

# Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 3. [Registered for  
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SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1881.

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## SPIRITUALISM:

### A RETROSPECT AND AN OUT-LOOK.

In our last issue we adduced evidence to shew that the present time is one of disintegration and uneasiness; of "a house divided against itself;" of conflicting interests; of class antagonisms; of general unsettlement and anxiety, to which may not unfitly be applied the words in which Christ spoke of the close of an epoch—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

Nor is it only in Theology, Politics, and Social Life that this note of the age is to be traced. It is found in that which, whether we regard it from within as a great movement, having for its purpose, or at least for one of its aims, the wiping away of much that is erroneous in man's beliefs, and the introduction of a body of new truth to mankind, or whether we view it as the world views it from without, is an undoubted sign of the times.

The Anti-Spiritualist, a widely embracing title, including within it all those who from the various reasons that influence men are antagonistic to Spiritualism as they understand it,—the Anti-Spiritualist regards the very presence of such a movement as a return to superstition. If he be a Theologian he will tell you that history demonstrates that a decay of faith is always accompanied by an outburst of fatuous superstition; and that it is small wonder that men who have lost their hold on Faith should lapse into Credulity. If he be a Scientist he will want to apply his apparatus of experiment and investigation, and test Spirit in the way that he has long been used to deal with Matter. He will require that we produce for him the phenomena at will, and hold the Invisible Powers who govern the results, which alone we can see, at his beck and call. Failing in these endeavours he will tell us that when we can shew him what he wants to see in the way in which alone it pleases him to see it, he will try the Spirits fast enough. Meantime he does not believe in them. If he be a man of social position he will hold up his hands in refined rebuke of anything so *bizarre*, so unpopular, so detrimental to a man's worldly prospects,—Spiritualists are such a *very* mixed body, he will tell you, though indeed some of the best people are Spiritualists—and then when he has uttered his little deprecatory speech in public, he will probably be found at a highly select séance in some highly select drawing-room in the evening. It amuses him, and then no one need know. Of course it is all nonsense, superstition, necromancy, demonology—here he is apt to get a little mixed in his ideas, and somewhat angry if asked to say exactly what he means.

All these, and many other types that either busy or do not busy themselves about Spiritualism, concur in regarding it as a very singular note of the age, a sign of the times. If the beliefs and practices of Spiritualists were defended by a united body, who took a lesson in worldly wisdom from their opponents, it would very soon come to a pitched battle between these opposing forces, and a very severe conflict would ensue. As it is, our opponents find us disorganised, each man fighting for his own hand, and it is not difficult to take advantage of that blunder and kill us off in detail, or allow us to pursue our favourite pastime of mutual extermination. For, do not let us make any mistake as to this, the spirit of persecution that has always been

evoked by the presence of these spiritual phenomena in a particular age, is not dead but only dormant, ready to make itself felt when we provoke it sufficiently. No doubt, we have not an Inquisition; we do not hang, burn, and rack heretics; but the nineteenth century has its own methods of persecution which are quite as effective as those mediæval expedients.

Turn we now to the inner view. As Spiritualists, looking at the movement from within, what meets the eye? The retrospect discloses the prevalence everywhere of disintegration and uneasiness. It is idle to point out the reasons for this—as idle as it is to lament over what is irretrievable. The seething pot boils and bubbles, and apparently it will continue to do so. Spiritualism has attracted into its ranks a vast number of minds of a progressive order, and of these a large number are frisking in the uncontrolled delight of a new-found liberty. Emancipated from an order of things which they found galling, they are not disposed to submit to any restraint, at least for the present. Each has his own notions; many associate the belief in Spiritualism with an acceptance of a number of heterogeneous opinions with which Spiritualism is in no way concerned, and on these they are a little apt to insist with considerable dogmatic unction. These, plainly, are the elements of disintegration, or rather the presence of causes which prevent permanent cohesion.

Let us admit that this is natural and that such is actually the case. If we recognise the fact, we have taken one long step towards neutralising its deleterious influence. For we shall be conscious of the necessity for mutual tolerance when we know that we carry about with us that which may be provocative of dissension. We shall be less angular, without being less true to our own principles, and we shall be more disposed to avoid the rough corners, and walk round them, when we bear in mind the fact of their existence. We shall "possess our souls in patience," waiting for the time of Disturbance to yield to the return of Peace.

## PSYCHOGRAPHY.

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Epes Sargent's new volume contains some remarkable evidence of successful experiments in Psychography which it may be useful to place on record in abstract. He rests a considerable amount of his argument against the destructive criticism of Science on Clairvoyance and Psychography.

With respect to the latter, he points out that it is a phenomenon in which it is possible to conduct an experiment that shall be without flaw. It is not beset with the conditions, real or fancied, but at any rate usually exacted, which have made the investigation of most of the phenomena called spiritual a weariness to the most interested, and a scorn to the man who is used to methods of scientific experiment. A little patience, an open mind, a pair of good eyes, are equipments that fall to the lot of most men. There need be no lack of every facility for the exercise of all the senses, and if *a priori* conclusions be avoided, and the temptation that once beset a man of science to arrive at his conclusion by most unscientific leaps and bounds be resisted, all is plain sailing.

### Experiments with Watkins.

Mr. Sargent records in his volume some half-a-score experiments, including the now well-known one in which the Rev. Joseph Cook took part, all of which present very satisfactory features.

In the first, on September 18th, 1877, held in the rooms of the medium, Watkins, Mr. Sargent took with him a book-slate which he had bought 20 minutes before. This slate, after a crumb of pencil had been placed between its surfaces, Mr. Sargent held out at arm's length, away from the medium, who was sitting at a distance of three feet from him. He satisfied himself twice that the surfaces were perfectly clean. Instantly there was a sound as of the grating of pencil, and in less than 10 seconds the name of a personal friend who had departed

this life was written. This was several times repeated, other names being written. A message of 52 words was written with preterhuman celerity. Throughout, Mr. Sargent was alone with the medium, and "the noon-day sun streamed into the room."

Passing by Mr. Cook's testimony as sufficiently well-known, the next experiment was with the same medium, on June 8th, 1880, in Mr. Sargent's own dining-room, in the presence of himself and two ladies of his family. On the table were seven slates, one being the slate used in the experiment last recorded. The observers sat on one side of the table in broad daylight, while the medium stood on the opposite side, or walked restlessly about the room. Under these circumstances, writing was got while the slates were held by all present conjointly: while one of the ladies, who had never met Watkins before, held the slate at a distance of more than four feet from the medium, and also while the two ladies held out each a pair of slates simultaneously, the medium not touching them, but standing on the other side of the table. Finally, the slate used three years before with the same medium was taken up. On one leaf it contained the long message before mentioned; on the other a short message obtained through W. H. Powell, another medium. This latter message Mr. Sargent consented to have obliterated if it could be done by the unknown agency. Here is the result in Mr. Sargent's own words: "Taking the slate on which the writing in large unfaded letters still stood, I shut the leaf and placed it in the hands of the medium, who instantly held it out before us all. The scratching sound of pencil was heard, and in less than twelve seconds he handed it back to me. I lifted the leaf: the surface on which was the old inscription had been thoroughly cleaned, and on it were the words, 'My Dear Brother,—I rub this all out. Lizzie, your sister.'" The message is not, perhaps, of an exalted character, but what was asked for was done, and done too under conditions that preclude deception.

The next experiment was conducted by a perfect stranger to Watkins, Mr. E. J. Hunt, of the City Treasury Office, Boston, U.S. His testimony bears date, July 11th, 1880. Under conditions precisely similar to those detailed by Mr. Sargent, he obtained on a double slate that was not out of his sight for a second the signature of a personal friend whose funeral he had attended some three weeks before, and the message so given was a direct and pertinent answer to a question addressed to him, and folded securely up, which question was not written in the presence of the medium but a week before the sitting was held. Up to that time the medium had never seen Mr. Hunt, and the particular question was so mixed up with eight or ten others that Mr. Hunt himself could not have selected it.

#### Seance with Mrs. Simpson.

Mr. Giles B. Stebbins, of Detroit, a name well-known to readers of the *Banner of Light*, records a well-marked experiment of his with Mrs. Simpson, of Chicago, in the month of December, 1878. She had met Mr. Stebbins only the evening before, and knew nothing of him or of his family; yet there came a message, obtained as already detailed above, from his departed uncle Calvin Stebbins, of Wilbraham, Mass., of a most striking nature, referring evidently to a private conversation between them on the state of the departed. "I find no hell, or babies' skulls as we used to talk of. I find over here common sense and justice. Each man makes his own destiny. Ah! Giles, the abyss is bridged, and we are fortifying the arches under the bridge daily."

This same medium, Mrs. Simpson, obtains slate-writing in a very singular manner. A bit of pencil is placed on a slate, and a goblet filled with water is placed over it, so that the pencil is apparently confined in its writing within the hollow space left by the concave bottom of the goblet. But on placing the slate under the table, and pressing it so that the top of the goblet rests firmly against the under surface, the pencil is heard to write in long lines across the slate, as freely as if the goblet were not there, though it could by no possibility be moved without spilling the water that it contains. This is recorded by Professor Denalow, who is not a Spiritualist. And the same has been witnessed and recorded under unimpeachable conditions by many competent observers. Moreover, at the close of the experiment the bit of pencil, having been evidently used to write, as its attrition testifies, is found in the water at the bottom of the goblet.

#### How are the Manifestations Produced?

These experiments are typical, and might be multiplied indefinitely. They occur in the presence of various mediums, of whom Henry Slade is, perhaps, the best known. The above are

selected from records of investigation with other mediums, not less reliable though less widely-known than he. At the time when Slade was in this country the phenomenon of Psychography was not so well-known as it is now. His prosecution had the merit of attracting wide-spread attention to the facts, and of giving them a publicity that they would have never attained except by that means. The more they are tested the more plain is it that there is in action a Force and an Intelligence that belong to no organised body of which the observer's senses can take note. They are not to be explained by any hypothesis of jugglery; the medium cannot explain the *modus operandi* if he would. It is not, however, for lack of temptation. In May, 1880, Mr. Hiram Sibley, of Rochester, New York, having investigated the phenomena in the presence of Watkins, and being unable to account for what he saw, "offered him a large sum of money, to be settled on his wife and children, if he would disclose the trick (if trick it were) by which the manifestation was produced; and furthermore, to give bonds, if he desired it, that his secret should not be divulged." That offer remains open "to any person that can expose or explain the trick." The offer of several thousand dollars has not yet been accepted. When it has, our readers shall be told.

### A DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The following account was given me by my father-in-law in 1862, and written down at the time from his dictation.

"When I was a young man, about the year 1820, I was living with my parents at the old family farm of The Haize. My father's flock was under my charge, and it so happened that that spring the lambs were remarkably coloured, 'spotted and ringstreaked,' reminding us of Jacob's. Two lambs in particular were distinguished in this way above all the others. One Wednesday evening I had, as usual, seen them all right. In the night I dreamt the following dream.

"I saw a large white sheep-dog start from Hempton Farm about a mile off, then in the occupation of Mr. John Powell, and trot across the fields to Callicroft Farm, my uncle Charles Hunt's. It there met a large black sheep-dog of his. The two then went together across the fields to Whitson's Leas, where our flock was. They each took one of the two above-mentioned peculiarly marked lambs, killed and began devouring them. When they were satisfied, I saw the black dog take what was left of his lamb across three fields, and lay it in a dry ditch by the side of Haize Wood. The white one took the remains of his through the hedge into a ploughed field, and buried it in the seventh furrow from that side of the field.

"The next morning I had to start off quite early, before it was light, to Bristol market. In the course of the morning my father followed me into town. I saw at once by the look of his face that something was wrong. His first words to me were, whether the lambs were all right the night before. My dream, which I had not before thought of, immediately flashed into my mind. Before he could say anything more I told him I knew what was the matter, telling him all the particulars above narrated, what dogs took the lambs, and where their remains could be found. Whether my father believed me or not I do not know, but he at once returned home. When I got back again in the evening my father had been round, and found the lambs buried just where I told him. He had been across to Hempton, and Farmer John Powell had killed his dog without any further evidence. My uncle Charles Hunt, however, waited to cross-question me, but soon consented to have his dog destroyed also. The only remaining link in the chain of evidence against the dogs was supplied on the following day, when the dogs' bodies were opened, and bits of wool were found in their stomachs, exactly corresponding with what I saw in my dream."

What psychological explanation can be given of this dream and others of a like nature?

EDWARD T. BENNETT.

MR. G. W. WRIGHT has gained great favour in Liverpool, the local Psychological Society having engaged his services for three Sundays in each month during the present year. This is the nearest approach to a settled engagement as a speaker ever made by Spiritualists in this country.

MR. ALLEN HALL and family, who have done so much to help the Grosvenor-street Association, Manchester, contemplate emigrating to Missouri during the present year. Miss Hall is a very nice trance speaker, and the Manchester friends will find it difficult to fill her place.



## EPITOME OF OPINION AT HOME AND ABROAD.

### Psychography:

We hope the friends of Spiritualism will plant themselves on direct writing, and say to all foes, clerical or materialistic: Here at least is firm ground. Here we take our stand. Direct writing is an established demonstrable fact of science; and you are afraid it is, or you would investigate it with a view of finding a flaw in it.

You know that all this mass of testimony in regard to its occurrence under conditions without a flaw, without a possibility of collusion or trick, cannot be delusive. Deep down in your hearts you are afraid it may be true.

And true it is! And what are you going to do about it? Reject it blindly as of no account? Try not to think about it? Raise the old cry of possible jugglery? You know that all this is mere evasion. Here is an immense fact pregnant with immense consequences—a fact capable of daily verification through a growing multitude of mediums. Here is a “basis”—and a strictly “scientific basis”—and you cannot gainsay it, except by a stupid, ignorant denial or a resort to the old spurious cry of prestidigitation. That is set at rest, since sleight-of-hand requires the use of hands. And here all is done independently of visible and tangible hands. How are you going to get rid of it, gentlemen? Why not give it up, and own your insignificance before such a phenomenon? You are nonplussed, gentlemen! Keep firing away on this line—direct writing. Put it to our opponents every week in every possible form.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago, U.S.A.

### The Power of the Christ-Spirit.

If we analyse the secret power of the life and character of Jesus, we shall find it all in this intense love. He is a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He dies that others may live. He is a vicarious substitute, willingly, by choice, and his last words in the agony of death, are those of forgiveness, charity and intercession. The silver tongue of oratory never need be silent in words of praise; the poet has abundant fields to idealise; the painter is at no loss for a subject. This one characteristic takes Jesus out of the realm of humanity and allies him to the celestial.

It takes not only him, it takes all sages. Six hundred years before the Christian era, Lautszo, the Chinese sage, uttered and practised the same doctrine: “The sage,” he says, “does not lay up treasures. The more he does for others, the more he has of his own. The more he gives to others, the more he is increased.” Eternal words of wisdom, for the more the sage teaches, the more perfectly does he understand his own doctrines.

To another people Buddha said: “A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me; the fragrance of these actions always redounding to me; the harm of the slanderer’s words returning to him.”

“Turn aside evil with that which is better,” says the Koran, even the Arab acknowledging this law.

The Bhagavad-Gita, the most wonderful portion of the Mahabharata, written more than four thousand years ago, the perfect blossom of Hindu intellect, inflexibly holds aloft the stern mandates of duty, the triumph of the pure spirit over the animal and selfish nature. Christna was the forerunner of Christ. His mission was to teach self-sacrifice, and it is well we have such examples even if gods be made to furnish them.—HUDSON TUTTLE, in *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

### A Stirring Picture, by M. D. Conway.

In the course of a sermon delivered by him in Boston, some time since, Rev. Mr. Conway gave utterance to the following eloquent passage:—

“I stood beside the open grave of an eminent American historian over whom a funeral service was rehearsed by an eminent English clergyman. The service is a survival from barbarism—of all burial services the grossest. It declares death to be sent by God’s wrath in vengeance for the sin of Adam, when even the illiterate know that death made the earth beneath us a cemetery of animal form before man existed. In the presence of weeping friends it thanked God for taking the beloved historian, Motley, out of this wicked world, every tear giving the heart’s lie to the lip’s thanksgiving. The historian had been a philosopher, and every sentence of the ceremony was contradicted by the testimony of his life. The Dean of Westminster, who read, is a very liberal thinker, and not one form he used could have expressed the conviction of his mind. They who stood around while the solemn farce went on were rational and educated people, and not one perhaps heard a sentence he or she deemed appropriate to the occasion or to the age. While the Dean was reading this antiquated stuff the Nineteenth Century

came by; it came by in the shape of a North London train, whose shrill whistle screamed under the cemetery walls as if it would rouse all sleepers, dead or living. The scream and roar drowned the Dean’s voice; he paused in the middle of a sentence and waited with closed eyes. In that pause the steam-voice cried: “Behold I make all things new!” What are you about there with the notions of old Syria? They are dead as the mummies that conceived them. Why should Egyptian darkness linger on that grave when elsewhere the sun is shining, and science, invention, art, are delivering man from that fear of a fictitious curse with which you still pall life and death? Can you not work your soul as nobly as your iron?” When the Nineteenth Century had passed on the Dean relapsed into the first century again, breaking his silence with the words “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” How is it that a ceremony which knowledge has reduced to an anomaly and a deformity holds its own against all the light of our time?”—*Banner of Light*, Boston, U.S.A.

### What Spiritualists Have Done.

Whenever you hear that lively song, “A Life on the Ocean Wave,” a song which Russell set to music and of which more than three hundred thousand copies were sold in the first eight months after its publication, remember the author, Mr. Epes Sargent, is a Spiritualist. Whenever you hear or read of “Descent through Natural Selection,” remember that Mr. A. R. Wallace, the eminent naturalist, who shares with Mr. Charles Darwin the chief honours accorded to that work, is a Spiritualist. Whenever you look upon that wonderful little instrument, the Radiometer or Light Mill, which is set in motion by the tiniest ray of sunlight, remember that its inventor, Professor William Crookes, the distinguished scientist, is a Spiritualist. Whenever you hear of any societies claiming to be “learned,” remember that the distinguished Professor Zöllner, who is himself a member of innumerable societies of that class, is a Spiritualist. Whenever you hear of a Protestant Episcopal bishop, remember that the equal of the best of them, the present distinguished bishop of Rhode Island, is a Spiritualist. Whenever you hear of Methodism, remember that manifestations, now known as spiritual, occurred in the household of Wesley, its founder, and were accepted as such by him.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago, U.S.A.

### A Friendly Welcome.

*Spiritual Notes*, an ably edited monthly, coming to us from London since January, 1878, made its last appearance in its issue for December, and is to be succeeded by a new weekly publication, the first number of which is announced for January 8th, 1881. The name of the new comer is to be “LIGHT,” and its aim to collect and record facts relating to the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, the discussion of such subjects allied thereto as are now occupying the attention of men and women of advanced thought, and the elucidation and dissemination of all truth relating to the highest interests of humanity both here and hereafter. The field is the world, white for the harvest, to which every active worker is thrice welcome; and we trust this new enterprise will possess attractions sufficient to induce the public to call for “Light, more Light,” until the most sanguine expectations of its projectors may be fully realised.—*Banner of Light*.

MANCHESTER.—The Association here is at present under a cloud, owing to the contemplated departure of several tried and useful workers for foreign shores, and the regrettable apathy of many still remaining. There is also a noticeable lack of sympathy towards the old workers in our midst, as also of that unity of purpose which can alone bind associations in a common bond. Our meetings for some time past have been fairly well attended, yet our funds steadily decline, owing to a want of co-operation, which, to say the least of it, is very disheartening. But, nevertheless, we hope for more prosperous times soon, though in losing the assistance and presence of Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Hall, the Misses Blundell, and Miss Johnson, we lose help invaluable and friends difficult to replace.—R.F.

CARDIFF.—At the usual weekly Sunday evening meeting of the Cardiff Spiritual Society, on January 16th, Mr. Lewis (President) read an address, announcing that his term of office having expired, he preferred making room for some younger and more active member in the Presidential chair. Mr. Paynter, hon. sec., in accordance with his notice at the previous meeting, moved—“That the offices of President and Treasurer be absorbed into a governing Council of three members, who shall be elected by ballot at the next General Meeting of this Society, shall retain their office for six months and be eligible for re-election at the expiration of that period;” and—“That the Hon. Secretary be elected at the same time and under the same conditions.” These motions were carried by acclamation, and after the reading of the accounts the meeting dissolved. There seems to be a general opinion among members that under the government of a triumvirate the Society will take a step forward, and favourable results are expected.

## 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 sances.

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.

All communications should be addressed, "Editor of 'LIGHT,' 13, Whitefriars-street, London, E.C."

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## NOTICE TO THE TRADE.

"LIGHT" may be obtained of E. W. ALLEN, Ave Maria-lane, London, and of all Booksellers.

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

As we go to press with the present issue the intelligence reaches us of the departure to a higher life of the well-known and highly esteemed champion of Spiritualism, Mr. Epes Sargent, in the 67th year of his age. We can now only chronicle the event, and must reserve further particulars for another week.

Under the heading "Fate, or What?" the *Detroit Free Press* records a most remarkable story of the ill-luck of a certain company of infantry in the late war. Mustered 100 strong in Michigan, it lost three men before starting, and two on the way to Washington. In marching along the streets of the capital another fell dead. In going into camp, another was accidentally shot through the heart. In the course of four weeks in camp two more died, a third was drowned, and a fourth shot dead in a street brawl. Eleven men had thus died, while no other company had lost one.

In the first skirmish the company lost four men, among them its first lieutenant and third sergeant. Hardly had their places been filled up when the company was called on for outpost duty, and again the first lieutenant and third sergeant were killed. Their places were again filled, and the company once more engaged in a battle. It lost five men, and among them once more the fated first lieutenant and third sergeant! This made 23 men lost. Not a man had sickened but to die. Not a man had been hit but to fall.

A curious change now occurred. In its next engagement the company lost five men, among them the first and fifth corporals. Within a week these two positions were vacant again. In six months five first corporals and four fifth corporals had fallen! When this unlucky company was reduced to 61 men no other company had less than 90. Ten recruits joined it, and all were killed in the next engagement. Seven more came, but in less than a month the number was reduced again to 61. In two years it lost 168 men, while no other company had lost 25. In its three years campaigning it never had a man wounded. Whoever was hit was killed on the spot. At length its evil fate became a bye-word, and no man could be got to join it, nor would any other company consent to being incorporated with its ranks. It was reduced to 38 men, and at last transferred to headquarters for guard-duty.

On what possible principle can such a run of fate, luck, or whatever it may please men to call it, be explained? It seems to be out of the range of mere chance, if indeed there be any such thing as chance, and reads more like the result of the malignant persecution of an unseen enemy than anything else. Such stories are not infrequent, though this, compiled by a person on the spot, familiar evidently with the details of which he writes, is the most extraordinary we remember to have met with.

The daily papers have lately contained a good instance of a warning dream and apparition occurring at the time of death. A fishing schooner was run down off Torbay, all hands being lost. On the same night the master's wife dreamed that her husband's vessel had been run into and sunk. She woke up screaming "Richard, save my boy," one of her sons, as well as

her husband, being on board. Early next morning her eldest son came into her room and said he had heard his father come home in the night, and go up stairs with his sea-boots on. They told these experiences to the neighbours, but they ridiculed their fears till they proved to be only too well founded.

Narratives of a similar character abound in general literature. Few things are better attested by evidence than the power of the spirit when freed from the body to make its presence manifest to those whom it has loved, and from whom it has been recently separated. It seems as if it had then a power, which it loses usually in a short time, of impressing the senses of those who cannot all be supposed to possess the mediumistic faculty. Here is a story from the *Annual Register* of the early part of this century which attests the prevalent belief in apparitions. It will be new to most, if not to all of our readers, and possesses a curious similarity to many that have since been recorded and are occurring in our midst now.

"DREADFUL CATASTROPHE AT SADLER'S WELLS.—A most distressing scene occurred on Thursday night at this place of entertainment, a little before 10 o'clock, from a false alarm of fire; in consequence of which great confusion ensued. The calamitous event is supposed to have originated in a quarrel in the gallery, when the cry of 'fight' was mistaken for that of 'fire' by the greater part of the people. Above 18 persons perished, it appears, from suffocation, and many others were severely injured. The following evidence of a witness examined at the coroner's inquest is noteworthy: Benjamin Price, deceased, was identified by his mother, who stated that she resides at No. 31, Lime-street, Leadenhall-street. The deceased was 11 years of age. He obtained leave to accompany some neighbours to Sadler's Wells. About half-past 10, his little sister, who was at home, went into the kitchen, where she saw her brother, who she thought was at the play. She called him, but he immediately disappeared. She then became alarmed, and said it certainly was her brother's ghost, and she was sure he was dead. Witness, being alarmed at the story told by her daughter, hastened with a friend to Sadler's Wells, where she found her boy a corpse."—*Annual Register*, 1807.

M.A. (Oxon), writing to the *Harbinger of Light* (Melbourne, Australia), points out that it is not to be expected that the friction, consequent on the evolution of new ideas and the shaping them for popular acceptance, should not engender heat. There must be divergence of thought in such an age as this, and on such a subject as Spiritualism; consequently there must be argument, and out of all this a fresh view of an old truth, or a clearer insight into a new one. Without probing and testing, wrestling with each other in all the domains that intellect energizes in, there would be for Spiritualism no progress. If there be one thing more to be dreaded than another it is apathy. "Better the conflict of the sword than the apathy of indifference. Gallio is the one character chiefly to be dreaded in our ranks." Noting the tendency to strife that disfigures the movement, M.A. (Oxon), says that exoterically it seems to be in process of disintegration, while esoterically it grows stronger and stronger day by day. It is "passing through a natural process of growth, from the mere wonder-hunting stage to one of a more encouraging nature, wherein its mysteries will be grappled with by a philosophy, and its spiritual potentialities be embodied in a religion." This esoteric Spiritualism, a thing of a higher nature, and better deserving the name of spiritual than that ordinarily so-called, "is fast becoming a note of the age: is influencing many who would repudiate the name of Spiritualists with horror, and is making Liberalism in all domains of thought and action a present possibility and future hope."

It is with no little pleasure that we note the conferring by the Queen of a pension of £200 a year on Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the eminent naturalist, whose name is associated with that of Darwin as having independently arrived at the theory which bears the name of Darwinian. Mr. Wallace's contributions to Science extend over a period of 30 years, from the time when he visited the Amazon in 1848, and published his "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro" on his return, down to his "Island Life," which appeared but the other day. In 1868 the Royal Society awarded him its Royal Medal, and in 1870 he was honoured by receiving the Gold Medal of the Société de Géographie de Paris. His contributions to the publications of various learned societies, the Zoological, Anthropological, Linnean, Entomological, and others, are extremely various and valuable. As a conscientious and consistent defender of the truth of Spiritualism his name is well-known to our readers, and not to them only, but to all who read the literature or investigate the evidence for the reality of the phenomena of Spiritualism. It is a cheering thought that outspoken and bold advocacy of very unpopular truths has not prevented the recognition of Mr. Wallace's great merits as a Naturalist.



## A REMARKABLE SEANCE.

By Dr. Nichols.

On Sunday evening, January 16th, at 7 p.m., five persons sat round a small table in Mrs. Nichols's study—a small room, lighted by two gas-burners and the open fire. The sitters were Mr. W. Eglinton, Mr. Bastian, the American medium, Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Webley, and myself.

After some movements of the table, and rappings on floor and table, Mr. Eglinton took one of several blank cards, three by five inches in size, and taking a thick book, which chanced to be a translation of the Decameron of Boccaccio, illustrated by T. Stothard, he laid the card, after we had all examined it, into the centre of the book. All this had been done by the direction of a spirit, "Daisy," who spoke through Mr. Eglinton. The book was shut, and upon it was laid a heavy glass inkstand and a steel pen in its holder, the card lying in the centre of the book.

Our hands were all upon the table, and "Daisy" said, "We will write upon the card a passage from the book, and give the page, and line on the page." We waited a few seconds—perhaps half a minute—when raps came upon the table, and we carefully removed the inkstand and pen, and opened the book—one which had come with several others from the Grosvenor Gallery Library, and which had not been read.

On the card, in a bold rapid hand, were written with black ink the following words:—

*"Happy souls! to end both their loves and lives on the same day. More happy still if they went together to the same place. Line 13, p. 245."*

These sentences are the beginning of the last paragraph but one of the Seventh Novel of the Fourth Day. Here lay the card on which the writing was made, while the book was shut and pressed down by a glass inkstand of more than a pound weight. Though the pen strokes are broad and made, apparently, with a full pen, there is not the slightest ink mark on the page of the book which was pressed upon the card. Book, inkstand, and pen were every moment under the eager watch of five persons—all who were visibly in the room.

In a similar experiment some weeks ago a card was written upon on both sides, and in Latin and English, and two different hands, while lying between two slates; a clean steel pen, without holder, lying with the card, and an inkstand on the slates. There was a space of about half an inch between the slates, but in the book the card lay tightly pressed between the pages.

Then we went upstairs for materialisations. Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Webley, and I sat in a large bedroom dimly lighted by gas and moonlight, while the two mediums, Eglinton and Bastian, went into a dressing-room beside it. Both doors opening into the hall were locked.

We were scarcely seated three yards from the door, from bedroom to dressing-room, when we heard the voices of "Joey" and "Johnny," spirits well-known to us and many others, talking to each other and to us. Then came the deep and well-known voice of "Ernest." One of the voices said, "Mrs. Nichols, your daughter, Willie, is here, and will come to you." The door opened wider and a form in white entered the room, came near to us, placed her hand upon ours, whispered some words to each, walked to the far end of the room, unlocked and opened the door, letting in upon her the full light of the hall gas burner, shut the door, came near us again, patted me on the shoulder, and went into the dressing-room. "Joey" said that "Ernest" and our daughter would come together, and a moment later the two forms—the delicate girl and the strong full bearded man—stood plainly before us for a few seconds and then retired. In a few seconds Willie came back, touched Mr. Webley's hand, as she had promised to do, went to the room door, which I had again locked, unlocked and opened it, turned off the gas and returned no more.

The voice of "Johnny" then announced that Mr. Merriman, a friend who died some years ago in Memphis, Tennessee, would come to us. He came, answered my question, "Are you Mr. Merriman?" in a full voice, came round to my side, gave me a strong grip with one hand, and a sharp stroke on the shoulder with the other.

A few words from "Ernest" and "good-bye" from the three controlling spirits closed our séance. I think the writing on the card the most remarkable for its mode and conditions of any I have yet witnessed. The materialisation of our daughter was also beyond all possibility of doubt; I mean that neither of the mediums, nor any person in the house, could have possibly personated her. We know her figure, her grace of movement, her manner of speech.

## SPIRITS FLOATING IN THE AIR.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The appearance of spirit forms without the aiding influence of a medium is an occurrence of exceptional interest, and a well authenticated instance of such a phenomenon is worthy of record. This fact induces me to place before you the circumstances under which two spirit forms were seen at my residence at Notting Hill. At about half-past six in the morning, on the 29th December last, the servant woman, as is her custom, opened the shutters of the back parlour window, when, to her surprise, she saw two luminous figures clad in white robes. The figures appeared to float across the lawn of the small garden, and moved towards the house. Alarmed at what she saw, the servant ran upstairs and called Mrs. Jencken, who descended into the parlour and likewise saw the two figures, which were not unlike, in size and outline, to my two boys. More bold than her servant she opened the window, when, lo and behold! the two figures approached the window and stood on the small balcony in front. This movement of the apparitions so frightened Mrs. Jencken that she, accompanied by the servant, in their alarm closed the window and ran away.

The interesting part of this account is the agreement in the description of the figures between Mrs. Jencken and her servant, the time the forms remained visible, and the time they occupied in approaching the window, evidently drawn towards Mrs. Jencken. I may perhaps name that our servant knows nothing of Spiritualism, and happens to be exceptionally prosy and dull-witted; so much so that it may be safely avowed that imagination had nothing to do with the seeing of these appearances, as far as she is concerned. The record of the appearance of saintly figures, especially that of the Holy Virgin, of which an instance was recorded in Ireland last year, is not uncommon, the circumstances of their happening corresponding in part with those of the two figures seen floating across the lawn of the garden of my house. I have during the course of my inquiry into Spiritual phenomena frequently seen spirit forms but invariably in the presence of a medium. Whether the fact of a medium like Mrs. Jencken residing in a house tends to mediumise the atmosphere, rendering the formation of visible forms possible, is a question yet to be answered; but whatever the cause may have been, in this instance visible forms were seen at a distance from the house, floating up to the balcony, and threatening to enter the room in which Mrs. Jencken was standing until, repelled by her alarm, the manifestation terminated.

H. D. JENCKEN.

Notting Hill,  
7th January, 1881.

## SEANCES WITH MR. BASTIAN.

Mr. J. H. Herbst, of York House, Upper Baker-street, sends us a report of séances with Mr. Bastian. He says: "At the first sitting there were four of us besides the medium. We sat in a row facing the door of the room which Mr. Bastian uses as his cabinet, and about 10 feet from it. A lamp, having a common newspaper for a screen, stood on a table or cabinet near to one of the sitters, who lessened or increased the light as the spirits might direct. Mr. Bastian occupied an arm-chair in the room that had been previously inspected and locked. He sat near the door, in front of which hung a black curtain. We had been sitting perhaps seven minutes when the first form shewed itself, that of a gentleman in evening dress, who, looking round, acknowledged our greeting and retired. Immediately afterwards another form appeared, short, and dressed in white, with long loose hair, that of a female, who held the curtains apart for a moment and then withdrew. Next there appeared another form in white, with a veil, as if a bride. She looked into the room, and, as if satisfied, closed the curtain. Again she appeared and stepped out into the light. She stood for a moment and then advanced until she was within a foot of me. The light was strong enough for me to read by, and as she stood before me I saw her features and recognised her. Yes, it was she whom I knew so well. How fond we always were of each other! how often had I played with her and stroked her beautiful dark brown hair! how often had those eyes gazed on me, sympathising with my joys or sorrows! She died some months before. Within a foot of me she stood for about half a minute, and at my request to come nearer still she seemed pained, when, by a movement of her head, she indicated her inability to do so. I asked her to sit down on a chair which I placed near the door of the cabinet, and she went

up to it, lifted it off the floor, altered its position, and then sat down as I had requested, all her movements being so familiar to me that I could not doubt her identity for a moment. At a subsequent séance she appeared again; and again I asked her to come nearer to me; and she said distinctly, 'I will try,' this being the first time she had spoken. After retiring into the cabinet she came into the middle of the room, but she could not come nearer. Then she went to a stand, on which were some ornaments and photographs, including a portrait of myself, which I had given Mr. Bastian. She looked about as if endeavouring to find something. She picked out this portrait. In her hurry she nearly upset the stand, and one little ornament fell over. Instead of being frightened she replaced it, shewed me the photo., kissed it, and took it away with her. After the séance we searched all over the room for it, but could not find it. She has promised to come again and I hope before long to be able to write and tell you that she has conversed with me of the days gone by. This is no fancy. Others will testify to the appearance though I alone could recognise it. To me there is no room for doubt."

### THE GUILD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

*To the Editor of "LIGHT."*

SIR,—Will you allow me to reply through your columns to the very numerous correspondents who have communicated with me in consequence of the paragraph you inserted in your first number with reference to the "Guild of the Holy Spirit"?

It will clear the ground if I state at the outset that I am a clergyman of the Church of England, and that I regard purely from a religious point of view the subject you so ably champion in all its manifold aspects. I have myself taken a small private room which I have fitted up as a small chapel or oratory, and, gathering a few earnest people round me, have officiated twice a week at a simple but solemn service, in the interval of which we sit for spirit-communion. Our rule is that we observe perfect silence, not asking for phenomena but simply waiting for what may come, and quite prepared for the results to be purely subjective, since we know that in hedging ourselves round with religious influences we are in fact by our own act cutting ourselves off from that section of the spirit world which is likely to be most demonstrative. We try, in fact, so far as in us lies, to reproduce the attitude of the expectant disciples who waited during the forty days after the Resurrection for the re-appearance of One who had gone from them.

Our first sitting was on All Saints' Day (November 1st), and since that time we have sat regularly on Mondays at four and on Thursdays at eight. Not only so, but several members of our small society who live at a distance make a rule to sit at the same time; and some of our most interesting experiences have been the evidence that such a spiritual union as is thus brought about quite overcomes bodily absence. Our second sitting, too, was marked by one of the most convincing proofs of communion with the departed which has ever come under my notice. All such results we carefully commit to writing, but, as I said, we do not anxiously expect these. There are gradations in our Guild; but all, from the inner to the outermost circle, are believers rather than inquirers. We are happily past the necessity for collecting evidence.

While we do not wish to proselytise we have no wish to be exclusive. I shall always be happy to give information to those of whose good faith I am well assured, but shall take all available means to guard myself against curiosity-hunters. In that sense only is our society a secret one.

What I am particularly anxious to do is to affiliate circles at a distance which will meet at the same time as our own, with similar purposes. A letter addressed to me so as to reach me on the day of meeting is found to facilitate such intercourse.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

THE FOUNDER OF THE GUILD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

London, January 15th, 1881.

There is a power in the soul, quite separate from the intellect, by which God is felt. Faith stands serenely far above the reach of the atheism of science. It does not rest on the wonderful, but on the eternal wisdom and goodness of God. The revelation of the Son was to proclaim a Father, not a mystery. No science can sweep away the everlasting love which the heart feels, and which the intellect does not even pretend to judge or recognise.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

### HOW FAKIRS ARE MADE.

*(Continued from page 15.)*

By what process of training do these Fakirs attain to this dominion over matter? Briefly, by certain dietetic practices, the object of which is to establish a heat-abounding while very unexciting nutrition; by practices whose object is to bring the involuntary processes under the control of consciousness; and lastly, by a prolonged series of exercises, the special tendency of which is to induce a state analogous to mesmeric slumber. Under these three groups all Fakir training may be classed.

The dietetic practices are very stringent. No food during the day, and only a light meal at night. Nothing but rice, wheat, milk, sugar, honey, and melted butter are to be used, and one or two native dishes from which meat and salt are excluded. No water is to be drunk, though some sects permit a little alcohol. The disciple is to live underground in a perfectly even temperature, fresh air and light being excluded. He is to maintain absolute silence, and to rest motionless on a warm bed of cotton, wool or furs, till the next step is gained.

This is the power to lessen the frequency of his respiration, to gain something like the inner-breathing of Harris and his school. He must learn to inhale the air and retain it for as many minutes as possible, the exhalation taking twice as long as the inhalation. He must breathe only through his nostrils, and finally, inhale with one nostril and exhale with the other. Next he learns to discipline his body, to rest immovable in any given position, until he has absolute command over his muscles. A favourite position is to sit with his left heel under his body, and the right heel advanced, and holding the big toe of the right foot in the right hand, and that of the left foot with the left hand, so that the lower part of the face rests against the breast bone. Such a position the neophyte learns to maintain for an indefinite period.

Next he learns to keep perpetual silence, and meditate on the sacred OM, the ocean of being into which he seeks to be absorbed. He must indulge in ceaseless prayer, so as to keep the mind in a somnolent state. He must repeat the mysterious OM over and over again together with other words, which, if the curious reader will try, he will find extremely sleep-provoking, should he chance to be wakeful in the silence of night. Soham, Bam, Lam, Ram, Yam, Ham—the *a* very broad as in *all*—repeated over and over again in their various pennutatives, are extremely soporific in their tendency. These words the disciple constantly repeats, squatting motionless in his cave, with mind absolutely freed from all care for sublunary things.

Having got so far, he submits to 24 incisions of the ligatures of the tongue, so as to set it free. It is pulled and stroked and rubbed with astringents until it becomes long and pliable. With the organ so developed, he learns to turn the tongue backwards, and close the throat with its tip, having first inhaled as much air as possible. Lastly, he learns to live with the nostrils and ears stopped with wax. By this time he is ready to be buried with impunity, and to undergo the crucial test imposed by Runjit Singh on one of his fraternity.

How many perfect Fakirs are developed by these means; how many neophytes endure to the bitter end, we have no means of knowing. Those who do must have reached a place of being from which the world and the things of the world have faded into nothingness, and seem, if viewed at all, as less than nothingness and altogether vanity. It would be idle to appeal to them for an opinion as to the value of the prize they had attained. Their standard is not that of mankind, who, we take it, would arrive at a pretty unanimous conclusion that unnatural processes of the kind we have described, even when successful, are repulsive to the higher instincts of humanity, and unfit men for any discharge of that wholesome duty which brings blessings to the doer and to humanity at large: which is not selfish but self-sacrificing; and for which it is above all things necessary to have a sound mind in a sound body. What-  
ever results the Fakir may attain, their benefit is purely personal. Not only does he not benefit humanity by any self-sacrifice or labour of love for the common good, but he does not even add to the store of our general knowledge. His highest achievements do but provoke a half-incredulous, half-wondering attention; and when, as in the case narrated above, there seems no reason to question the fact, the evenly-balanced mind does but more strongly turn to question its wisdom and utility. The real value to the student of psychology is to open out to him a nearer view of the mysteries of his own being, and to encourage him to look, for a solution of some of the perplexing problems that beset his special study, within his own breast.



THE FOURTH DIMENSION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The subject of a Fourth Dimension is a very interesting one. I am not proposing to offer any "explanation," not feeling competent to do so, and not having yet read Professor Zöllner's book. It is, however, I think, not difficult, premising only an elementary knowledge of mathematics, to realise the possibility of there being not only a "fourth" dimension, but that "dimensions" as we know them, are probably only the first terms of an infinite series.

Mathematics must necessarily have relationship to something far more comprehensive than nature or the material universe, as we are acquainted with it. The soundness of this conclusion may, I think, be thus illustrated. The series of numbers—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 . . . represents a line. The series of numbers—1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36 . . . represents surface. These are commonly called "square" numbers, or the "second powers" of the corresponding numbers of the 'first series. The following series of numbers—1, 8, 27, 64, 125, 216 . . . represents solidity or space. These are called "cube" numbers, or the "third powers" of the corresponding number of the first series. As an instance, 9 is the number of square feet in a square the side of which is three feet long; 27 being the number of cubic feet in a cube, the side of which is three feet long.

We have thus three series of analogies :—

1. The ordinary series of numbers, or numbers to the first power, corresponding to a line—i.e., to "length," the "first dimension."
2. The series of square numbers, or numbers to the second power, corresponding to surface—i.e., to "breadth," the "second dimension."
3. The series of cube numbers, or numbers to the third power, corresponding to solidity—i.e., to "thickness," the "third dimension."

We have now come to the end of the external universe, so far as we can perceive it by our physical senses. We cannot, in the ordinary way, conceive of anything beyond "length, breadth, and thickness." On the mathematical side, however, we can go on farther. In exact relationship to the three series of numbers we have mentioned, stands a fourth, namely :—1, 16, 81, 256, 625, 1296 . . . or, the "fourth powers" of the numbers of the first series.

The question now legitimately arises, Is there anything in existence—the word nature is not large enough—which bears the same relation to length, breadth, and thickness, that this series of numbers does to those that precede it? If there is, it would be "the fourth dimension," and we have found a natural and rational place for it. I do not know the origin of the phrase "the fourth dimension of space," or whether Professor Zöllner uses it himself; but it would seem to me more correct and less confusing to speak simply of the "fourth dimension," confining the word "space" to the three dimensions. The "fourth dimension" must be beyond space in the sense of thickness (or solidity), as space (in the same sense) is beyond mere surface (or breadth).

We do not thus arrive at any "explanation" of a "fourth dimension," but we have, I think, taken one step towards it, and shewn, in a manner easily understood, that there are rational and analogical grounds for believing in its existence. We need not stop here, however, for the same reasoning and the same analogies carry us onward to possibilities in the realm of being, of which all we know of the physical universe is comprised in the first three of an infinite number of series, each of which is infinite in its own plane, illustrated mathematically thus :—

1	2	3	4	5	6	ad infinitum (length)
1	4	9	16	25	36	" " (breadth)
* 1	8	27	64	125	216	" " (thickness)
1	16	81	256	625	1296	" "
1	32	243	1024	3125	7776	" "
1	64	729	4096	15625	46656	" "
"	"	"	"	"	"	ad infinitum.
"	"	"	"	"	"	"

E. T. B.

\* Limit of the external universe, as apprehended by the "senses."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It appears to me that "C. C. M.'s" explanation of the "fourth dimension" is more puzzling and unsatisfactory than the original difficulty, and his illustrations of his expositions are elaborate fallacies. He says that "every babe is a two-dimensional being till it has related the changes in its perceptions by this intuitive reasoning."

I respectfully submit that the babe does nothing of the kind, and that it acquires its knowledge of a third dimension by experience; and no cultivation of its faculties will ever allow it to conceive more than three dimensions; nor will any idea of the "relativity of space" enable the mind to infer a fourth dimension. What is called a fourth dimension seems to me a misapplication of terms, and to be not "a dimension" at all. It is a verbal juggle—a metaphysical and an argumentative illusion.

NEWTON CROSLAND.

London, 15th January, 1881.

THE MICKLEGATE GHOST.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I beg to forward you an extract which I have just cut from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, thinking that it may interest your readers, some of whom might be able to explain this remarkable phenomenon. I enclose my card and remain, Sir, Faithfully yours,

E. M. J.

8th January, 1881.

An account of this very unusual and, I may add, inexplicable phenomenon will, I have no doubt, prove acceptable to many of your readers. My attention was first drawn to the circumstance when on a visit to the ancient city of York some years ago; but not being able to stay there over Sunday, I was debarred the privilege of seeing the enactment. I may add that I have many personal friends, on whose veracity I can rely, who sincerely and emphatically declare to me that they have witnessed the incidents I am about to relate. I assign no reason for this marvellous manifestation, but leave the facts to speak for themselves, appealing to the good sense and sober judgment of your readers to decide for themselves whence this mystery proceeds. About twelve months ago a London journal published the following communication from a gentleman, writing to the Rev. Baring Gould in 1866. The writer says :—

"While staying at York about a year ago, I first heard of the apparition or ghost, supposed to be seen in Trinity Church, Micklegate. I felt curious to see a ghost, if such a thing could be seen without the usual concomitants of a dark night and a lone house. Accordingly I went to church one hot Sunday morning. The east window of the church is of stained glass of no peculiar design (rather tawdry), except that the colouring is much richer in the centre than at the sides, and at the extreme edge there is one pane of unstained glass which runs all round the window. The peculiarity of the apparition is that it is seen on the window itself, rather less than half way from the bottom (as I saw it from the gallery), and has much the effect as that of a slide drawn through a magic lantern, when seen on the exhibition sheet. The form seen is that of a figure dressed in white walking across the window, and gives the idea of one passing the churchyard in a surplice. I was told that on Trinity Sunday three appeared, and on the day I was there, which was on one of the Sundays after Trinity, there were rarely less than three visible. They began to move across the window before the service, when there was no one present but ourselves, and also when the Venite was sung, continuing till the conclusion of the sermon. Of the three figures two were evidently women, the third was a child. One of the women was tall and graceful, the other middle-sized; the second was called nursemaid, from her evident care of the child during the absence of the mother, which relationship is attributed to the taller from the passionate affection she exhibited to the child caressing it."

The correspondent goes on to describe how the mother came from the north side of the window, and having gone about half-way across, stopped and waved her arms, which signal was answered by the appearance of the nurse and child. Both figures bend over the child, and appear to bemoan its fate, the taller one always appearing most frantic. This was repeated several times, and then they retired to the north side of the window. The louder the music the more frantic were their gestures. Where the colours of the window are least light the figures are most distinct, and on the pane of plain glass they were perfectly distinct. The writer emphatically declares that he saw the right arm of the medium figure "bare to the shoulder, with beautiful folds of white drapery hanging from it like a Greek statue. No one in the church seemed to be in the least discomposed, or, indeed, to observe it. The incumbent of the church has watched night and day to endeavour to find out the imposture, if imposture it is. He is unable to find any clue to the mystery." The correspondent adds that the trees in the churchyard can have nothing to do with it, as their movement is entirely independent of the figures. As late as 1874 the trees had been cut down, and still the figures were to be seen. If any of your readers have any further information on the subject I think it would prove interesting.

W. M. BRAITHWAITE,  
Ulverston.

## EPES SARGENT'S "SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF SPIRITUALISM."

By M. A. (Oxon)

- "Notwithstanding my age and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent."—IMMANUEL H. FICHTE.
- "It is a question, in the first instance, of evidence: it then follows to explain, so far as we can, such facts as may have been established."—W. E. GLADSTONE.
- "Science is a collection of truths. The language of science is, This is, or This is not; This does, or does not happen. Science takes cognizance of a phenomenon, and endeavours to discover its law."—JOHN STUART MILL.
- "The testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."—CHALLIS: Professor of Astronomy in University of Cambridge.
- "Spiritualism is an experimental science, and affords the only basis for a true philosophy and a pure religion."—ALFRED R. WALLACE.
- "If true, it will become the one grand event of the world's history, and will give an imperishable lustre of glory to the 19th century. . . . If the pretensions of Spiritualism have a rational foundation, no more important work has been offered to men than their verification."—NEW YORK "SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN."

From the time, now two and twenty years ago, when Mr. Epes Sargent published his "Planchetto," down to his latest effort, which lies before us fresh from the printer, his labours in the cause of Spiritualism have been ceaseless and unwearying. Probably it will never be known to what an extent the periodical literature of Spiritualism has been enriched by his pen; how much of solid, substantial instruction we owe to the man who knew, as few others do, the subject on which he wrote so voluminously, and who, in writing, never lost his head in an access of enthusiasm, or was carried into impracticability by an outburst of unreasoning zeal. Mr. Crookes once described his first book as "the best to put into the hands of an investigator;" and in so doing he probably had regard to what was conspicuous by its absence, as much as to the actual contents of the volume. Mr. Sargent's writings—and this, his latest work, has the same distinguishing characteristics in a high degree—are marked by a keen appreciation of what constitutes scientific evidence. He instinctively puts aside weak points that would lessen the force of his argument, and marshals his facts and testimony in strong and orderly sequence. So completely is his mental vision filled with the necessity for care in this respect, that he sometimes does scant justice, as we are inclined to think, to subtler and finer shades of evidence which, though they make very strongly for his general conclusion, are of "the things spiritual, spiritually discerned," and, consequently, not to be established on the lines of scientific demonstration. He is resolute to present the Scientific Basis in a purely scientific manner.

The basis he rests on the phenomena of Clairvoyance and Psychography: or, as he prefers to call it, Pneumatography. These two facts, representing the physical and psychical aspects of many analogous phenomena, he takes as typical, and as affording a firm basis for a Psycho-physical Science. Some remarkable narratives illustrative of his psychographic experiments we present to our readers in another column.

The evidence which he adduces for the reality of Clairvoyance, especially that connected with the name of Alexis Didier, is already familiar to most students of the literature of Spiritualism. A valuable letter of Robert Houdin, the most celebrated of French conjurors, testifies to his complete bewilderment at the results he witnessed. He played a game at *écarté*, bringing his own unopened pack of cards, the envelope so marked that he could be sure it was not changed. A skilful player, he put forth all his art. In vain: Alexis told him the cards he was going to play, and presented his own card face downwards, yet always right when turned up. "I have," says Houdin, "returned from this *séance* as much overwhelmed with astonishment as I could well be, and persuaded that it is altogether impossible that either chance or address could have produced effects so marvellous." [p. 156.]

Beyond the facts which he considers to form the basis, Mr. Sargent devotes some attention to Form-Manifestations respecting which he adduces some very cogent testimony. But he, wisely, as we think, lays most stress on the formation of the spirit-hand, a detached member governed by manifest intelligence, which has been observed under conditions perfectly satisfactory by so many competent witnesses. A very typical case is that recorded by Mr. Crookes, F.R.S.:—

"Under the strictest test conditions I have more than once had a solid, self-luminous, crystalline body placed in my hand by

a hand that did not belong to any person in the room. In the light I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side-table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about."

This testimony might be indefinitely multiplied. We ourselves have more than once been grasped by a large hand, of natural shape and temperature, which has pulled us up from a sitting posture to an erect one, then to the chair on which we had been sitting, and afterwards to the table, until the hand faded in our grasp at the ceiling. This in the presence of Mr. Williams, both on his own premises and in a private house. Where was the fulcrum there? There was no room for deception; and that constitutes for us the chief value of the experiment. In all such investigations it is first and especially necessary to clear the ground of the possibility of a "perhaps." Mr. Sargent is right in pointing to the evidence for the detached spirit-hand as strong enough to resist all fair assaults.

Into the philosophical rejoinders which our author makes to Professor Wundt, of Leipzig, to Hartmann's dreary pessimism, we do not enter. The argument in each case is a piece of clear and incisive reasoning which it would be impossible to condense, and which must be studied at first hand.

Scattered up and down there are some grand passages bearing eloquent witness to the author's appreciation of the philosophical and religious bearings of his subject. To these we may, perhaps, recur. They have a ring in them which tells of supreme conviction, and they derive an added weight from the consideration that they are the final deliverance, the last measured judgment, of a mind that for a long course of years had devoted its best energies to the critical analysis of the philosophy of Spiritualism, and which, when these passages were penned, was to all human likelihood losing its hold on time, and gazing into the dim prospect of the future. To him, that which lies beyond is less hazy than to most of us: his vision has been trained to pierce the clouds that shroud for most men the entrance to the world of spirit. But, none the less, words such as these gain an immeasurable weight of added significance from the fact that they express the matured and final judgment of an expert who is near to the time when his opinion will be brought to the last great test and his work be tried of what kind it is:—

"The facts of Spiritualism, rightly construed, hold out the loftiest inducements to a noble, beneficent life. It proclaims to us that we think and do in the sight of a host of witnesses: it recognises the supremacy of law, physical, moral, and spiritual: it looks for no relief from the penalties of sin through the mystical sufferings of another: it teaches no vicarious advantage. It illustrates the efficacy of prayer, but teaches that the power of finite spirits is limited, and that the Divine Benignity is exercised in harmony with laws which it is for us to study and to obey. It proves that as we sow we reap, and that man is preparing his future condition while here, by his ruling thoughts, devices, and acts, and is thus his own punisher, his own rewarder."—[p. 167.]

If it be the will of the Supreme it would, as man may judge, be an incalculable gain that so doughty a champion of the faith should be spared to us. If the Supreme Will decide otherwise, no fitter termination to his life-long labours can be conceived than this volume which his closing years have given us.

Devoutly look, and nought  
But wonders shall pass by thee;  
Devoutly read, and then  
All books shall edify thee;  
Devoutly speak, and men  
Devoutly listen to thee;  
Devoutly act, and then  
The strength of God acts through thee.

WISDOM OF THE BRAHMINS.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. C.—Your kind offer shall be placed in the hands of "R. E. D."

F. H. S.—Have returned your MS., as it is much too lengthy. Can you send us a short paragraph on the subject?

A. E. N.—Your expressions of sympathy and good-will are very encouraging. You have our good wishes in return. Some day we may avail ourselves of your generous offer.

DR. J. M. PEEBLES writes that he is engaged upon a new work in illustration of the Life of Jesus, and embracing communications, received through mediums in all parts of the world, upon the subject of His life and influence.

\* The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism. By Epes Sargent. Boston: Colby and Rich.



## 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 Mape, 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 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; Lord Lindsay, M.P., 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, H.B.M. Consul at Trieste.

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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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