

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATEVER DOTTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.'—Paul.

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CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way	241	Christian Science	247
'The Dream-Woman'	242	An Interview with Dr. Van Eeden	248
Old-Time Experiences	242	'The Weak Spot in Spiritualism'	249
Unsought Visions	243	State of Spiritualism in America	249
A Christian Mystic	243	Mr. A. P. Sinnett and Spiritualism	250
The Infinite Spirit Universe	245	'Astral Influences'	250
Theosophy and Reincarnation	245	How Spiritualism Helps Humanity	250
Capital Punishment	246	Spiritualism in the Public Press	251
A Model Investigator	246	Whose Mind was Read?	251

NOTES BY THE WAY.

The Rev. J. R. Byrne, M.A., gives us, in 'The Humanitarian,' a chatty paper on 'Coincidences.' On the whole, he thinks we had better give up believing in them as having in them anything uncanny, though he admits that some of them happen 'as though the tricky sprites, the Pucks, who play about the margin of human life, were every now and then making incursions over the border, delighting to puzzle people, to set things in confusion, to let men see that there are powers at work other than what are visible to human eyes.'

But some of his coincidences look uncanny enough. Here, for instance, is a story for which he vouches, as 'exactly true,' told to him by the person to whom it happened:—

I was travelling to London with a friend, General M., when we fell to talking about what was then the topic of the day, Home Rule for Ireland, and, in the course of the conversation, my friend remarked, 'My father was an Irishman.' 'And so was mine,' I said. 'And a Roman Catholic.' 'And so was mine.' 'And he changed his religion in quite mature age.' 'And so did mine.' 'And he went as a member of the Civil Service to a certain place in India.' 'And so did mine, to the self-same place.' 'And he had five sons.' 'And so had mine.' 'And before dying he left directions that his five sons should be brought up in the faith of the Church of England.' 'And so did mine.' Now there is nothing uncanny in all this. It leads to nothing. It is an accumulation of chance coincidences, curious, but nothing more.

We are not quite as sure of that as Mr. Byrne seems to be. We have no explanation: but if we were driven to it we should prefer to say that Mr. Byrne's friend 'had him,' rather than agree that this was 'an accumulation of chance coincidences, curious but nothing more.'

We are afraid that Mr. Scouller is not at all convincing in his tract, 'The doctrine of Re-incarnation: its scientific basis.' He adduces the familiar fact that children occasionally arrive who possess very abnormal powers, and says that these instances of 'psychical qualities' prove re-incarnation. 'If such facts as these do not indicate the possession of a special skill and adaptability, acquired during previous states of existence, then I am wholly at a loss to know what they do mean. For I can conceive of no other theory which will serve to give any reasonable explanation of the facts.' We suggest that spirit-control is at least as good a working theory as skill acquired in previous states of existence.

Mr. Scouller is sometimes quaintly ingenious. Here is an example. He says: 'Thus it becomes apparent that

the doctrine of the pre-existence of man's spiritual and immortal part is in strict accordance with the principles of science. Moreover, this doctrine serves to explain that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said that Levi paid taxes unto Melchizedek, *while as yet he was in the loins of his father.*' The odd spelling of 'Melchizedek' may be the printer's, but the humour of the argument must be the author's own.

By the way; in a previous notice of one of Mr. Scouller's tracts, we criticised a statement of his in a way that seemed to us gentle: but he tells us now that what we said was 'distinctly false.' His statement was this: 'Does it not seem a monstrous thing to imagine that a mere physical act on the part of a pair of humans should have the effect of so arousing the Divine creative energy that an entirely new immortal soul is created and dispatched into this world, possibly to the intense grief and shame of the unworthy parents?' Our criticism was that 'such an imagination would be a monstrous thing if anybody harboured it,' but that we had 'never met anybody who did.' This is what Mr. Scouller says is 'distinctly false.' How does he know whom we have met? We do not know the secret thoughts of everybody we meet; but, so far as we know, we never met anyone who believed that a special divine act 'created and dispatched into this world' a brand new soul every time a body was begotten. Reincarnation is much nearer to that conjuring trick than any belief of ours. Any way, we recommend Mr. Scouller to be civil. It would, at all events, improve his style.

A book of fine merit is R. G. Legge's 'Vagrom Verse and Ragged Rhyme' (London: J. Miles and Co.). This writer is not a mere versifier, but a true poet, with a miraculous gift of musical and subtle phrasing,—a kind of sane Kipling, 'clothed and in his right mind.' The title does not give the right idea of the book, though certain gipsy poems and a gipsy breeziness haunt it. We find much here that belongs to a very high and noble plane of thought and expression, though the writer's taint of Kiplingism, on the war-path, disturbs us. Still, 'Facing the music,' and 'To be used before battle' are, we admit, splendid:—but it is a hateful splendour that throbs and glistens here. We prefer the strenuous, massive, original work in 'Wanted—a bard.' But here, quite in another vein, of strongly contrasted simplicity, is a short poem of pathetic beauty. Baby with its broken toys and Daddy with his broken hopes are both one in the mighty swirl of things:—both children, both trafficking with playthings, both tired and ready for bed:—

Don't you bother, Baby—
The soldier's lost his stand,
The gee-gee's broken both his legs—
It's time for Wonderland!
The house we built is fallen,
We've shattered dolly's head—
Don't you bother, boy,
Don't you bother, don't you bother—
Don't you bother, baby-son,
But come along to bed!

Don't you bother, Daddy—
 The friends you made are gone,
 The strings that tied you close to life
 Have given, one by one !
 The frost has nipped the flowers,
 The snow's about your head—
 Don't you bother, dad,
 Don't you bother, don't you bother—
 Don't you bother, daddy-man,
 The world must go to bed !

OLD-TIME EXPERIENCES.

(Continued from page 231.)

Worth reading is Paul Tynor's new book, 'The Living Christ: an exposition of the immortality of man in soul and body' (New York: The Temple Publishing Company). We say that, though not greatly agreeing with it, but feeling that its writer is an original thinker who is fond of voyages of discovery. The immortality of the body, as he expounds it, is not the persistence of this body, but of a much higher one, the nature of which may be gathered from the following reference to Jesus: 'The body in which Jesus passed through walls and closed doors, appearing and disappearing at will, was a body of "flesh and bones," as he declared—a physical body. But it was also a spiritualised body, flesh and blood so raised in vibration as to become instantly responsive to the will.'

Calm common-sense, nice discrimination and the peculiar knowledge which only experience can give, are the leading characteristics of Part II. of Mr. and Mrs. Wallis' 'Guide to Mediumship.' We see no publisher's name, but the book can be had from the authors, 62, Station-road, Church End, Finchley, or from the office of 'LIGHT.' If inquirers and mediums would take to heart the prudent counsels, and follow the sensible instructions, here given, they might be spared many mortifications and be saved from many dangers.

'THE DREAM-WOMAN.'*

The title of this book gives no clue to its character and purpose, but it is strikingly appropriate nevertheless, as the reader will quickly discover for himself. Who the 'Dream-woman' is we must not divulge, but must be content to say that she is a wonderful creation of the author's fancy and plays a strange part from beginning to end of an unusually clever story. The real object of the writer seems to have been to familiarise us with the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, their laws and purposes. The hero and heroine are brought together by a series of curious incidents, and they gradually learn—by methods for which we must refer our readers to the book itself—that they were lovers occupying high positions in a previous incarnation ages ago. By degrees the details of their strange history are brought to their remembrance, and graphic pictures are drawn of wonderful events in their experience as king and priestess amongst a forgotten people, whose country exists now only on the psychical plane, its physical form having been destroyed by the higher spiritual powers because of the wickedness of the inhabitants. The whole story is enthralling, but to ourselves its most notable feature lies in the charming style of the writer—so simple, so natural, and yet so vivid as to give to fiction all the seemingness of reality. Those of our readers who accept the doctrine of Reincarnation should be delighted with the book.

* 'The Dream-woman.' By KYTHE WYLYWYNE. Published by T. Fisher Unwin, Paternoster-square. Price 6s.

Mrs. MELLON.—We have received a letter from Mrs. Mellon informing us that owing to an accident to the propeller of the steamer by which she is travelling she was delayed at Melbourne but hoped to resume her journey to England on April 23rd. The Sydney Spiritualists presented Mrs. Mellon, before she left that city, with a purse of gold and a handsome dressing case, with silver mountings, engraved with her name.

I find that my old-time experiences are like a cabinet of specimens, rather than a belief-house that I dwell in. The principle on which I always went was to discard any phenomena that were suspicious or unsatisfactory—to put them out of my mind without tormenting myself to discover a possible fraud. I got together in that way a small number of interesting specimens, as it were, for future study, without adopting any theory in the beginning; and this has, I think, kept my mind pretty clear from the chronic and very general suspicion of paid mediums; a suspicion which, whether well or ill founded, has a bad effect both on the phenomena and on one's own judgment. The worst of that system is that when one comes to study his collected specimens he finds it exceedingly difficult to discover any theory that will satisfactorily account for them all; the more so as time goes on, and new possibilities arise, such as that of 'thought-transference'; the control by a sitter of the subconscious self of the medium; and the materialisation of the 'astral' body of some living person. The ordinary method of bringing your theory with you when you enter Spiritualism, does not present this inconvenience, and is therefore much more satisfactory for anyone who finds it irksome to suspend his judgment; he, too, who brings a theory of the spirit world with him, throws away the experiences that he does not want; the difference between us being that I always kept the experiences that puzzled me, while he generally keeps only those that don't puzzle him. He preserves what agrees with his theory, and discards what does not. So I, unfortunately, am never able to take down the card 'A mind to let,' while he, happy man, has a lodger all the time.

These remarks suggest themselves to me when I pick up a specimen marked 'Charles Foster; early sixties; Elise.' I had a private sitting with Foster at that time; and having heard that the spirits were able to write names on his arm in red letters, which names he did not know, I wrote, on the morning of my séance, in ink, on my thigh, the name 'Elsie' (I had lately read 'Elsie Venner'). I told no one anything about it, and naturally, no one could see the writing through my trousers. At my request, Foster tried if the name on my leg would come on his arm; but he asked me to see first if the spirits could read it. For this purpose he gave me a card with the letters of the alphabet, requesting me to run over it with a pencil, to see if the spirits would rap out the right letters. I held the card and pencil so that Foster could not possibly see what letters I touched; he was leaning back in his chair, with his eyes shut, smoking a cigar. We tried three times, with the same result; and I then said: 'Two of the letters are transposed,' which was all the clue I gave him. Foster seized a piece of paper and dashed off: 'We spell it as we see it.' I said that would do; and immediately he was seized with a violent paroxysm, and caught hold of my hand spasmodically. Then he unbuttoned his cuff, and turned up his sleeve, and there, on his forearm, was the name 'Elise' (not 'Elsie') in bold script, the letters an inch and a-half long, and light red in colour, turning to brown in a few minutes, and fading out before the séance was over. People who say that Foster did this 'trick' with chemicals or with a diamond ring simply don't know what they are talking about. But the queer thing, which makes this incident a 'good specimen,' was that when I got home and looked at my leg, I found that the ink in the letters *s* and *i* had been so rubbed by the trousers during the morning that anyone who had not the name of 'Elsie' in his mind would have certainly read them 'Elise.' Now, at the time of the experiment I was thinking of the name 'Elsie' as hard as I could, in order to impress it on the spirit, for my object was to get that name on Foster's arm, yet 'Elise' came out; therefore there was no thought-reading in the case.

I asked the spirits present at this séance if they would pay me a visit when I was alone; and they said they would try to come to me that evening. I was living by myself in chambers at the time and it was after twelve when I returned home that night. I sat for a while smoking a cigar and

waiting, with the gas full on. After about ten minutes, there came pretty smart 'ticking' raps on the gas globe, such as I never heard except on that occasion; they came in showers, or else in a kind of tauto, like 'Kentish fire'; but I could get no intelligence from them, so I went to bed. Just as I was dozing off, there came two tremendous whacks on a clothes press near my head; it was as if someone had hit it violent blows with a heavy stick. I started up into a sitting posture in the darkness, and my pillow slid out of the bed, and fell with a 'dull thud' on the floor, completing my alarm—for I had not then quite got over the nervousness that the common idea of a 'ghost' produces. I lit my gas, and left it burning, yet every time I was dropping off to sleep (and I was very tired) there came tremendous bangs on the clothes press, on the dressing table, or on a chest of drawers. The last time I looked at my watch it was four o'clock, and after that I got to sleep. There was never any repetition of the visit. Whoever the visitor may have been, he seems to have been satisfied with the result. There was certainly no thought-reading or clairvoyance in this case; and that it was not clair-audience, or a mere effect of my 'imagination,' is proved by the fact that the noise awoke a friend who slept some rooms away. Nor do I suspect my 'astral' of playing tricks on me.

(To be continued.)

'CHRONOS.'

UNSOUGHT VISIONS.

From childhood I have been a Spiritualist without knowing it. From the age of four to fifteen years I had many spirit visitors, to my great horror, for there was no one to explain these things to me. My parents and friends tried to persuade me they were only dreams or fancies, but I knew better. Two of these visions I remember very well. One night while in bed with a younger brother I was suddenly awakened by a great noise as though a cannon ball had come through the roof. On opening my eyes I beheld a figure in the middle of the room robed in white and reaching from floor to ceiling; it was motionless and remained until my father (whom I had called) came into the room, but he saw nothing. On another occasion I was mysteriously awakened and found by my bedside three spirits, two children and one adult, who disappeared on my father coming into the room with a light. From the age of fifteen to thirty-four years I remember very little of a spiritual character. The spirits seemed to have left me for some reason; whether my life was not so pure as formerly or whether it was out of pity for the terror they caused me, I know not. About this time my wife was taken from me, but two nights before her death, feeling very weary, I went to the church for a little quiet music on the organ, and while playing I was startled to see a figure pass before me, although I knew I was alone and the doors locked. There was very little music after that, for I left the church as quickly as possible. After her death I watched for her nightly, but for about two years nothing came; at last I had spirit communion 'of the most consoling nature,' as Mr. W. J. Colville puts it, for while I slept one night she stood before me in all her spirit glory. In this life she was one of God's most perfect creatures, and I have seen nothing as lovely either in painting or sculpture as she was in her spirit form. A few years more, and as I stood by my bed one night, some three months ago, I perceived a very peculiar perfume in the room, as sweet as the most delicately scented-rose; then I knew she was with me again, for this same perfume had emanated from her body when living and in perfect health. I ask your pardon for troubling you with these experiences, but I have felt strangely prompted to do so.

A. K.

'IM REICHE DER SCHATTEN.'—Under this title Karl Siegmund, of Berlin, has issued a German edition of Mrs. d'Esperance's very popular work 'Shadow Land.' The book is excellently printed and strongly bound, and will be cordially welcomed by many of our readers, whether they are already familiar with the language or are seeking to perfect themselves in its acquisition. To the latter the English edition might, of course, serve as a handy key.

A CHRISTIAN MYSTIC.*

'The life of a scholar,' says Goldsmith in one of his delightful essays, 'seldom abounds in adventure; his fame is acquired in solitude, and the historian who only views him at a distance must be content with a dry detail of actions by which he is scarce distinguished from the rest of mankind.' Yet, *pace* the good doctor, there is scarcely a branch of literature so generally fascinating as biography—to the serious reader at least. When, as in the present instance, the subject of the biography is not only a scholar but a mystic, and moreover a French mystic—artistic, refined, penetrative, and intuitive, as befits the Latin type—then it is reasonable to expect interest and attraction.

Mr. Waite's book, it may be mentioned, concerns itself not only with the fine spiritual personality of Saint Martin, 'the Unknown Philosopher,' but also with his transcendental doctrine, and ably epitomises a considerable body of philosophic writings.

Comparatively few are familiar with Saint Martin's mystic correspondence and his more formal treatise on the true nature and ministry of man. They were translated into English many years ago by the late Mrs. A. J. Penny, whose name is familiar to some of the readers of 'LIGHT.' In the present volume, however, Mr. Waite has in the compass of some 500 octavo pages traversed a far larger area of the published work of the French mystic. In the course of a critical analysis of the man and his work, he has cleared up a number of doubtful points, and his study thus represents a more advanced stage of knowledge than the previous volumes (published abroad) on the same theme.

Saint Martin, we learn, was born at Amboise in the province of Touraine, on January 18th, 1743, coming of noble parentage. He lost his mother at his birth, but her place was entirely filled by his father's second wife—a circumstance as rare as it is pleasing. So tender was the attachment between the philosopher and his step-mother that, as he tells us, filial respect and affection became for him a sacred sentiment. Constitutionally, he was exceedingly delicate. However, he went through the usual scholastic training, and was subsequently entered as a student in the School of Jurisprudence. Law, however, proved an uncongenial study, and he entered the Army, not from any predilection for a martial career, but because it afforded him more leisure for his mystical pursuits. While stationed at Bordeaux, after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, he became, so to speak, intromitted to the occult life. This was in 1767, when he was initiated into the Order of Don Martines de Pasqually, a Rosicrucian, a disciple of Swedenborg, and the founder of an organisation to which was attached the not over-felicitous style of the 'Elect Cohens,' a body of 'Masonic Illuminists.' It was a school of persons devoted to theurgic practices; and here Saint Martin seems to have gained conviction of the efficacy of the processes set in operation by the Order.

Amongst the points dealt with in the volume in connection with the mystical life of Saint Martin, are, the origin of this school of initiation, its alleged derivation from Swedenborg, and (arising out of this consideration) the connection of Swedenborg himself with secret societies and occult practices; the part played by Saint Martin in the Masonic movements of his time, and the extent to which he can be regarded as the originator of the Martinist rite which perpetuates his name to-day. All these and other disputed points receive critical and dispassionate consideration, and as those of an expert in such matters, Mr. Waite's conclusions are interesting and doubtless valuable, although too highly specialised to be even touched upon here.

But to return to the life of the mystic on its external side. Before the decease of his Mentor, the Spaniard Pasqually, Saint Martin, after the manner of genius, began to strike out for himself a line which ultimately took him far away from the operations and ideals of the 'Masonic Illuminists.' He had early in life conceived the idea that he was destined for a spiritual mission, a conviction, by the way, that has penetrated many thousands of lesser minds to no particular purpose, as Spiritualism and Theosophy can bear witness.

*'The Life of Louis Claude de Saint Martin.' By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE (Philip Welby, 7s. 6d.).

However, Saint Martin was of the elect, and to Spiritualists, who are ever and always the stout advocates of free trade in thought, discovery, and revelation, it should be of interest to learn that, whereas Pasqually guarded his secrets jealously from the world, Saint Martin was anxious to broadcast them amongst thinkers and students at large. Hence arose, no doubt, the literary career upon which he ultimately embarked, and the faithful following which still responds to his influence, although it is well nigh a century since he departed from the earth.

In assigning the position of a distinguished man, regard must always be had to the opinion in which he was held by the leading minds who were his friends or contemporaries. We learn with interest, therefore, that during a stay in London (in 1787) Saint Martin made a 'memorable and fruitful acquaintance' with certain disciples of William Law, the English mystic. He also came into friendly association with Herschell, the astronomer, Lord Beauchamp, and the Russian Prince Galitzin, who declared that he had never been really a man until he knew M. de Saint Martin. Amongst the more eminent Continental writers who have expressed admiration for him in their works are numbered Chateaubriand, Mme. de Staël, Joubert, Sainte Beuve, and Victor Cousin. It is noteworthy that amongst a great deal in his philosophy that must have been received by direct inspiration from the common sources of truth, he owed (on his own testimony) very much to his studies of Jacob Boehme, whose 'influence,' Mr. Waite considers, 'may be found on every leaf of his correspondence.'

His life was not entirely destitute of the peril and adventure of more active careers. An aristocrat, and living almost exclusively in the circle of the aristocracy, he was brought into close contact with the storms and terrors of the Revolution. A visit to his father, who was ill in Paris, brought him practically under the storm centre, for he writes: 'The streets near the house I was in were a field of battle; the house itself [probably the palace of the Duchesse de Bourbon] was a hospital where the wounded were brought, and, moreover, was every moment threatened with invasion and pillage.' And in the midst of this turmoil he had to travel at the risk of his life through the turbulent mob to protect his sister, who resided in another part of Paris. As he did not join the terrified crowd of aristocratic *émigrés* who sought asylum in England, it is a marvel that the life of the mystic did not come to a dramatic conclusion under the guillotine, for his close intimacy with royal circles was well known. There is something almost droll in the circumstance that his writings fell under the suspicion of the leaders of the Revolution, and he had some difficulty in proving that their mystical phraseology had no political significance.

Probably his safety is explained by certain diplomatic manoeuvres. Thus he contributed liberally towards the equipment of the army of the Republic, and he is even said to have formed one of the guard at the Temple when the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XVII.) was immured there.

In considering the general fabric of his philosophy there is a vital significance in the exclamation he is said to have uttered when, as a youth, he arose from the study of the theological speculations of his day. Said he, 'There is a God, I have a soul, and no more is wanted for wisdom.' He regarded his life as a journey every step of which brought him nearer to the Deity.

In his comments on the relationship between the teachings of Swedenborg and Boehme and the doctrines of Saint Martin, Mr. Waite makes a suggestion which may (parenthetically) be commended to the consideration of Spiritualists.

'Swedenborg,' he says, 'may be said in a sense to have prepared the way for Spiritualism. No man of visions and illuminations has done more than he to commoise the world of spirits. . . In his way he was the most gracious, most approachable, and the clearest of natural seers.'

After such encomiums it is a little disconcerting to find Mr. Waite summarily dismissing Swedenborg as an influence of any importance in the interior life of Saint Martin, who surely, on Mr. Waite's own testimony, had his affinities with

the Swedish seer, himself a nobleman, and moved by the same impulse for popularising interior truths that possessed the younger philosopher. One is inclined to resent the suggestion that the visions of Swedenborg, being of a 'profuse and bourgeois' character, could have had no attraction for such an intellect as Saint Martin. Quite apart from the fact that the French mystic was admittedly a spiritual democrat, for all his patrician externals, it should not be forgotten that the teacher, Pasqually, to whom he owed his inception in the interior wisdom, was actually a 'transfigured disciple' of Swedenborg. The power of the transmuted idea was surely not dormant in the case of such a receptive mentality as Saint Martin.

Here, for instance, is an aphorism of Saint Martin, in which we seem to trace the 'fine Roman hand' of Swedenborg: 'Death is the target at which all men strike; but the angle of incidence being equal to the angle of reflection, they find themselves after death in their former degree, whether above or below.'

It is illustrative of the broadened spiritual perceptions of the thinkers of to-day that Saint Martin cannot be regarded as having any especial message for this age. His personal qualities are an important attraction, his literary excellences have a charm of their own. For the rest, what is of permanent value in his writings is his profound spiritual insight, his 'sublime gleams' (to quote Mme. de Staël).

'Flashing thoughts from brooding depths of genius' are not characteristic of the mystical school. They are too often concerned in the founding of 'close corporations' in the province of wisdom, and the title of 'obscurantists' applied to them is often libellous only to the extent of its truth. Hence Saint Martin, both as to his life and his works, is a subject of study suitable for the broadest type of Spiritualist student as well as for the devotee of mysticism, or even the general lover of classic literature. And if any justification for the title at the head of this notice is demanded, it may be found in Mr. Waite's statement that the inspiration of Saint Martin was drawn from the mysticism of the Latin Church, which showed its appreciation by placing one of his works on its 'Index Expurgatorius.' Probably the volume contained a little more illumination than the Church approved of. One would like to think of that Church as having grown a trifle wiser to-day. But the example of the late Mr. St. George Mivart forbids the reflection.

In conclusion, one may be permitted to evade the difficulties of indicating in a few words the scope and drift of Saint Martin's philosophy by quoting from Mr. Waite, who thus summarises the matter.

'I do not,' he says, 'offer the system of Saint Martin as an adequate measure of the providence of God in respect of the destinies of man; I know of no adequate measure, mystic or non-mystic; but I could not be a transcendentalist without holding that man has come forth from God, that he has erred somehow in the way, and that he has to return. Saint Martin has something to teach us as to the way of that return; and if even in the last analysis we could accept nothing that he tells us, he is still an object of imperishable interest because he is actively occupied, as we also should be with him, in the one pursuit which, to quote his own words, "engrosses the entire universe." But I think also that in that last analysis there is light in Saint Martin, and that where he is not directly helpful he is invariably consoling.'

D. Gov.

'UNCONSCIOUS SPIRITUALISTS.'—'Multitudes of men and women are unconscious Spiritualists. They feel, as Wordsworth says, "Heaven lies all around," and are dimly conscious at times that the loved and lost are near them, and not in some distant, far-away Heaven. They feel the breezes that blow from the spirit land, and though they "see but dimly through the mists and vapours," yet in their hearts they recognise the presence and power of the unseen spirit realm about them. The poets have ever been men and women whose spiritual senses were developed to apprehend the spiritual realities around them. Consciously or unconsciously they have sung the Philosophy of Spiritualism, and many of them have expressly declared its central doctrine of spirit return and communion.'—REV. B. F. AUSTIN.

THE INFINITE SPIRIT UNIVERSE.

Our subjective mental activity, like the objective physical activity of the planets, is swayed by two influences, a centrifugal force and a centripetal. The centrifugal force which controls our mental activity is the product of the infinite nature within us; as it develops it tends to extend our mental and spiritual sympathies ever more and more widely, until the soul can pray with Rabbi Ishmael in Whittier's poem:—

'O Thou Eternal! I am one of all,
And nothing ask that others may not share.'

And in that prayer the whole creation is included. The claim that this infinite nature in us makes on behalf of all conscious beings is imperative; it is an intuitive appeal to Eternal Justice which the soul, at its best moments, knows to be valid, which it is sure cannot be disallowed by the Soul of the Universe, who inspires it. But a centripetal force, within us also, acts in the reverse direction; the finite nature perpetually tends to limit the mental and spiritual activities and to confine the orbit of the soul's course.

This centripetal action of our mentality becomes a practical stumbling-block to our imagination when we face the fact of the overwhelming hosts of spirits which throng the Universe. The study of Spiritualism brings us face to face with this, which Professor William James calls the 'plethora and glut of life.' We might read with advantage the Professor's little book on 'Human Immortality,' when we feel, as we do at times, that our imagination reels, our brain is paralysed, our sympathies exhausted by the attempt to include within their range the recognition of the existence of all these infinitely various orders of spiritual existence. In it the Professor opens his mind with a frankness which is truly helpful, and lets us see how a psychologist and a man of science goes through much the same subjective experiences as those which hamper and perplex smaller minds, the difference between the two experiences being, perhaps, that the deep thinker does really *go through* and come out into clearer vision, whereas the more superficial mind loses itself in a maze and gets no wider out-look.

Professor James deals with two difficulties which are felt by those who are doubtful about human immortality. His way of dealing with the first—that, apparently, *thought is a function of the brain*, is very interesting. He recognises the formula, but points out that 'function' may be, and often is, permissive and transmissive, and it is as permissive and transmissive, not as productive function that he regards the formula as expressing a truth. But it is particularly in order to draw attention to his treatment of the second difficulty that we have alluded to his Essay.

That second difficulty is the one we have already alluded to. 'Having myself,' he says, 'as a recipient of modern scientific culture, gone through a subjective experience like this, I feel sure that it must have been the experience of many.' He then proceeds to state it uncompromisingly, and to expose the 'tremendous fallacy' which he believes it to be: 'Since the noting of the fallacy has set my own mind free, I have felt that one service I might render would be to point out where it lies.' He traces it directly to that limiting influence which is the product of our littleness and incapacity:—

'It is absurd to suppose, simply because our private power of sympathetic vibration with other lives gives out so soon, that in the heart of Infinite Being itself there can be such a thing as plethora, or glut, or supersaturation. . . . If we are Theists we can go farther without altering the result. God, we can then say, has so inexhaustible a capacity for love that His call and need is for a literally endless accumulation of created lives. He can never faint or grow weary, as we should under the increasing supply. His scale is infinite in all things. His sympathy can never know satiety or glut. . . . For my own part, then, so far as logic goes, I am willing that every leaf that ever grew in this world's forest and rustled in the breeze should become immortal. It is purely a question of fact: are the leaves so or not? . . . The heart of being can have no exclusions akin to those which our poor little hearts set up. The inner significance of other lives exceeds all our powers of sympathy and insight.'

We have ventured to make this long quotation, not because this Essay is recent, and *therefore* not widely known,

but because it is not quite recent,* and therefore probably may not have come under the notice of those who are new students of psychism and new explorers in the limitless field of living spirit existence which the study opens up; and because, moreover, the Essay fills so small a volume that it is very likely to be overlooked on the shelves of the Alliance Library where it has a place.

H. A. D.

THEOSOPHY AND REINCARNATION.

Reincarnation is referred to as a burning question in the contribution of Madame T. de Christmas Dirckinck-Holmfeld in the issue of 'LIGHT' for May 4th. It should, however, not be forgotten that the question which is a burning one to many, has ceased to be a knotty problem and has been an accepted belief, a working and an established conviction, to the majority of mankind.

I am not, of course, repeating this fact as evidence to the truth of Reincarnation, but to remind your readers that the belief is not new or modern in any sense, but a very ancient and an almost universal teaching. But the point of your contributor's communication lies in its inference that the teaching of Reincarnation tends to laxity of effort after progress, on the part of those accepting the doctrine. Your contributor's conclusions may be the result of perfectly serious and sincere thought, but they are entirely erroneous in the light of Theosophy, and your contributor speaks without knowledge of theosophic teaching when she says that 'Reincarnation as taught by Theosophists will dry up the springs of Christian love and divine progress,' for, as a matter of fact, no Theosophist can accept the doctrine of Reincarnation without previously, or at the same time, accepting its companion doctrine of Karma. Belief in Reincarnation or in spirit-communication may be optional, immaterial, non-essential to right action and progress, but Karma is an essential doctrine, a vital belief, a fundamental basis of life to every soul. It is the law which none can annul or escape. Karma, briefly defined, is 'the ultimate law of the universe, the source, origin, and fountain of all other laws which exist throughout Nature.' It is written of it, 'Great is the law. It hath never been broken since the beginning of time.' 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' 'Rigid justice rules the world. With mighty sweep of never-erring action it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.' It is because the doctrine of Reincarnation fits in with the logical and practical operation and fulfilment of this law, stands in fact as its corollary, that the doctrine is so generally accepted by Theosophists.

F. T. S.

Scarborough.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

May I venture to draw the attention of your readers to a very valuable work, just published, on a subject which should be of vital interest to all Spiritualists, viz., the question of the Abolition of Capital Punishment? Our late lamented president, 'M. A. (Oxon),' struck no uncertain note in dealing with this matter; and just recently Madame Florence Montague has sounded the same note in the course of her admirable address at the last *Conversazione*. We who recognise that the executed murderer is not an element of mischief safely put out of the way, but a living entity projected into the world of causes 'with all his imperfections on his head,' and capable of working even more evil than when incarnate, because he is in a less tangible form, should perceive better than the outer world can do the vast importance of the subject. The book in question is 'The Penalty of Death,' by Dr. Josiah Oldfield (Messrs. Bell and Sons, York-street, Covent Garden), and deals in an exhaustive and masterly fashion with every side of this complicated problem. All the arguments in favour of capital punishment are boldly faced and resolutely dealt with, in a spirit that your readers should find very acceptable.

A. E. MAJOR.

*It was published, 1898, by Archibald Constable and Co., 2, Whitehall-gardens.

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A MODEL INVESTIGATOR.

Biographies and autobiographies are just now in fashion, and no wonder: for surely there is no better book for enjoyment than the story of a notable life, especially if that life led along the roads and by-paths trodden by specially interesting women and men. One of the very best of these is 'The Autobiography of a journalist,' by W. J. Stillman, late correspondent to 'The Times' in Rome (Two volumes. London: Grant Richards). That indeed is a life of singular richness in the particular we have named. Both in America, his birthplace, and home for the first twenty years of his life, and in Europe, Mr. Stillman naturally gravitated to artists, poets, philosophers and literary men generally; and everywhere he was an independent observer, a keen critic, a bright and alert man of the world. His Autobiography abounds with indications of all this, giving to it a vivacity, a charm and a certain informing value which cannot fail to make it highly acceptable to many classes of readers.

Our own special interest, of course, turns upon the subject of a chapter entitled 'Spiritism,' a chapter which gives a very good idea of the writer's tone of mind: for, underneath all his gossip, grave and gay, there is always a note of criticism, and the touch of a genuine seeker after truth. His spiritual studies, if we may so call them (he would probably call them inquiries into Spiritism,) began in early manhood. From the moment the subject came up before him, he was a serious and hopeful inquirer, eager and resolute, but easily repelled by vulgarity, pretence and credulity. Very soon, he gave up public mediums as frivolous or fraudulent. Even the ordinary private circles were distasteful to him, as 'farcical' or 'inane': his clean eye and fine taste were easily disturbed by much that ordinary men could very well have endured. Fortunately, he did not follow the usual course, by retiring from the whole thing in disgust. 'To me,' he says, 'the question had such vital importance that I was determined that neither fraud nor the inconsequent nature of the pretended communications should dissuade me from the most thorough investigation possible.' We commend that resolution to the men of his calibre who usually allow themselves to be too readily turned back, disgusted, bothered or tired.

After forming this resolution, this model investigator limited his inquiries and experiments to séances in which the good faith of the company was unquestionable, as private friends. Here, however, a curious thing happened. Though the investigators were all sincere and cultivated, they often got only 'triviality and low intelligence,' and 'the character of the "manifestation" was generally so

trivial and opposed to all preconceived ideas of spiritual intelligence as to justify the conclusion that the departed had left their wits behind them.' He probably meant by this that they appeared to have left their wits behind them when they departed from this state of being: but what if they had to leave their wits behind them, or to suffer mental confusion, or worse, when they attempted to manifest themselves in the mud and reek of our earthly surroundings? Then, apart from that, is it not reasonable to expect that if we tap the ocean of intelligence around us we must run risks as to the barrel we reach?

Fortunately again, our intrepid seeker kept on. His investigations went on for years, 'and included, to greater or less extent, every form of psychological and physical phenomenon which was offered by Spiritism.' He was rewarded. A model investigator found a model medium, in the person of 'the wife of our ablest sculptor of that day.' This lady, he says, 'apart from the peculiar powers she possessed,' was one of the most remarkable women he had ever known, both morally and intellectually, 'and the peculiar mental powers she manifested were well known to all the large and thoughtful circle of friends which gathered round her.' No physical manifestations took place in her presence,—indeed, Mr. Stillman appears to discredit physical manifestations,—but 'her telepathic and thought-reading powers in ordinary social intercourse were most surprising.' 'I had myself the evidence that in her presence there was nothing in my past life beyond her perception.' Two other mediums greatly helped him in the same direction; one, the girl to whom we are indebted for the Turner story we lately quoted; the other, 'a child of seven,' a 'hypnotic clairvoyant of singular lucidity.' Through both of these he received extraordinary evidences in the form of answers to mental questions.

The general result is given in a thoughtful summary at the end of this enthralling chapter. No doubts remained. His experiences enable him to say, 'I have no hesitation in saying that they completed and fixed my conviction of the existence of invisible and independent intelligences to which the phenomena were due.' The question of the identity of these intelligences he holds in abeyance, but he says, 'Of the actuality of a disembodied and individual being which, for want of more intelligence of its nature, we call a "spirit," I have no more doubt than I have of my own embodied and individual existence': and he goes farther and says bluntly, 'I am of the opinion that if all the cultivated minds which, having studied the subject, agree with me in my conclusions were to be as frank as I am, there would be a large body of witnesses in accord with me.'

He holds, too, that the subject demands and deserves the gravest possible attention. 'If the beginnings of physical life are worth the years of patient study which science has accorded them, I must believe that the final issue of it is worth the time and study needed to arrive at such results as would, I am convinced, finally crown them.'

The chapter, following this on 'Spiritism,' describes his 'life in the wilderness.' Here, almost entirely alone, he went through experiences which tend to show that he knows well what it is to be open to the spirit-powers. 'The human being,' he says, 'possesses spiritual senses, parallel with the physical, by which it sees what the physical sense cannot see, and hears what is inaudible to the physical ear.' He evidently knows that by personal and solitary experience, as this picturesque and weird but beautiful chapter on 'Life in the wilderness' witnesses.

We should like to add that these volumes are handsomely produced, with good type, that there are two choice portraits of the author, one in what we may almost call youth (Rossetti's), and the other in old age, and that, apart from the subject of 'Spiritism,' the Autobiography is, in many ways, charming and absorbing.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

By publishing, in our last few issues, Mr. Harte's articles on Christian Science, we have, possibly, gone beyond the requirements of politeness and fairplay in our desire to be just to that strange latter-day 'movement.' We Spiritualists know what it is to be misrepresented and maligned; and, no doubt, a fellow-feeling makes us 'wondrous kind'; although Christian Scientists have no great claim upon our good nature, for while we have been not unfriendly to Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy treats Spiritualism very scornfully. 'Perhaps,' as Voltaire said under somewhat similar circumstances, 'we are both of us mistaken!'

Christian Science at present presents a bold face to the world, but it is apparently more true of it than of most things mortal, that it was born with the seeds of its dissolution in it. Over the head of Mrs. Eddy and her followers there hangs a sword of Damocles, in the shape of the voluminous manuscripts of the late Dr. P. P. Quimby, of Portland, Me. These manuscripts—which may perhaps do more to break up Christian Science as a doctrinal religion than argument, ridicule, abuse and legal enactments—are in the hands of his son, Mr. George A. Quimby, who was with his father for many years, and is now a manufacturer in Belfast, Me. About the year 1853, Dr. Quimby, at that time a staunch believer in official medicine, was waiting for death by consumption, complicated by diseases of several important organs. An apparently accidental circumstance caused him to experiment on himself mentally, and soon afterwards he took up mesmerism, and greatly improved in health. Some ten years later, a clairvoyant subject of his described his condition to him just as the doctors had diagnosed it, but said he (the clairvoyant) could cure him. He laid a hand upon his back and told him he would be well in two days; and he was! Dr. Quimby thought the matter out, and concluded that there exists in man a marvellous curative power, which is called into action by true belief, or what may be called the *recognition* of that power. He felt the power in himself, and for nearly twenty years before Mrs. Eddy knew him he had been practising mental healing, according to his theory, with astonishing success. Dr. Quimby, long before he met Mrs. Eddy, called his system or gnosis, 'the Science of Christ.' The very name, 'Christian Science,' occurs in his MSS., and many of the believers in Mental or 'Metaphysical' Healing consider him the true originator of Christian Science. This in fact is the great heresy which has led to several secessions from the Eddyite Church; and it is a continual thorn in Mrs. Eddy's side, which has not improved her temper. Even in the Church itself there are two parties, one of which leans towards Dr. Quimby's view that Christian Science is, properly speaking, a science, while the other regards it as essentially a Religion—much as two similar parties exist in Spiritualism. The point at issue between the Eddyites and the Quimbyites is that the Eddyites say that Mrs. Eddy taught Dr. Quimby all he knew, and that he afterwards 'stole' her doctrine, and claimed it as his own, whilst the Quimbyites maintain that Mrs. Eddy copied some of Dr. Quimby's MSS. and published them, with fanciful additions, as a revelation from on High vouchsafed to herself. Both parties are in accord about the main historical facts, which are these: In 1862, Mrs. Eddy (then Mrs. Patterson) went to Dr. Quimby as a patient, and was cured by him of spinal paralysis; and she became his enthusiastic admirer, and remained with him for three years as his friend and secretary. A year before Dr. Quimby died, Mrs. Eddy left him; but she remained his devoted disciple for many years after his death (in 1866). The first edition of 'Science and Health'

(the 'Bible' of 'Christian Science') was published by Mrs. Eddy in 1875. It is generally supposed that the publication of Dr. Quimby's MSS., now in the hands of his son, will settle the point in dispute; but so far, Mr. George A. Quimby has been deaf to all appeals to put them before the world—his answer invariably being 'All in due time.'

Dr. Quimby was an experimental psychologist of very large experience, and an acute reasoner on scientific lines, whereas Mrs. Eddy knows nothing of psychology, and her logic is grotesque; but they agree in proclaiming the existence of a marvellous 'spiritual' or mental power in man, capable of producing extraordinary physical effects on the human body. If that power really exists, and he, as it seems, exercised equally by the followers of Dr. Quimby and of Mrs. Eddy, it might appear of little consequence who originated the system, or what precise idea the practitioner has about the rationale of the means and methods he successfully employs; but there is this important point involved: If Christian Science be presented to the world—as Dr. Quimby presented it—as the result of accurate observation and experiment, combined with cautious and logical inference, it will be far more likely to obtain a hearing than when it is imposed on mankind as a revelation from on High. What Dr. Quimby's theory was cannot be accurately known until his MSS. are published. Although he used much the same language as Mrs. Eddy, such as calling disease 'error' and Christian Science 'the Truth,' still he seems, from what we already know of his ideas, to have differed from her in the very important point of the non-existence of Matter. Mrs. Eddy says that the belief in Matter is a delusion of the Mortal Mind; but Dr. Quimby seems to have considered Matter, not as actually non-existent, but as what may be called a heteromorphic form of Spirit, to attribute to which an *independent* existence is the 'error' that causes all the trouble, because Matter is entirely subservient to, and at the mercy of, Mind—a deposit, as it were, of Mind, which can be volatilised by the power of Thought without ceasing to have an existence as Spirit, its underlying substance or reality. Any of our readers who feel a curiosity in this whole matter should consult 'The True History of Mental Science,' by Julius A. Dresser, Dr. Quimby's personal friend and fellow worker (Metaphysical Publishing Co., New York); also 'The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby,' by Annetta G. Dresser (G. H. Ellis, Boston, Mass.). We do not intend to take part in the controversy, either now or when it may develop from the mild into the acute stage; but we cannot help saying that Dr. Quimby's readiness to avail himself of physical means for awakening hope, expectation, or belief in the mind of a patient who is affected by such means, seems not only wiser than Mrs. Eddy's uncompromising denunciation of them all, but also more in accordance with what sober-minded people are accustomed to regard as the real teachings of the Bible.

MR. F. W. H. MYERS.

We are asked by Mrs. F. W. H. Myers to state that none of the articles or letters referring to her husband which have appeared in our columns since his death have been published with her knowledge or sanction.

MADAME MONTAGUE.—We are desired by Madame Montague to announce that she has removed to 3D, Hyde Park-mansions. Particulars of her future plans will be found in our advertising columns.

MR. W. J. COLVILLE.—The 'Harbinger of Light' says: 'Mr. W. J. Colville has been kept continuously busy in Adelaide during March.' He was engaged for April to lecture in Melbourne and was to open a three months' engagement in Sydney, N.S.W., on Sunday, May 5th.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. VAN EEDEN.

That Dr. R. Hodgson, Professor Hyslop, and the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, after much tireless study and observation, ultimately surrendered to the conviction that they had satisfactorily proved the continuity of individual existence after death, is, we suppose, by this time fairly widely known, but to these three notable workers in modern psychological research we may now claim to add a fourth investigator of prominence—one who also confesses to a similar position of belief. He affirms that in one instance at any rate he was given indubitable proof that a deceased personality was certainly manifesting and proving its identity through the entranced medium. This one experience stands its ground for genuineness in the face of every conceivable hypothesis, even supposing that all other phenomena obtained through the same source might possibly be explained on certain known psychological laws and theories. This latest addition to our ranks of scientific investigators is Dr. F. van Eeden, of Holland, who came over recently to read to the Society for Psychical Research his report concerning many experimental sittings held last summer with Mrs. Thompson.

The Doctor's paper led to one of the most interesting and animated meetings held by the Society for Psychical Research for some time past. The lecturer was frankly critical, and stated his ideas and views with encouraging freedom and honesty. While analysing the vagaries and possibilities of unconscious telepathy, or the apparent guess-work from intuitive impressions which all mediums exhibit to some extent when under purported control, he at the same time unhesitatingly accorded certain phases of spontaneous phenomena a just measure of praise and consideration. If he was uncompromising in his declaration that mediums too frequently give way to the desire to add to, and elaborate, on their own initiative when filling out the lines from clairvoyant impressions, he also willingly acknowledged the truth and accuracy of certain statements which came frequently in unexpected fashion from the medium, when marked independence of thought and aim was sometimes revealed. Measures taken to test the power of telepathy, or hints deliberately made to gauge how far suggestion could effect the supposed control, were, he admits, rarely successful, and in more than one case his attempts to lead the medium into certain trains of thought were ignored, and matters were touched upon widely removed from the subject he had in his mind. All this, and many more exceedingly interesting inferences and observations, were contained in Dr. van Eeden's paper, and were followed by some broad and sympathetic remarks from Dr. Oliver Lodge, who is able to discuss mediumistic phenomena luminously and without prejudice. Psychical Researchers are forging rapidly ahead on spiritually scientific lines, and one feels hopeful that much good work lies still before them, which will continue to influence progressively the world of psychological thought.

A short *resumé* of some of the more pronounced features of his investigations with Mrs. Thompson had already been given by Dr. van Eeden at the Psychological Congress of Paris, but a complete and full record of his experiences will appear in an early number of the Society for Psychical Research 'Proceedings,' for the first time, and those interested in similar studies will be well advised not to miss a perusal of this important work. The Doctor's opportune visit to London enabled me to renew an acquaintance of last summer, and obtain a long and pleasant chat one afternoon during his brief stay in our midst. One or two of his more personal views on psychical matters I feel tempted to reproduce, though he may be said to differentiate firmly, when expressing them, between the two positions which a student can take up in these metaphysical discussions: between the position of philosophical ethics and that of scientific psychology; between the spiritually-minded theorist and the prober into the domain of fact. What the heart or soul might suggest, the brain or reason would perhaps be forced to question, and reject as incapable of demonstration; and it is here that he finds his first occasion to reprove the Spiritualist, who too readily responds to the dictates of desire and emotion at the expense of accuracy

of observation. What my philosophical idealism might accept, Dr. van Eeden would say, 'should not bias my mind when I search for the scientific demonstration of certain inexplicable phenomena in nature.' It is just this equilibrium which maintains between brain and heart, that makes his judgment well worth the respect of all intellectually-minded Spiritualists.

As a psychologist who has studied in the French schools, he knows his ground thoroughly, while philosophically his thought is unmarred by materialism. A writer of distinction in his own country, he has largely given up active practice in his medical profession, and disliking intensely all conventional trammels of 'officialdom' in science, he is known to have struck out his own path in life in order to follow the dictates of his inclination in intellectual study, free from academic shackles. This mental emancipation gives him an all-round grasp and comprehension in psychological deductions rarely met with in medical men, even when they are specialists in such study. His personal aims and teachings are expressed in the belief that only by a judicious blending of the physical and mental capacities can a truly spiritual advancement be achieved; and these convictions he practically demonstrates in his own life. He believes with other thinkers in this line that intellectual growth is strongest and best when harmonised with healthy physical action—the unity of mind and body acting in conformity with the laws of spirit and the higher consciousness, and expressed by attention to the physical growth as well as the psychical or mental. This mode of life he and others, forming a small community called 'the Colony,' endeavour to carry out, striving to show that a mere ideal, when systematically evolved, is quite compatible with successful and practical results. He himself is a vegetarian, though without bigotry on the subject. Beginning his day at six in the morning, he retires to bed at ten or soon afterwards, having worked so many hours at his numerous outdoor occupations of country life and so many hours in literary work; and when discussing the phases of psychical development, such as projection of the double, thought trans-mission, and, in fact, such experiences as the more advanced students desire to obtain, he gave his opinion that only under very favourable conditions of fresh air and restful surroundings can this be systematically achieved. Philosophically, he is in sympathy with Eastern teachings, and his bias from that point of view, added to his medical knowledge, compels him to consider that continued or frequent séance holding is wrong, physically and ethically. When phenomena occur spontaneously or are comparatively uninduced, then, and then only, was it right and proper to investigate and seriously study the laws of cause and effect in connection with what transpired. The spontaneous phenomena of purely physical nature are generally unmistakably pronounced and require little trouble to verify, for many can testify to these occurrences when they occur at all times and in all places; but spontaneous clairvoyance, or action from the invisible through the mind, is, in his opinion, far more difficult to prove and vastly more inextricably mixed with the personality of the medium to enable truth-seekers to accept all that is forthcoming readily and without searching analysis.

To take, on faith or from inclination, anything phenomenal which can be subjected to scientific scrutiny, is, in the Doctor's opinion, far too comfortable and easy a philosophy, and so, out of many experimental sittings with one of the best 'sensitives' known to the English world of science, Dr. van Eeden is still bound to confess that if much was extremely probable as coming from an outside source, much was also but a useless and unnecessary elaboration from the sub-conscious mind of the medium, and, therefore, inexact. Keeping, however, as strictly as he may, to scientific exactitude, there was one occasion when the conclusion was forced upon him that the identity of a deceased friend was certainly manifesting through the medium. Personality was vividly expressed in tone and manner and in the Dutch language, convincing Dr. van Eeden thoroughly that the phenomenon was genuine.

This conviction is duly stated in his paper, and during our chat I begged him once more to confirm his opinion,

which he did, saying 'it was a matter he had well thought over and considered in all its aspects, and nothing could alter the fact that during a period of four or five minutes he had the distinct proof given of an independent mind at work, expressing individuality and identity.' To him the memory of this one fact is worth all the rest of his experiences put together, as far as these experiences are obtained from a source apart from himself. I imagine that there are few of us, loving precision and exactitude in these matters, who would not willingly sift sackloads of chaff and spend hours of precious time if it enabled us to secure one grain of fact and truth; truth which would have become all the more precious to us in that we had given of our very best in mind and soul in its search.

J. STANNARD.

'THE WEAK SPOT IN SPIRITUALISM.'

What your correspondent, G. H. J. Dutton, calls the weak spot in Spiritualism is no weak spot at all, if empirical Spiritualism will only abate its pretension to demonstrate 'immortality,' and be content to prove 'survival.' For then, by the light of natural analogies and experience, it will be seen that the failures complained of are exactly what we should expect, and cannot be set off against the quantity of indubitable evidence which we possess.

Physical death being cessation of normal conditions of objective activity in this world, and intercourse with it, the analogy of the process of going to sleep presents itself as reconciling successes and failures in the mediated communications which Spiritualism affirms. Some get to sleep at once; others remain for longer or shorter periods in a state of semi brain-activity, still occupied with the interests or anxieties of the past day, and with more or less vigour and coherence of the intelligence related to them. You may rouse a drowsy person to talk with you, but you will soon find that his reaction on your stimulus is fainter and less frequent, till the complete silence of sleep ensues. Well, suppose that our death only initiates the process of retreat into a deep subjective state, which will be exceptionally retarded in comparatively few cases. Then we must conceive our individuality as being, on the larger scale of alternation, what it is in our diurnal experience on the smaller. And all Nature shows the constancy of the same alternation on different scales.

I have always contended that empirical evidence by mediation cannot possibly prove immortality or 'another world.' We can identify no intelligence except by relation to its life here; and its presence in another sphere is naturally undemonstrable to us, because such other sphere would be a discretely differentiated experience, having no terms of community with our own. In short, the so-called departed who communicate with us are not departed at all, but are memorially detained in a condition which, in their interest, neither they nor we should seek to prolong, any more than one who ought to be asleep should be kept awake. But they cannot tell us all this, because they have not the conscious experience of that alternation of sleeping and waking on the larger scale to inform them that their surviving earth-consciousness does not represent their true life and its process. If we could not remember our former daily wakings, love of life might take the form of resisting sleep. ('Sleep,' of course, is a relative term, signifying abeyance of consciousness in our degree and mode, but, just therefore, deep sleep may be an expansion of interior and contemplative consciousness.)

I cannot attempt a more adequate exposition of this idea now. Years ago I put it before your readers at greater length. But I just suggest it again for Mr. Dutton to think out for himself, with its consequences, in case it strikes him as possibly or partly solving his difficulty.

C. C. M.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.—We are requested to state that one or more members of the Council of the Alliance will be in attendance at the rooms, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., every Wednesday, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., when they will be pleased to meet any friends who may wish for an interview.

THE STATE OF SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.

If the casual reader of the American Spiritualist papers receives the impression that Spiritualism is dying in the land of its birth, he will be justified by the tone of the editorials and letters which have recently appeared in the 'Banner of Light' and the 'Light of Truth.' But his deduction will be an error. Spiritualism is rapidly spreading in America as elsewhere, but for some reason or other Spiritualists just now are less disposed to 'organise' in America than they have been in the past.

For some time past the 'Banner of Light' has drawn attention to the decay of the local spiritualist societies, and in the 'Light of Truth,' of May 4th, the editor of that ably conducted journal takes up the parable in a strong article headed 'Unite or Perish,' in which he alleges that a crisis is upon the Spiritualists of America, whose business now, he says, 'is to unite their forces for self-preservation, or perish from the face of the earth as a distinctive movement.' . . . 'This is no call to arms. It is a call to brains, understanding, and a determination to save the wreck of a once fair ship from utter destruction.' He tersely sums up the situation in the following forcible sentences:—

'Your local societies with rare exceptions are gone. Your mediums are taxed by the Congress of the United States right in the city of Washington and classed with vendors, pedlars, and mountebanks. Your Press is struggling for the most part in dire distress to keep you informed. Everywhere the petrification of fossilism has set in.

'And yet you are the chosen people. To you hath been given a charge mightier than that which the Elder Brother gave to the fishermen. Are you going to hand it down unsullied to other hands, or shall your children's children look back on Spiritualism as a memory? Heaven puts its own price upon its goods. You can pay that price only by fealty to Heaven's cause.

'This is not shop talk. It is the result of practical observation and conclusions which any fourth grade school boy could arrive at where he to view the situation.

'Our only hope is in organisation for self preservation and the perpetuity of Spiritualism as a movement. Again we say UNITE OR PERISH.'

The president of the National Association of Spiritualists, Mr. Harrison D. Barrett, is travelling all over the country organising mass meetings, many of which are large and successful, but it appears as if these spasmodic efforts are of little value in fostering abiding interest in the work of maintaining local centres of spiritual activity. The 'Christian Science' and other movements are drawing away thoughtful and philosophical people who have grown weary of unsatisfactory sciences and whose appetite for 'tests' has been thoroughly sated, and the element of permanency is sadly lacking in the movement as a movement.

Mr. E. L. Allen, the president of the Boston Spiritual Temple, in his address at the meeting held by the Berkeley Hall Society, Boston, to celebrate the fifty-third anniversary of Modern Spiritualism, reviewed the history of his society, which has existed for nearly eighteen years. He said:—

'This society has been through all the trials and vicissitudes of most societies. It has been bankrupt, but it has never been rich. It has followed the usual course of spiritual societies in engaging speakers by the month, until it became apparent that a change must be made or the society would cease to exist. In the face of strong opposition the board of management voted to engage a speaker for the season. We are now in the second season with the same speaker.'

Mr. Allen concludes that 'the days of itinerant speakers have gone by for any society claiming the dignity or membership of a church.' He answers the question 'Why spiritual societies do not succeed' by asserting that 'it is because they are not cohesive; do not work together; are faint-hearted or have no heart at all in the work.' The Berkeley Hall Society has prospered under the leadership of a settled speaker. 'In one short year,' says Mr. Allen, 'the membership and finances have been doubled and trebled; and the element, the lack of which is largely responsible for the disintegration complained of, namely, cohesiveness, has become a pronounced ingredient in its make-up. . . . Our experiment has proved a success. The outlook is encouraging. We are looking forward to greater achievements.'

There is a hopeful ring about Mr. Allen's words, and it

certainly seems as if the remedy he suggests is the right one if Spiritualism is to take its place as an organised movement for the spread of the knowledge of spiritual truth and its application to the needs of mankind.

READER.

MR. A. P. SINNETT AND SPIRITUALISM.

Mr. A. P. Sinnett is writing a series of interesting articles upon 'Nature's Mysteries,' which are appearing in the 'Sun' on Thursday evenings. In the first of the series, which was published on the 9th inst., after dealing with the limitations of science in regard to the nature of electricity, gravitation, and life, he claimed that, as a result of the experiments made by mesmerists, 'the survival of the soul of man after what is commonly called his "death" is all but demonstrable.' He further stated that:—

'In this matter of trying to find out something more about the real nature of life and consciousness than can be learned from the surgeon and the physiologist, everyone eager in the pursuit is keen to find out whether it is possible to communicate with souls that have passed out of the body not merely for a time, as in the case of the mesmerised subject, but finally and completely by reason of the death of the body. And the fact that it is possible sometimes to do this is as certain as the fact that it is possible to get to the top of Mont Blanc.'

Having referred to the difficulties which beset the inquirer, he made this significant assertion:—

'It is as certain as the occasional appearance of comets in the sky that spiritual séances are sometimes—very often—attended by invisible beings who are actually the departed souls of people who once lived in the body. Persons who deny that are as ignorant as they are silly.'

An anonymous writer in the 'Sun' of Saturday, May 11th, challenged Mr. Sinnett to mention the names of eminent scientific men who have avowed themselves believers in Spiritualism. In reply to that challenge Mr. Sinnett fully justified his claim, in the 'Sun' of Tuesday, the 14th inst., and, in addition, clearly set forth the spirit in which the inquirer should deal with the subject:—

'The right way to approach these investigations is with an open mind, taking nothing for granted, but recognising that multitudes of people—amongst them many of the greatest eminence, hundreds or thousands with accomplished minds and advanced culture—have come to important conclusions along these roads of research. The rational inquirer must first be prepared patiently to go over the ground thus trodden. For all who come forward in that spirit, those who have travelled the road already are always willing to give help and guide study. The empty-headed scoffer can be left to herd with his congenial mates, making one of the many millions who, for this generation, may be safely relied upon to return to the earth from which they have sprung, no wiser for their present promenade through life than the oxen dragging carts along the road.'

ASTRAL INFLUENCES.

I live in a House Beautiful, and associate with a number of others who live in Houses Beautiful. Presently I learn of the existence of those who live Beyond, and I am told that by going to sleep and throwing wide open my front door, I shall not only know something of them but be able to teach others. I do so. But, in my anxiety, I have forgotten, or am too ignorant, to distinguish between the desirable and the undesirable, so that all sorts and conditions rush in, and even my faithful friend-servant cannot keep them out, for it is 'I' who have opened the door. Some behave well and speak truth, and some behave badly and swear and use high-sounding names to which they have no right. They make havoc of my House and they leave behind strange influences, so that I am obliged to take too much drink, and do other things that 'I' don't want to do; finally, worst of all, my House becomes so unbeautiful that I have to leave it before I can find a new one and become a poor wanderer for a long time. But I can now warn others. Oh! that I had kept awake and watched who entered my House.

This is my answer to 'Interested.' Further information can be had by study, observation, and meditation.

H. W. THATCHER.

HOW SPIRITUALISM HELPS HUMANITY.

The 'Coming Day' for May contains a thoughtful article entitled 'In Memoriam: A Plea for Spiritualism,' written by M. E. Robinson, which will be of interest to the readers of 'LIGHT.' In the opening passage the writer says:—

'In Memoriam' was a prophecy of the great wave of Spiritualism which has swept over men, and is everywhere showing extraordinary vitality and disseminative power; for it brings us up to the highest pinnacles of religious belief which men could reach without Spiritualism. Not that this great movement altogether transcends in beauty and spirituality the religious temper and constitution of which Tennyson is the exponent. Tennyson was more spiritual than many a Spiritualist, but the system he represented was a step lower in the evolutionary scale than is Spiritualism, the relation of which to the old religion of pure faith resembles that of the genius to the highly cultured scholar. The latter represents the principles of an old system worked-out to a fine completeness, the former represents the rough, unordered principles of a higher dispensation which implies vaster possibilities than did the old system.'

The student-lovers of Tennyson will find much in this article which, whether they agree with the writer or feel that he hardly does justice to the poet's spiritual insight, will be of interest because of its appreciation of the great poem in which Tennyson paid immortal and loving tribute to the memory of his friend, and so finely voiced the feelings and longings which so many mourners have experienced. It is, however, the concluding portion of this suggestive review which concerns us most nearly as Spiritualists, because of its testimony to the inestimable value of the influence which Spiritualism is exerting upon the thought-tendencies of the age. The writer says:—

'In a unique way Spiritualism reconciles knowledge and faith. It has a dignity which commends it to the loftiest mind as well as a simplicity which endears it to the humblest heart. It does not tinker-up some poverty-stricken anthropomorphic god whom the generations to come will call childish. It leaves God to the illimitable heights and the unfathomable depths where He can never be finally comprehended, but only progressively understood throughout eternity. Spiritualism makes no revolution. It deepens mystery rather than sweeps it away. It is simply a key, the magic of which has not been matched in fairy tale, which has rationalised the existence of mystery. It has unlocked the door to a land of open secrets and of discovery where man's soul may revel boundlessly. It rationalises and sanctions imagination, ideality, faith, reverence, and all the finer soul-faculties which have sometimes found the atmosphere of earth chilling. It makes reason able to say: "So far I can see: that I can see no farther is by no means proof that there is naught beyond the seen. The progressive apprehension and understanding of the unseen I can trust to the spiritual sense."

'To a God who has given us immortality and progress we can trust our lives, our love, our all. With this conception of God, and the assurance of its faithfulness to truth, Modern Spiritualism has enlightened us. And when we look back upon the age that has toiled with the unbelief and the despair of the past few generations, with its very poet in the midst of the fray, labouring up the steep of faith only to catch rare glimpses of the summit which frees the soul with views of the Promised Land, we cannot but see that all this turmoil has not been in vain. It has led up to Spiritualism by training the reason of men. The revival of Spiritualism would have been sensational, commonplace, ruinous to mental development, had it come upon the world in an age of superstition and credulosity. Coming into a world prepared for it by a severe scientific training, it bids fair to be the mightiest promoter of universal love and progress of mind which has ever moved men. Looking to this noble result, we shall recognise that Tennyson did not suffer in vain when he set forth the needs of his age in the intensest tribute of love which has ever commemorated the departure of a kindred soul from this earth.'

IS A FUTURE LIFE DESIRED?—It is generally believed that the 'longing after immortality' is well-nigh universal. The American branch of the Society for Psychological Research has arranged to make an effort to ascertain the prevailing sentiment in America upon the subject—not what people 'believe,' but what they 'desire'—an important difference. The difficulty will be, we imagine, to make a canvass that will be sufficiently complete to be of practical service.

SPIRITUALISM IN THE PUBLIC PRESS.

Spiritualism has been having a good innings in the London newspapers lately. The subject has been fairly treated in several cases, especially so in the 'Referee' and the 'Clarion.' Commenting in last Sunday's issue of the 'Referee' upon Dr. A. Wallace's address before the Society for Psychical Research, relative to the finding of the body of Mr. Percy Foxwell, 'Merlin' says:—

'One undeniable fact stands out, and the scientifically-minded inquirer has got to make the best of it. The people concerned in this curious affair, whether they be liars or self-deceivers, or really the possessors of extra normal faculties, did actually find the body of the missing man when all other searchers had failed.'

Several letters upon Spiritualism are also printed in the same issue of the 'Referee,' in one of which the writer challenges Mr. Maskelyne to attend a séance for materialisation phenomena under most stringent test conditions. We hope, if the séance take place, that successful manifestations will result, but we have our doubts as to the wisdom of 'challenges' of this kind; the mental and psychical conditions—under such circumstances and with prejudiced sitters—are all against success. Another writer, Mr. Walter Taylor, claims that he is the 'only *bonâ-fide* illusion maker or builder in Britain,' and continues:—

'I wish to inform Mr. Maskelyne that I have made his "suspension of a person in space illusion" for a professed Spiritualist at Glasgow, as the party came to London to see Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of Spiritualism, and was so very pleased with the illusion he saw at the Egyptian Hall that he determined to do it himself. He found me out somehow, and I made the illusion for him.'

We should be glad if any of our Glasgow readers can furnish us with particulars regarding this alleged 'professed Spiritualist.' We do not know of any medium in Glasgow, or elsewhere, to whom Mr. Taylor's words will apply; and as he claims to be the 'one man in Britain' to whom 'conjurers and illusionists apply for information' before they make 'anti-Spiritualism a part of their programme,' we are inclined to think that his 'professed Spiritualist' is *not* exhibiting his 'illusion' as a genuine spiritualistic phenomenon.

Mr. R. H. Russell-Davies wisely advises 'Refereaders' to 'solve the question of spirit communion for themselves at their own homes and with their own family and friends.'

WHOSE MIND WAS READ?

By G. E. LOTHROP, JUN., IN THE 'LIGHT OF TRUTH.'

A problem which we would like to have some one solve is this: A Boston author received a personal letter from an old school friend, who now occupies a prominent position in a Western bank. He wrote in the letter a mere statement that 'he had been promoted to a more responsible position but he did not know that he could hold it since the handling of so much money worried him, and made him have pains in the head.' He did not write any further facts, so that no one in the East knew what sickness the banker had, outside of the person receiving the letter; yet under these conditions this letter was given to the psychic artist Littlefield, where a few psychical researchers had accidentally met, and while the entire facts of the letter were kept secret by the author who had received it, the psychic went on to say that the writer of the letter was a man, that he had a diseased stomach, liver, &c., and was affected by pains in the head, small of back, &c.

An exact description of the man was given, with his characteristics, habits, tastes, methods, and similar details; even his family was described and facts were told with which no one present was familiar, which were afterwards verified by writing to the banker. The psychic did not know who wrote the letter, she did not examine the handwriting, she told facts about the sick man which no one present knew and which were not known at the time to the sick man. She talked for a half hour about the writer of the letter, giving scores of authentic facts—often of the most novel and original nature, facts which the banker would not have told himself. Now, whose mind was read? Did these facts come from the minds of those present? If so, how did the psychic tell things of which no one knew at the time? How did she describe the family social conditions in the distant home, and even relate the private opinions of two strangers in the house whom no one present had ever met? This is an interesting problem for the psychical researchers, the medical fraternity, and the university psychologists.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'Isiac Tablet and Tarot.'

SIR,—Students and subscribers to the above will be pleased to know that in my 'Key' to the plates of 'The Virgin of the World' (1886) there is an interesting extract translated from the French 'History of Magic' (I think), by Eliphas Lévi, identifying the connection of these marvellous relics of ancient symbolism, the latter, in sheet form, being presented with the former gratuitously.

For those who desire these extracts I will, if the demand justify the step, reprint it for them, free, with pleasure.

ROBT. H. FRYAR.

Bath.

The Need of 'Decisive Evidence.'

SIR,—It is now thirty-six years since I began the study of Spiritualism. During that period I have had many promises from friends and relatives, that if they passed over first they would, if possible, return and assure me of their continued existence; but, alas! like the late Rev. H. R. Haweis, I have never received any positive proof of identity. I take it as probable that their yearning to communicate the glad tidings would be equally as strong as ours to receive it. But still the mystery seems to deepen with our *apparent* increased knowledge of the laws and conditions of spirit life; and I think it quite likely that much of what passes for spirit communications may be traced to the action of our own minds. I have read 'LIGHT' for many years, and there are few things I look forward to with more pleasure than my weekly perusal of its carefully edited pages.

So many great minds have recently passed the border, who have for years given this study their close attention, that I have been expecting some *decisive evidence*; but, alas! all is as silent as the grave itself. What is the barrier that divides this life from the other? And why is it that illiterate and undeveloped spirits are able to produce phenomena which we fail to get from more advanced spirits? I daresay I shall be reminded that these are earth-bound spirits; but one would rather imagine that those who have made a study of the laws and conditions pertaining to this question would be able to produce results far in advance of the ignorant, or those who have never given the question a moment's thought. In conclusion, I may say that I am not only expressing my own opinions, but also those of many others who, like myself, are yearning for

MORE LIGHT.

The Form and Position of the Grave Clothes.

SIR,—I have not seen Dr. Latham's book referred to in your issue of May 11th, but an examination of the original of that passage in John's Gospel on which his argument is, I suppose, based, leads me to submit to your readers that its wording yields no evidence at all in favour of the Doctor's theory. All that it implies may thus be summed up:—

1. The word used of the body-wrappings, 'lying' or 'laid,' may bear either (a) the sense that they had been intentionally laid where found, *i.e.*, laid either by their wearer himself, or by the attendant angels; or (b) the sense of simply 'lying' as a mere matter of fact. The Greek word may in truth be used either as an intransitive participle or as a passive one, implying an agent.

2. Exactly the same is true of the words applied to the head-bandage, which may be rendered equally (a) 'laid and rolled up'; or (b) 'lying rolled up.'

I can find no evidence at all in either these words themselves or their context to favour the inference that either the body-wraps or the head-wrap, or both of them, were found lying exactly in the positions which, when covering the corpse, they had occupied.

Both wraps were seen 'lying,' and of the head-wrap it is added that it was 'rolled up.' Further, this wrap is said to have occupied a separate place apart from the others.

As to the epithet 'rolled up,' no doubt the head-wrap had originally been rolled or wound round the wearer's head; but when applied to the wrap apart from the head, I see no reason why the word should not have been chosen merely to indicate that the band was loosely done up—as disused napkins destined for the laundry are often done up—in roll form, the very form, by the way, in which disused 'bandages' are after use returned.

Again, I can see no objection, on the score of sentiment or otherwise, to our accepting the alternative sense implying an agent and purpose. If, as the poet tells us, 'Order is Heaven's first law,' there would seem to be nothing surprising, nothing at all *infra dig.*, in either the Lord of Heaven Himself or one of His attendant spirits putting the grave-

clothes in neat order after the body which had worn them had ceased to make use of them.

Not that I maintain this interpretation of the words. I shall be content if I help others to feel, as I feel, that for the rival interpretation the passage in question yields no adequate evidence.

E. D. G.

P.S.—Perhaps some one of your readers familiar with the East can tell us whether a 'roll' is the form in which either used or unused handkerchiefs are put away there.

SOCIETY WORK.

SOUTHALL—1, MILTON-VILLAS, FEATHERSTONE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Millard spoke well on 'Sincere Devotion.' Investigators will be heartily welcomed at our meetings.—M.

CAMBERWELL—GROVE-LANE PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, 36, VICARAGE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Holgate gave an address on 'Overcoming,' followed by successful psychometry. On Sunday next Mr. Adams and Miss Peaspod will conduct the service. A public circle will be held on Thursday, at 8 p.m.—S. O.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday evening last, after the usual reading from the New Testament, Mr. Alfred Peters delivered a sound address based upon 'Personal Responsibility.' A good number of clairvoyant descriptions were afterwards given by Mr. Peters, and all but one were recognised. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. John Kinsman will address the meeting and Mr. Henry A. Gatter will give clairvoyance.—O. H.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—The Sunday morning public circle here continues to be helpful and well attended. The subject of Mr. Long's address last Sunday evening attracted a large and thoughtful audience, and the present series of addresses on 'The Appearances of Jesus after His Crucifixion' (the second of which will be given on Sunday next, at 7 p.m.), promises to create greater interest than any of its predecessors. Strangers and investigators are earnestly invited to attend these meetings, where they will be cordially welcomed. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., a public circle will be held; at 3 p.m., children's school.—J. C.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday evening last Mr. E. W. Wallis delivered an address entitled, 'The Significance of the Affirmations of Spiritualism,' in which, with great ability, he showed the vital importance of the facts of Spiritualism in relation to all the issues of human life and experience. It is understood that a summary of the discourse will appear in 'LIGHT.' Previous to the lecture Miss Samuel sang 'Folded to Rest' with her accustomed charm, and Mr. Wallis gave a reading from the poems of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Peters will give clairvoyance, and early attendance is requested.—G.

BIRMINGHAM SPIRITUALIST UNION, MASONIC HALL, NEW-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. J. W. Boulding delivered two fine addresses, on 'Spiritualism not a Religion of the Tomb,' and 'The Gospel according to Spiritualism.' In the morning address (interspersed with striking personal experiences) a vivid contrast was drawn between the mental attitude of the ordinary 'believer' towards death, and that of the Spiritualist. The evening discourse was a blend of incisive, sarcastic criticism and forcible appeals to reason, enriched by some brilliant 'word-pictures' in the portrayal of the ascent of man from barbarism to civilisation. We trust societies will avail themselves fully of Mr. Boulding's talents.—T. H.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVE CHURCH, BLANCHE HALL, 99, WIESBADEN-ROAD, STOKE NEWINGTON.—On Sunday last Mr. J. A. White again gave clairvoyance. The care with which each description was given made a deep impression on those who were fortunate enough to receive a test. Mr. White is almost invariably successful in every case on his visits to this church, and last Sunday was no exception, as every description was recognised. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. W. Ronald Brailey will give an address on 'Immortality,' followed by clairvoyance. On Sunday, June 2nd, Mr. Alfred Peters will give clairvoyance. On Wednesday, at 8 p.m., a meeting will be held for members and associates. At the Public Hall, Forster-road, Tottenham, on Sunday last, Mrs. M. H. Wallis gave an address on 'Is Spiritualism of Practical Benefit in this Life?' which was full of information and spiritual knowledge. It was an 'intellectual treat.' Mrs. Wallis also answered six questions from the audience, and gave great satisfaction. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Edward Whyte will speak upon 'The Vision of Belshazzar, or the Fall of Babylon.'—ALFRED CLEGG, Secretary, 18, Fleetwood-road, Stoke Newington, N.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, 73, BECKLOW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday last Dr. Berks Hutchinson discoursed on 'Deity' at some length to a good audience. Questions were asked and answered. A large after-circle was held. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Whimp will give clairvoyance.

BATTERSEA SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, HENLEY-STREET, S.W.—On Sunday evening last brief but interesting addresses were given by Mr. Woolen, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Boddington. Mr. Adams presided and also made some useful remarks. In the afternoon the annual election of officers for the Lyceum was held, with the following result: Mr. Imison, conductor; Miss Morris, treasurer; Miss Imison, secretary; Mr. Frost, musical conductor and drill instructor; group leaders and guardians—Mr. Imison, Miss Morris, Miss Imison, Miss Doncaster, Mr. Frost, Mr. and Mrs. Boddington, Miss Wyndoe, Miss Dent, and Miss Ward; book guardians—Miss Gould and Master Frank Imison; Band of Hope conductor, Mrs. Boddington; secretary, Mr. Boddington. On Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 3.30 p.m., meetings in Battersea Park and on Clapham Common; at 7 p.m., Mr. Cole will deliver an address. On Tuesday, at 6.30 p.m., Band of Hope. On Thursday, at 8.30 p.m., public séance.—YULE.

NEW MISSION FOR PECKHAM.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to ask any Spiritualists in Peckham, who are not already attached to a 'Mission,' and who are willing to join with several others who have already expressed a desire to commence a new society in this neighbourhood, to communicate with me, when I shall be pleased to forward them particulars.

A. BROWN, Hon. Sec.

107, Queen's-road,
Peckham, S.E.

SPIRITUALIST NATIONAL FEDERATION.

May I ask you to favour me with space for the following notices of motion received for consideration at the forthcoming conference of the Spiritualist National Federation at Sheffield, on Saturday and Sunday, July 6th and 7th? I should also like to call the attention of societies and associates to the rule which requires that all nominations for the vacancies on the Executive Committee shall reach the general secretary one month prior to conference. The following persons are the retiring members, viz.: Messrs. Morse, Butterworth, Bibbings, Kitson, Parker, Johnson and Parr. Retiring members are eligible for re-election.

W. HARRISON, General Secretary.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS.

1. That though the philosophy of Spiritualism is based upon its phenomena, this Federation (or Union) is of opinion that whilst it would be unwise to entirely exclude the public presentation of the phenomena from our platforms, the time has arrived when its presentation at our Sunday meetings should, as far as possible, be discontinued, or if presented on Sundays such presentation to take place after the conclusion of the ordinary service or services.

2. That this conference is of opinion that the time has arrived when the National Federation (or Union) should possess its official organ, and that only the names of efficient and qualified mediums and speakers should appear therein, whether by advertisement or otherwise. Such names to be approved by the Executive Committee of the Federation (or Union).—J. J. PARR, Secretary, Bootle Society of Spiritualists.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- 'The Theosophical Review,' for May. London: 3, Langham-place, W. Price 1s. 2d., post free.
- 'The Theosophist,' for May. London agents: Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham-place, W. Price 2s.
- 'The Astrological Magazine,' for May. Edited and published by B. Suryanarain Row, B.A., 102, Linga Chetty-street, Madras, India.
- 'The Light of Dharma.' A Religious Magazine devoted to the Teachings of Buddha. Published bi-monthly by the Buddhist Mission, 807, Polk-street, San Francisco, Cal., U.S.A. Price 50 cents per annum.
- 'True Spiritualism.' An Exposition of the Spiritual Philosophy and the Spiritual Religion. By JOHN SCULLER. London: John Scouller, 147, Grove-lane, Camberwell, S.E. Price 3d.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'ILFORD.'—Kindly favour us with your name and address.