirits can and do influence men's minds. . . . If it be true, how completely does the truth harmonize with Scripture! . . . If anything can be made clear concerning them, our science will have advanced."

The second doctrine which the author considers, is "The Prevailing Disbelief in the Existence of Evil Spirits." "It seems," he says, "a contradiction to call one's self Christian, and then deny that there are malignant Spirits, who possess tremendous powers, who can misdirect the course of things in this world, opposing and thwarting, in a permitted degree, the providence of God. Our hopes for hereafter may in a sense be said to rest upon the personality, wickedness and power of evil Spirits, because we are distinctly told that God sent His Son into this world that He might destroy the works of the Devil. In another place we read that the Son of God came into the world to save sinners. Thus the salvation of the human race, and the destruction of the Devil's work, would appear to be one and the same thing. How can we dare to make so light of this fundamental truth as to say that these Scriptures are figurative as far as they relate to the Devil? . . . Surely this being is far too dangerous to be lightly ignored. . . . I should like to hear, too, how they who object to the recognition of a devil can account for the confusion which is so prevalent in this world. They cannot believe the perversities, the injustice, the sufferings, the sorrow, the destruction which are constantly shewing themselves, to be directly the work of the Almighty."

In regard to the first of these propositions, I am tempted by experiences in the realms of Spiritualism, which I have enjoyed for the last twenty years, to offer to the author of "Powers of the Air," and to any one who may take interest in the subject, some elucidation, based upon facts in the phenomena of "Spiritual manifestations," witnessed in a manner that I think must entitle them to general credence. That credence being established or presumed, I will add communications from Spirits, oral and written, through *trance* mediums, describing the transition of the soul, on its separation from the body, to the world beyond, its condition and surroundings there on awaking to consciousness, and containing lessons and admonitions to those who are still in this life that to me seem rational, and I believe will be useful to all who receive them, thus answering the inquiry, "Can we learn anything at all from them?"

First, then, as to the genuineness or reality of the manifestations by which my faith in them was obtained; and afterwards as to the *teachings* which the faith acquired by the manifestations has enabled me to receive.

Almost everybody, I may assume, has heard of what were known as "The Rochester Knockings," and been familiar with the names of two little girls (as they were when these commenced), Katey and Margaretta Fox, in whose presence these mysterious rappings occurred. Almost everybody knows that the Fox family was persecuted on this account, until, with better judgment, it was sought to try whether any *significance* could be given to the sounds; and, addressing the supposed authors, it was suggested that, on a repetition of the alphabet, they should select by rapping the letters that would spell out what they might wish to communicate. Thus commenced a *telegraphic* communication (for time has proved it to be neither more nor less) between inquirers and the invisible intelligences, for whom mediums (so-called) are the telegraphic instruments.

When these mysteries were first published to the world, as the means by which we could inaugurate a communion with our departed friends, my taste, my judgment, scouted the idea as too absurd for one moment's attention, and it was not until I was a *second* time urged by a medical gentleman of high standing in New York to be present at a meeting in which a young British officer and his wife (on their way to Canada), the doctor and myself, were to be the only participators, and Catherine Fox, then a girl of about 16, the medium, that I con-

sented to join them. We met in a small parlour of the Waverley Hotel, on Broadway, and sat round a table of about six feet diameter, the young medium placed between the doctor and the young officer. The doctor, having for two years been engaged in the investigation of the subject, said that to save time he would inform us that five knocks or sounds always signified "a call for the alphabet," three sounds meant, "Yes," and one, "No," in answer to any question, and that a single rap or sound on any letter called on the repetition of the alphabet selected that letter, which should be written down by one of the investigators; and thus words and sentences would be composed.

It was a summer evening, the hour six, and the windows wide open, and, of course, *broad daylight*. Our hands were all placed on the surface of the table, the doctor and the young officer each placing one of his hands on the hand of the medium. Soft sounds soon became audible, rather on my side of the table than the medium's, who sat opposite to me. They presently became more distinct, and then declared themselves in five distinct concussions or raps, without pause, and then a cessation. Upon this the medium repeated the alphabet. A name was then announced utterly unknown to the medium or to anyone present but myself, the name of one who had been connected with me in my early manhood by the tenderest and most sacred of ties, now twenty years separated from me, as I believed beyond all power of communion in this life. The sounds selected letters that gave the two christened names and the surname *before marriage*. I was certainly, notwithstanding my prepared unbelief, startled by the significance of the letters selected, and my next thought was, "If this could indeed be what was professed, is, then, the *married* name discontinued in that life?" The thought, *quite unexpressed*, had scarcely flashed across my mind, when five gentle raps occurred, more quickly given than before, and *my surname* was added to the preceding. Many instances in our lives were then recalled to me by similar sounds, thus evincing the identity of the Spirit. Then followed a description of the Spirit world, or rather of her own immediate surroundings, which I cannot now give, as I have it not in this country, but I well remember the close, saying, "In this beautiful home my own dear friends live; none can enter but those who are in deep affinity with me." . . . "Now, dear . . . you have it in your power to build for yourself a home equally perfect. Every pure thought you have, every good act which you do, is a new shrub in your garden. Every holy thought is a choice flower in your Spirit home. Then let your life be pure, and build for yourself a home so spotless, that no Spirit can enter it but those you have loved and can love throughout eternity."

The doctor had for two years been an investigator, convening every week a circle composed of himself and wife and three or four friends, who met at the *private* residence of one of the circle, and the sounds, as described, now directed me to join that circle, promising to give me satisfactory tests, for the commencement of which I was desired to bring a guitar. We met accordingly, I taking with me a guitar of my own. We held our meeting round a circular table in a dining-room, communicating with the front parlour by means of folding doors. These we left open. The hour was six in the evening, and, being summer, the windows were open, and it was broad daylight. The medium was the same Miss Fox; her hands were placed as before on the table, the doctor placing one hand of his on hers, and his wife hers on the other, and each placed a foot on a foot of the medium. The rest of us all had our hands on the table touching each other. The raps occurring as before, directed me to place the guitar under the table, which I obeyed, placing it in the centre. Presently we heard the guitar move over the carpet, and it pressed against my feet. I drew them back under my chair, and the guitar followed, when the strings were audibly touched five times, and the letters "s-i-n-g" were selected by a sound on the guitar at the utterance of each successive letter as the alphabet was repeated by the medium. The ladies uniting in an air, the guitar rose on end between my feet, vibrated in cadence with the air from one of my legs to the other, and at the same time played a full and powerful accompaniment to the song.

As these material or physical tests proved to be only the alphabet or stepping-stone to infinitely higher and purely spiritual instruction, I shall only pause on them to record the experience of one more investigating reunion before giving some examples of the higher phases of spiritual instruction by means of written or oral communications. The reunion I now

refer to was held by a private circle of my family connections, new to the subject; and the medium was the celebrated Mr. Home, then (it being some twenty years since) a very young man, occupying lodgings in the house of two old ladies well-known in our family. We assembled to the number of seven, Mr. Home making the eighth, in the small parlour he occupied, sitting round an ordinary dining-table, Mr. Home occupying one end, and above our heads a *full-lighted chandelier*. After sitting for several minutes, all having our hands visible on the surface of the table, it rose from the floor, ascending to the height of about one foot, and there continued several minutes. Many suggestions followed from the party. "How could this be accomplished?" "Had we not some hand in it?" "But how could our hands be used, being *seen* on the *surface*?" "Yet how much more satisfactory would it be, if the table could be so raised without our hands touching it!" Then Mr. Home was asked, "Would that be possible?" His answer was, "I do not know; suppose we try?" Upon that, we, including Mr. Home, all held our hands several inches *above* the table. In a few minutes it commenced to rise, and as it continued until about a foot from the floor, we kept our hands at the same distance above it, of several inches. One of the gentlemen of our party then sprang in sitting position upon it, and then, without depressing it in the slightest degree, extended himself upon it full length; and while he was in this position, the table commenced *undulating*, rolling him to one edge, then back to the other, but not allowing him to roll off, resembling, he said, the rolling of a vessel at sea.

Next followed five raps, and on the alphabet being repeated, letters were indicated by the sounds, directing one of the ladies to place her hand under the table. She did so, and presently she exclaimed: "I feel a very small hand, like the hand of an infant, tapping my hand. It is playing with my ring; it is taking off my ring!" She held up her hand and her ring was gone. The opposite lady was by the sounds told to put her hand under the table. Presently she exclaimed: "I feel the little hand you described. It is placing a ring on my finger." She held up her hand shewing the opposite lady her ring. It was presently returned in the same manner. Several equally remarkable manifestations followed, when presently it was observed that Mr. Home's countenance changed. It became apparently translucent, and in every aspect shewed an abnormal condition. In this guise he delivered, or rather what professed to be a Spirit that possessed him delivered, to us an address, declaring to us the object of these *physical* manifestations—that they were designed to give evidence of the presence and some of the power of *invisible* forces without exciting fear; then that these forces possessed intelligence, thus leading to inquiry, by which theories would be suggested, until the manifestations had become familiar from nursery to kitchen in every household. Thus, disbanding all alarm, we would become prepared to accept the truth, that these physical manifestations were designed to make us sensible of the presence and intervention of Spirit friends, who, using the same appliances that have advanced mortals in their manner of communicating with each other across and underneath oceans, are able to correspond with us from their more ethereal, but yet substantial, spheres. "Do you not," the communicator implied, "use electricity to communicate with your friends on earth? so electricity and magnetism are great instruments in our hands. Knowing, understanding the laws of earth, comprehending the chemistry of life, we can so produce effects by combination of substances as to give you the manifestations so interesting. Know that from you we gather much magnetism, from the medium other materials, and they are to us instruments whereby we work. Electricity is our mainspring of action in these manifestations—when we would produce *spiritual* results, we must call upon the *Spiritual* laws, and then the medium *feels* and *receives impressions*, but when we give you *physical* manifestations, the above is our method."

Such are a few of the notes taken imperfectly during the delivery of the address, which went to assure us of the gravity and sacredness of the object, and counselled us not to despise the means thus taken to enlist our attention.

The sequel of my many years pursuit of the subject has amply sustained and confirmed this assurance. Every sense has been satisfied to prove the presence and the identity of the Spirit. To those who have read Sir Walter Scott's description of the apparition of "The White Lady of Avenel," I could hardly convey a truer picture of the manner in which the Spirit has again and again appeared to me, first in my own home, and always under circumstances that absolutely prevented any possibility of illusion.

I. V. W.

(To be continued.)

IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION?

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I notice in "LIGHT" an article, "Is Spiritualism a Science or a Religion?" Will you allow me to give expression to my views on the subject?

By religion is meant "the duties which man owes to his God."

By Spiritualism is understood "a class of phenomena by means of which man is brought into contact with departed human beings, so that both can mutually interchange ideas."

Religion is a variable thing, and has no definite form or quality. Man's idea of what his duty to God is has varied in all ages and every clime. The so-called heathen believes that his duty to God demands of him sacrifices, some human, some floral, some animal. Others, called Christians, think that their God demands of them pure lives, praise, adoration, and certain observances called Sacraments.

The God of the Jews demands of His worshippers obedience to the Mosaic law, which embraces offerings of beasts, birds, cereals, and the rite of circumcision; and a class of people, to be found everywhere, believe that their duty to God demands love to God and man, by solely living a moral life.

Let us now ask "What is Science?" Science is knowledge, and comes from "*Scio—I know.*" Every fact of which we know anything is a contribution to science.

We will try Spiritualism now by the foregoing definitions. Is Spiritualism a science? Answer: It consists of a series of physical and mental phenomena coming under the observation of the senses. It is a knowledge of nature's forces acting in certain directions, and is, therefore, science.

Is Spiritualism a religion? Answer: A knowledge of nature's laws or forces does not teach us our duty to God; or, what God requires of us. It only teaches us the powers of God. This may incline our hearts to wonder and amazement and love; but shews us not what He requires. Therefore, Spiritualism is not a religion in itself.

"Ah!" will be the answer, "you mistake the meaning of Spiritualism, and confound it with Spiritism. Your Spiritualism is of a cold, barren nature if it only consists of *table rapping* and phenomena."

In reply to this let me say, Spiritualism has nothing to do with morality or spirituality. Morality, &c., is not the distinguishing feature of Spiritualism. Love to God and man is not the badge of Spiritualism. The Jew has the same mark, love to God, &c., according to his ideal. The Turk has it; the Brahmin; the heathen; the Christian. But these, all, are without the one great feature which has made Spiritualism the mighty power it is, namely, *communion with the departed*. That it has no distinctive mode of religion ask the departed, and the answer is as various as the minds.

What was the Spiritualism of the first medium?—Phenomena. What is it of the last formed successful circle anywhere?—Phenomena. And without phenomena in a circle there is reckoned no Spiritualism.

I know why the terms Spiritism and Spiritualism are used distinct. It is because the desire to found a separate sect in the religious world—together with the knowledge that *Spiritualism pure and simple only meant dealing with Spirits*—shewed the expediency of shifting the phenomenal upon Spiritism, a new word, reserving Spiritualism for the moral part. Not only do I see that Spiritualism is no religion, but I hope it will never be made one. The true place of Spiritualism is to mix with all creeds, wherever a man's views will allow him, and to bring that man comfort and knowledge from the other world. There are religions enough and to spare. While some Spirits (?) teach salvation through Christ, and some through man's own deeds, what need is there to label it a new religion? If we take the words of the Apostle, "True religion and undefiled is to visit the widow and the fatherless and keep himself unspotted from the world," we shall be able to say that neither Spiritualism, Wesleyanism, Catholicism, Protestantism, nor any other "ism," is a religion, but only a form of ceremonies; and that true religion is only found in the heart of him who, separate from all sects, yet loves his God and his neighbour.

Spiritualism is the greatest incentive to true religion of this kind; or to that religion which aims at assimilating oneself to the Great Deity.—Yours respectfully,

EBOR.

No summer but it has a winter: he never reaped comfort in his adversity who sowed it not in his prosperity.

A STRANGE CASE OF DUAL EXISTENCE.

A contributor to *Chambers's Journal* gives the following story of a case of dual existence, in which a series of actions which took place during sleep were discontinued during waking hours, and resumed when sleep again occurred:—

"Called upon one night, in the pursuance of my professional duties, to visit a young lady in whose family a series of sad misfortunes had recently taken place, I found my patient in what is known as a cataleptic condition; or rather it would perhaps be better to describe it as one form of catalepsy, since, in some rare attacks of this curious affliction, the patient is suddenly seized, whatever he or she may be doing at the moment, and transfixed like a statue, firm and rigid, until the symptoms abate. In this case, however, I found Miss S— in bed, to all appearance lifeless. Pulsation could be detected with the greatest difficulty; and it was only by placing a small mirror over her mouth that breathing was apparent. The most singular feature of the attack was this, that in whatever position you placed a joint or limb—however inconvenient or impossible to sustain during consciousness—it remained there until you replaced it; just for all the world like the limbs of an artist's lay-figure. I remained by her bedside until the morning, when the pulse began to be a little stronger and the breathing a little deeper. She then gave one or two profound sighs, and appeared to awake as if from an ordinary sleep, being quite unconscious of having been ill. This was the commencement of a series of phenomena which then took place. On the following night, she retired to rest as usual, and went to sleep; but after an hour or so, her sister—who slept in the same bed—saw her get up and dress. When asked what was the matter, Miss S— made no answer, but continued in the most mechanical manner to dress, as though she were getting up in the morning in the usual way. Her eyes were wide open, although she did not appear to use them. Thoroughly alarmed, her sister rose also, and sent for me.

"When I arrived, Miss S— had completed dressing, and had descended to the drawing-room, where she proceeded to rearrange the furniture: placing a chair, for example, in the corner opposite to its accustomed place; putting some of the chimney ornaments on the cabinet, and after removing each, standing with a reflective air, as if considering whether the new position were advisable. All this was done by the aid of a small lamp—though light was evidently not necessary to her proceedings, since she moved with the most perfect ease amongst the many articles of fragile ware which usually adorn a drawing-room. I requested that she might not be disturbed, but stood by and watched her for more than two hours.

"Amongst other articles of furniture in the room was a table, upon which stood Miss S—'s writing-desk. It stood in a corner away from the window. Taking the table and desk, Miss S— lifted it carefully, and placed it at the window, as if she wished to have all the light she could get. She then sat down in a chair, produced a bunch of keys from her pocket, selected the right one, opened the desk, and having apparently looked for and found certain letters, appeared to read them. After a while, the letters were replaced, the desk locked; and as if tired with her work, she sat down in an armchair and apparently slept. Finding that she made no answer when spoken to, I carefully lifted her, and carried her up to bed.

"Next morning, she woke as usual; and beyond expressing surprise that 'she had fallen asleep without undressing,' knew nothing of the events of the preceding night. Of course, we kept our own counsel, and did not tell her. On entering the drawing-room next day, she observed that her desk and table had been removed, and expressed some considerable annoyance that anyone should interfere with them, being evidently utterly unconscious that she had removed them herself.

"On the following night, Miss S— rose from her sleep as before, and went straight to the drawing-room. The furniture, at my request, had been left as she had arranged it, with the exception of the table and desk, which had been relegated to their proper corner. On entering the drawing-room, taking her keys out of her pocket as she went, she proceeded straight to the window where she had placed her desk on the preceding night; and not finding it there, seemed vexed, and stamped her foot. She soon, however, removed it from its place to the window; and sitting down, read, or appeared to read, her letters, until she sank to sleep as before, and was carried to bed.

"This went on for some time. I carefully watched her; and my observations convinced me that her sleeping world was a distinct and separate world from her waking one. Under careful treatment and attention to her bodily health, these phenomena after a while ceased, and she was, to all appearance, in good health. Whilst fairly well, Miss S— had a paper sent her which was of considerable value. She placed it in her desk. Her sister saw her place it there. Shortly afterwards, having occasion to refer to this document, Miss S— went to her desk to look for it. It was not there! Every place in the house was fruitlessly searched. There were no signs of the missing paper. Happening to hear of the circumstance, and being aware that some events had occurred likely to worry such a sensitive mind as that of Miss S—, I advised that she should be watched at night. This was done. One night, after sleep, as formerly,

Miss S— rose, dressed herself, entered the drawing-room, and without hesitation went to a large vase which was nearly filled with dried rose-leaves. Plunging her hand into this vase, she at once drew forth the lost paper! She then opened the paper, appeared to read it attentively, and then, deliberately folding it up, replaced it amongst the rose-leaves. Here, the next morning, her sister, when they were together in the room, pretended to find it by accident, to the great delight of Miss S—, and to her intense surprise how anyone could have taken it from her desk and so hidden it, and why they did so.

"Who shall explain these phenomena?"

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON AND THE PROVINCES.

GOSWELL HALL.

The platform of this hall was occupied on Sunday evening last by Mr. Iver McDonnell, who took for his subject "The Coming Christian Religion," which he predicted would be one of true spirituality and love. It was quite a treat to listen to the earnest orator, who is possessed of a rich fund of original and progressive thought, which recommends him at once to his audience. In reviewing the religion of to-day, he condemned in unmeasured terms the priestcraft, hypocrisy, and cant which are so rampant. In comparing the system of to-day with the teachings of Jesus, he emphatically denied that the religion of to-day is anything like that which was taught and practised less than 2,000 years ago. A few questions were asked at the close, which were ably and readily answered by Mr. McDonnell. It is hoped that there will be a large audience to hear him next Sunday, when he will give an address on "Prayer."—J.N.G.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

On Sunday morning last Mr. Wright, trance speaker, of Liverpool, delivered an interesting address before the members of the N. S. E. S., and in the evening, by request, his guides entertained a fairly average assembly with an able discourse upon the late Dean Stanley. They enlarged upon the greatness of his earth work and the zeal wherewith he had enforced the truths he considered himself called upon to promulgate. The lecture was listened to with marked attention, and elicited the warm approval of the audience. On Monday (Bank Holiday), the committee of this society held their annual picnic in the grounds of Mr. W. R. Armstrong, Benwell. The weather, being favourable, gave a splendid opportunity to those who delight in rural sports or to dance attendance to the merry music of the pipe. Although the attendance was considerably less than at the last year's gathering yet the day passed off pleasantly. The tea, which was provided free to the committee by gifts of goods from several of the members, came off in good order, and met the general commendation of those present. In the latter part of the day a band was in attendance (which had offered free service), and entertained the pleasure seekers most admirably. In the evening Mr. Wright delivered an address, purporting to proceed from a divine of the sixteenth century, who enlarged upon the severe persecutions he and his fellow-workers suffered under the narrow and intolerant edicts of Charles II.; and how, banished from their churches, they had to deliver themselves to their hearers under the broad and open canopy of heaven. As he proceeded, the control waxed fervent and gained upon his audience with every breath. At the conclusion of the address, votes of thanks were passed to the several ladies and gentlemen who had given their services and presented their mites toward the success of the day. A vote of thanks was also presented to Mr. W. R. Armstrong, for the ready and kindly grant of his grounds for the occasion of the picnic. About 9 p.m. the visitors began to disperse, after enjoying a very pleasant half-holiday.—NORTHUMBRIAN.

We very much regret to hear that Mr. E. T. Bennett and Mrs. Bennett, of The Mansion, Richmond, have both been seriously injured by an explosion of gas, and that they will be for some time to come confined to their rooms.

The first case of a typographical error yet discovered in the revised New Testament is, it is alleged, in the "Seaside Library" reprint. This error occurs in Matthew xi., 24, where it says: "They laughed him to scorn;" but whether this will designate the edition as the "Corn Testament," just as misprints in former Testaments have led to their being called "The Vinegar Bible," "The Breeches Bible," &c., it is as yet impossible to say.

Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond was at last accounts doing good work in Colorado—the *Daily Gazette* of Colorado Springs (for instance) bearing well-worded witness to the value of one of the discourses pronounced by her in the Court House at that place on Monday night, July 11th, and announcing another for the evening of the 12th. Mayor France presided. The audience chose as a theme, "Spiritualism, its Influence upon the Thought of the Nineteenth Century," and the *Gazette* says the address was "a strong statement in favour of the spiritual nature of man as against his material and intellectual ambition."—*Banner of Light*.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Spiritualist."

The editor believes that he and his journal would have saved Spiritualism from the discredit which he thinks has come upon it if his advice and warnings had been heeded. "All-round men," he thinks, "are wanted, capable of guarding the interests of psychology as a whole, instead of riding small hobbies to the death in a spirit of selfish indifference. Iniquities might have been checked and cruel wrongs to the innocent been redressed, had we had any competent men, above the influence of gossip and slander, (!) unselfish enough to have investigated passing events to the roots and to have initiated public action thereon. For want of such action psychological science has received a check it will take years to recover."

Mr. William Bowman supplies an interesting communication in reference to certain visions some five years ago, by Miss Jessie Nicholl, of Newcastle, purporting to reveal some of the incidents connected with the fate of Abdul Aziz, the late Sultan of Turkey.

The Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan furnishes excellent testimony to the valuable mediumship of Mr. J. C. Husk and Miss Caroline Pawley.

"The Medium."

The *Medium* copies from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* a biographical sketch of M. Alexander Aksakof, by Hudson Tuttle.

Mr. James McDowall, of Glasgow, contributes a long letter on "Spiritual Science and the Fourth Dimension." The following is the commencing paragraph:—"It will, perhaps, be evident to your readers that the idea we have tried to convey of spirit in its highest and primary condition is that of an infinite contracting power, successfully resisted at every point by an infinite expansive power; the expansive power being the contracting power inverted, and, consequently, of the same nature, only acting outwardly."

In regard to this contribution the editor says:—"Read Mr. McDowall's paper over a few times before you give it up as a hopeless conundrum. Pity it is that he can't supply a quantum of brains of the right sort with his articles. We fear in most craniums the 'magnitude' far exceeds the 'substance.'"

There is another brief note by the editor, on another subject. Its special reference is left to the surmise of the reader:—"Spiritualism only prospers by self-sacrifice. Make a trade of it, base it on 'shares' and 'proprietors,' peddle it about, and it dies rapidly. M. Aksakof's experience, though his position and circumstances differ vastly from other workers, is no exception to this rule. Be liberal, be devoted, be ever industrious."

"The Herald of Progress."

Our Newcastle contemporary ought to be highly appreciated by the local Spiritualists, seeing that it is well filled with North-country news. From some of the correspondence in the current issue, we gather that there has been an ill-founded rumour afloat that Miss Wood had met with "some disaster," while holding a séance at North Shields. Mr. John I. Bates, who was present, testifies that the sitting was a very successful one, but that "from some not well understood influence, the medium was kept in the trance state from 8.30 p.m. until 10.30 a.m. During this time, she was attended and watched by her kind hostess and one or two other members of the circle." Do any of our readers know of another case in which a medium was kept in a state of trance for 14 hours? If so, we should be glad to have particulars.

The "Journal du Magnetisme," of Paris.

The *Journal du Magnetisme*, of Paris (July), gives obituary notices of three eminent men, M.M. le Baron du Potet, Robillard, and Littré. M. du Potet, founded the journal in 1845, and continued it as its chief to the end of his days. Our friends Aksakof, Russian Councillor of State, and Camille Flammarion, astronomer of Paris, contribute to its pages. M. du Potet was in his eighty-sixth year. Vital magnetism, while lengthening the days of patients, does not seem to lessen those of operators.

M. Robillard had reached the age of 79. He was for years president of the Société de Magnetisme, and was long most active in the dispensary for treating the sick by vital magnetism. He was an active writer, and contributed to the journal.

M. Littré died also at an advanced age. His title to mention in the obituary of the *Journal du Magnetisme*, is due to his having in his "Dictionnaire de Médecine" characterised vital magnetism as a natural force, difficult to direct, but capable of being utilised.

Vital Magnetism, or Mesmerism, is more in vogue in France than among us.

"It might have been in dream, love." Song (Chappell and Co.). We have much pleasure in drawing attention to this song, the words of which are by Miss Caroline Corner, set to a graceful melody by Golvina Rhomet. It is very singable, and well within the compass of all ordinary voices, its range being from C to E flat. The accompaniment is good throughout, without being too difficult, an advantage not to be lightly estimated. It is dedicated to the talented Baroness Von Vay, a name well-known in all Spiritualistic circles.

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 Mapee, 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.; Darinus Lyman, of Washington.

William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medalist, 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. Elliottson, 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 Goldenstübbe; 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 the 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; Butlerof, 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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The Association possesses a Library, which now contains a large collection of the best works on Spiritualism and occult subjects, and a Reading Room, where Spiritualist and other newspapers and periodicals from all parts of the world are regularly supplied.

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