

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The exceedingly attractive subject, lately dealt with by Mr. Dyne at a recent Spiritualist Alliance meeting, is rapidly winning the attention of enterprising experimenters. For our own part, we hesitate somewhat to speak of 'Life in the inorganic world': we prefer, at present, to say something like—Simulations of life, or resemblances to life, in the inorganic world, not, however, denying the bold affirmation lately advanced, that in certain pre-crystalline states of various salts there are far-off but real resemblances to life or life-conditions.

Dr. Benedikt, of the University of Vienna, describing some very remarkable investigations by Schroen, of Naples, refers to acts of increase, growth and reproduction on the part of these salts. 'These phenomena,' he says, 'recall those of vital processes. They represent a grade much lower than life, and form a connecting link between the mechanics of the inorganic world and bio-mechanics.' He adds:—

If these phenomena are not those of life, we shall be obliged to revise the ideas and notions that we have entertained of life. If, on the contrary, we regard these phenomena as vital, we shall have to enlarge our definitions of life.

If it is true that the pre-crystalline stage of solutions is a vital phenomenon, then Schroen's 'precellules' give us an example of spontaneous generation in the present geological epoch.

In the beginning all life originated from inorganic matter; the different atoms formed particular associations and their energy was distributed in a special way; this is an absolutely justifiable and permissible hypothesis. Very well. We have no reason whatever for maintaining that this passage from the inorganic to the organic world took place only in one limited geological period.

There is no proof that in the animal and vegetable world these transformations are not still taking place. Methodical logic does not exclude this possibility.

From the play of chemical forces, then, it is suggested, the change from dead to living matter arose, and still arises. We hesitate; and yet, if this be so, we think we can see in that only another proof of the existence of Infinite Life pressing from beyond the veil and panting to manifest itself in every conceivable way. If life is evolved by way of the lifeless regions,—through simulations to sensations, through resemblances to consciousness—well and good. It is the way of the Living God, after all.

'Paths to power,' by Floyd B. Wilson (New York: R. F. Fenno and Co.). 'Many have been working and writing on similar lines,' says Mr. Wilson. That is true.

His book is mainly another Mental Science manifesto. But he claims a difference. 'Herein,' he says, 'I present a method that I have tested and proven to be practical.' About his practical method we have our doubts—as to anything novel. What we find is—a collection of fourteen very pleasant and wise lectures on vital subjects relating to personal harmony, union with the unseen but not unfelt 'Omnipotent force' or 'the Infinite.' Perhaps the following thoughtful and eloquent passage will give as good an idea of the writer's refinement, as a teacher, as any we could select:—

With a clear understanding of the relationship between one's atmosphere and infinite vibrations, the force back of vibrations becomes apparent. How often have you spoken the word that names it flippantly! Its name is emblazoned on every form of inanimate or animate life. Atoms vibrate because of its mighty energy; men and nations bow to its controlling force, and the universe in space keeps rhythmic time through the dictates of this invisible director of all. Ages ago it was named. It is the crowning force of Nature; it has been called the greatest thing in the world, it is the opening thought of life, it is the sweetest memory of existence, its halo is divine, its breathing is inspiration. This mighty entity called Love, then, in its purest and highest sense, is not merely a sentiment expressing mutuality of attraction between individuals. It is the vital force on which the entire Cosmos rests. Love is the force that, by its attractive power, awakens the Ego to its possibilities in the accomplishment of purpose. Behind the throne of all vibrative action it stands, for Law and Love are one. To know its voice is to catch the whispers of inspiration, to heed its warning is to walk in the light.

'U. N. G.'—well-known letters, we imagine—writes, in 'The Exodus,' concerning reaching out and up to the highest things. In her conclusion, a profound but rather pathetic truth is set forth—that winning the highest things means bidding farewell to the lower. We call that 'pathetic,' and, in doing so, are not thinking of moral gradations, in connection with which, of course, all ascents from 'the lower' are unalloyed triumphs and joys: we are thinking, rather, of degrees of knowledge, and even of degrees of blessedness: and here, however much we may welcome the higher, it is not always delightful to part with the simpler stages. And yet we agree with 'U. N. G.':—

The world of the Infinite is not open to us until everything less than the Infinite may go, so we possess it. Always is there a price to be paid for knowledge; always is there a price to be paid for power, for strength, for wisdom, for ability to overcome and establish our dominion. If we think we shall receive it for nothing we reckon without our host. This is the law operative in creation from beginning to end.

So many times we have failed to receive what we sought and we do not always see that the reason why was in ourselves. We were trying to get something for nothing; trying to get what we desired without paying the price for it; trying and longing to have all poured into our laps as passive receivers. Nowhere in the industrial, in the everyday world, nor in the spiritual world, do we, or should we, obtain something for nothing. Always the price. When we are ready to pay the price we shall attain that which we desire.

Florence Huntley, who seems to have had a great deal to do with the much-discussed book, 'The Great

Psychological Crime,' defends it, in 'The Progressive Thinker,' thus:—

If we are to discuss 'The Great Psychological Crime,' should we not try to get at its real purpose? The book was written with a definite purpose in view, namely, to show that any process which deprives a man of the power to exercise his own natural and inalienable faculties, capacities and attributes, strikes at the very basis of his moral nature, his personal responsibility.

The book shows that both hypnotism and subjective mediumship do this thing. The author therefore claims that the subjective, psychic process upon which they depend is destructive to individual well-being and to the moral status.

There is a certain air of plausibility about this which calls for careful scrutiny. We may all admit that 'any process which deprives a man of the power to exercise his own natural and inalienable faculties, &c.,' is to be reprobated, but it is an arbitrary assumption that 'subjective mediumship' necessarily does this. It by no means follows that being used at times for trance utterances transforms the medium into a mental and moral idiot. It would be just as true—perhaps truer—to say that a man who pledges himself to believe and teach for life a creed written by dead hands is deprived of the power to exercise 'his own natural and inalienable faculties, &c.'

It has always seemed to us that the strength of this book is, for the most part, the strength of over-emphasis and bold assertion. We freely admit the difficulties and dangers of mediumship, but the remedy is not in the direction of terror and exaggeration;—quite the contrary.

Mr. Grant Richards has just published, in a neat volume, an excellent collection of Tolstoy's Essays and Letters, translated by Aylmer Maude. Although the subjects are said to be those which relate to religion and moral duty, we note here some of a highly inflammable kind in relation to politics and war. Of course, our chief interest in these remarkable documents is in their direct bearing upon 'Living the Life,' in the lofty spiritual sense. Tolstoy lives spiritually and ethically in a very high world. He is as uncompromising as the moral law, and as peremptory as Christ. Herein is his power. He startles, rebukes, shames.

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS.

(From many shrines).

Almighty God, have mercy upon us who, when troubled with the things that are past, lose faith and courage and hope. So have mercy upon us and uphold us that we, being sustained by a true faith that Thou art merciful and forgiving, may go on in the life of the future to keep Thy commandments, to rejoice in Thy bounty, to trust in Thy mercy, and to hope in the eternal life. Grant unto all of us, whatsoever may betide us, to remember ever that it is all of Thy guidance, under Thy care, by Thy will; that so in darkest days, beholding Thee, we may have courage to go on, faith to endure, patience to bear, and hopefulness to hold out, even unto the end. Amen.

CONTINUED EXISTENCE.—A correspondent says: 'Merlin,' writing in the 'Referee,' says: 'The clearest proof of continuance could at the furthest only be accepted as *implying* a possibility of eternal continuance.' 'The future life of the soul,' he says, 'is one thing; its immortality is another.' Doubtless this is true in a certain limited sense, but it seems rather trifling to split hairs in this way, for, if the soul's survival after death be demonstrated, surely it is 'undying' so far as we understand and dread death, and we are justified in claiming that just as substance and force are declared to be indestructible, so too spirit—which is a living force—is equally eternal.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East (near the National Gallery), on

FRIDAY EVENING NEXT, FEBRUARY 26TH,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY

MR. J. BRUCE WALLACE, M.A.,

ON

'The Superpersonal Element in Man.'

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PSYCHOMETRY AND CLAIRVOYANCE will be given at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., by Mr. W. Ronald Brailey on Tuesdays, February 23rd, and March 1st and 8th. These séances commence punctually at 3 p.m., and no one is admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. to Members and Associates; to friends introduced by them, 2s. each.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—Arrangements have been made with Mrs. M. H. Wallis for a further series of meetings at the rooms of the Alliance, at which pleasant and instructive talks may be had with one of her intelligent controls. The next séance will be held on *Friday next*, February 26th, at 3 p.m., prompt. Fee 1s. each, and any Member or Associate may introduce a friend at the same rate of payment. *Visitors should come prepared with written questions*, on subjects of general interest relating to life here and hereafter.

PSYCHIC CULTURE.—Mr. Frederic Thurstan, M.A., kindly conducts classes for *Members and Associates* at the Rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., for the encouragement and direction of private mediumship and psychical self-culture. The next meeting will be held on the afternoon of Friday, February 26th. Time, from 5 o'clock to 6 p.m., and visitors are requested to be in their places not later than 4.55. There is no fee or subscription.

DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES.—Mr. George Spriggs has kindly placed his valuable services in the diagnosis of diseases at the disposal of the Council, and for that purpose will attend at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, Charing Cross, W.C., on Thursday afternoons, between the hours of 1 and 3. Members, Associates, and friends who are out of health, and who desire to avail themselves of Mr. Spriggs's offer, should *notify their wish in writing* to the secretary of the Alliance, Mr. E. W. Wallis, not later than the previous day, stating the time when they propose to attend. No fee is charged, but Mr. Spriggs suggests that every consultant should make a contribution of at least 5s. to the funds of the Alliance.

AN INTERESTING COMPARISON.—We frequently hear complaints of the 'dreadful weather in England,' but it is not as extreme as it is in some parts of America. According to the 'Sunflower,' published at Lily Dale, New York State, 'the thermometer has been going many degrees below zero some nights, and some days rising up in the neighbourhood of thawing,' and this sort of thing has been going on for eleven weeks! The editor of 'Eltka,' published at Corry, Pennsylvania, writes: 'While I am writing this item the snow line on the other side of the wall before me is nearly two feet higher than the surface of my desk. Add to this the fact that the thermometer has registered as much as forty-two degrees below zero, and you will have some idea of our surrounding conditions!' After all our much abused British climate has its advantages.

SPONTANEOUS 'APPORTS' IN AUSTRALIA.

The 'Harbinger of Light' for January contains the concluding portion of the records of the remarkable phenomena which occurred last year, in the presence of Mr. C. Bailey, at Sydney, Australia. We have already quoted some of the most striking of these manifestations, and we think the following occurrences will be of exceptional interest to the readers of 'LIGHT,' as they took place spontaneously, in full daylight or gaslight, while the medium was under close observation and in some instances in his normal condition. The accounts are supplied, as before, by 'X.,' a gentleman who is well-known to the editor of 'The Harbinger of Light,' and they are all attested by the signatures of the witnesses who were present when the *apports* took place.

PHENOMENA IN FULL LIGHT, THE MEDIUM BEING NORMAL.

'Extract from Mr. R.'s Diary.'

'June 2nd, 1903. Called at Mr. X.'s house. Found Mr. Bailey present. After some conversation between Mr. X., Mr. Bailey, and myself, I noticed that Mr. Bailey was going under control. "Dr. Whitcombe" took possession, and subsequently the Hindu "Abdul," both controls talking to us in a general way.

'After about half an hour the medium became normal. Saying he felt cold he sat before the fire and warmed his hands. He remarked that his feet were cold, and pulled off one boot and felt his foot. Replacing the boot he sat down again, and leaning forward towards the fire he placed his hands over the blaze. Instantly, while both his hands were still over the blaze, something was heard to strike the back support of the wooden chair upon which he sat, and I distinctly saw fall upon the floor at his right a clay tablet. I picked it up and found it to be quite damp. There was some figure on the flat side. On the right back support of the chair we found a fresh dint where evidently the tablet had struck.

'I consider this to be a fine test of Mr. Bailey's mediumship. There was no possibility of his throwing the tablet as his hands were over the fire. The room door was closed, and only we three within. I was standing next to the medium, and in such a position that I could have at once seen any manipulation. Mr. X. was standing beside me. I was between him and Mr. Bailey, and the tablet struck the chair on the side away from both of us, so that neither Mr. X. nor myself could possibly have thrown it in such a position had we chosen.'

'A bird, the "widow bird," brought occultly by "Abdul" on June 4th, disappeared this morning (June 6th) mysteriously from its cage in my bedroom. At noon, the sensitive, while chatting with me in a room underneath my bedroom, where the empty cage still was, suddenly got under the control of "Abdul." A lady friend, Miss L., who was aware of the disappearance of the bird, was also present. In reply to a question "Abdul" said: "'Selim' took the bird away, fearing him die of cold." I earnestly desired him to try and get it back. He said: "'Me speak to 'Selim' about him," and turning he conversed in a foreign language with apparent ease and fluency, to his (to our eyes invisible) companion; after which he said: "'Selim' gone to get him." In a minute he again said: "'He put him back now, you go up and see." I went upstairs. The bird was back in its cage.'

'About 3.30 p.m. on Saturday, June 6th, 1903, "Abdul" controlled the sensitive in my room, and desired me to tell the sensitive to let him "have yellow bird (canary) to take away to friend in India." When out of control, Mr. Bailey, to whom I gave the message, came to a bird shop in town and made a purchase. Then, while I spoke to him, facing him, I heard something fall at his back. I looked over and saw, about two yards away from and behind him, a small object on the floor. It was an old coin, evidently of the Ptolemy period. By no means could he have thrown it there unnoticed by me, as I was close to and facing him when it fell.'

'On Tuesday, June 9th, at 12 noon, the sensitive and myself were in my bedroom; he sitting quite close to the window, his back to the light. "Dr. Whitcombe" controlled, saying the Hindus would bring a rare old Persian coin. He thought it was of the Sassanide dynasty, about 150 B.C., but that "Dr. Robinson" would give description and date more accurately. "Abdul" next controlled. He wrote some apparently Arabic letters from right to left with closed eyes. In making them more distinct, the pencil having been a hard one, I noticed he returned without hesitation to letters and

lines, bringing the pencil exactly over them, still with eyes tightly closed. The same happened in regard to a rough sketch he made of a head with turban and puggaree. While chatting with him, our knees touching, something fell to his right. It was a large thick silver coin, which he said was the one just promised. Nobody else was in the room. The door was locked.'

'Saturday, June 13th, was a cold day. Mr. Bailey and myself, at 3 p.m., were at my bedroom fire chatting, he sitting, I standing over him, close to him at his right, the bedroom door closed, and both windows down. He was just remarking that it was that very day twelve months that an interesting event happened between him and Dr. Peebles, when I heard something fall at my back and right side. I turned round and found on the floor, about a yard away, a large copper coin, apparently modern, with Oriental-looking characters on it. (I subsequently learned it was a coin from Cairo.) Had Mr. Bailey thrown or flicked it, I should at once have detected him. It came with such an impact that it evidently fell from a good height.'

'Mr. P. M. gives, at my request, the following account of a spontaneous occurrence witnessed by him at my house:—

'"Mr. Bailey, Mr. X., and myself proceeded together for a chat to Mr. X.'s room, about 12.30 p.m., on Friday, July 3rd, 1903. As we were entering the room, Mr. X. was called away. Mr. Bailey and I sat down quite close to and facing each other, he on a lounge, his left arm resting on the side of the lounge, his legs crossed and his right hand resting on his left knee. As we were conversing, I heard a noise or thud behind and to the right of my companion, who sat at an angle. I looked over and saw a light brown object on the lounge, about a yard away from him. Mr. X. returned while I was examining it. I found it to be an oval tablet, looking like sand-stone, with blurred figures on it. The blurring or imperfection was, I afterwards discovered, caused by an outer covering of hard clay, which was with difficulty removed, showing a human figure of large proportions strangling a lion.

'This tablet was not on the lounge when we came into the room. It could not have been placed there then by Mr. X., because he was called away before he actually entered the room. Moreover, I heard the thud of the falling object. Nor had Mr. Bailey any chance of placing or throwing it there when we sat down, because (1) we both entered and took our seats simultaneously; (2) if he had dropped it there in the act of sitting down, or while we conversed, the position of the object having been within my range of vision I could not have helped noticing it even if not attracted by the noise of its fall; (3) the position of Mr. Bailey's hands precluded any possibility of his throwing it there while we conversed. Being in close proximity, moreover, I could have immediately detected any suspicious movement on his part.'

'On entering my room with the sensitive on Wednesday, July 8th, about 3.30 p.m., two coins fell simultaneously, one in front and the other about two yards behind the sensitive. One was a thick silver Indian coin, similar to those already obtained; the other a Ptolemy specimen. I was at his right side, and somewhat behind him at the time. Had he succeeded in throwing or flicking the one in front, it would be difficult to imagine how the other could have in this way fallen simultaneously behind us. The coins struck the floor with forcible impact, but did not roll.'

APPORTS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

'Mr. Bailey sat on a chair at the side of the room (in Queen's Hall, Sydney), I speaking to him, with my back towards Miss L., to whom Mr. R. was talking, she fully three yards away to the left of the sensitive, and her body at right angles to the direction of his body; that is to say, her right side would be nearest to him. While the sensitive still sat, I still speaking to him, and while Mr. R. was engaged speaking to Miss L., a good-sized clay tablet fell on the outside of Miss L.'s left foot, touching the outside of the heel. It was broken by the fall. On examination we found it to be a good specimen of baked clay tablet with a bas relief figure on it.

'The possibility of the sensitive having thrown the tablet could not be entertained. And even if he were able to throw it unobserved by me, while I stood facing and almost touching him, it could not have fallen in the place stated. Mr. R., who stood in front of Miss L., could not have thrown it without detection by her, and then it could not fall in the position it did. Miss L. could not have dropped it there without attracting his notice; moreover, it fell with much force, as if from

a height. The windows and door were closed. No others were present but ourselves.'

'At the Theatre Royal, Sydney, on Monday, June 29th, Mr. Bailey, unable to get a seat beside me, was seated just in front of me, a little to the right, in the next row. Between the acts, as he was leaning over, speaking to me, something bright struck his left shoulder and bounded on to the seat. He stood up and it rolled on to the floor. It proved to be a coin like those described as minted by the Indian Princes. It was thicker than any produced at the evening sitting.'

(To be concluded.)

'THE LIVING WHEEL.*'

For a full appreciation of this dramatic novel it must be related to traditions and speculations of which modern thought takes little account. The idea of the Androgyne as the original and normal unit of humanity was, nevertheless, common to philosophers of such different epochs and characters as Plato and Jacob Boehme. And according to a later writer of profound erudition—Fabre D'Olivet—all the great historic schisms of the race are distinctly consequent upon that division of the sexes which Boehme identifies with the 'Fall.' Swedenborg, again, represents the same thought in his vision of the separation as occurring in the descent from the spiritual to the earthly plane. So, as regards offspring, the Görlitz mystic declared birth by 'rending' of the maternal body to be a consequence of animal conditions unnatural to man. Nor is the present generation wholly uninstructed in these ideas. To say nothing of Thomas Lake Harris, the readers of Oliphant's book, 'Sympneumata'—itself the product of two intimately fused male and female minds—will remember the eloquent enthusiasm with which the spiritually organic reunion of the sexes in the individual was urged as an already proximate evolution of consciousness. And now an ingenious novelist has discovered in the more familiar conception of 'the higher self' realistic possibilities which seem to him to throw light on another cognate tradition of the deepest religious interest—the 'Virgin Birth.'

Very naturally, yet subtly, is the mind of Mr. Uniacke's heroine prepared for the experience which faintly adumbrates the great mystery of Christian faith. A psychical researcher of the less imaginative type would describe this preparation as the genesis of an hallucination. But in truth all consciousness might be said to result from 'suggestion,' seeing that no mind can receive an impression—that is, react upon it—unless prepared for the order of thought or sense to which the impression belongs. And that is just as much a law of revelation, or of a transcendental experience, as of nature. It is the very law of intelligence and even sensibility itself. Whatever influences us in any way does so by finding itself, as to its principle, already in us, and all knowledge is really self-recognition. That the Violet Beauchamp of this book went through a mediating experience in reading of the spiritual relation of St. Francis D'Assisi and Santa Chiara, and in afterwards contemplating the Giotto frescoes, only makes the story more convincing than it would have been had the author made the mystery of her lover's 'higher self' an abrupt revelation. The really difficult assumption for the psychologist is the independently conscious personality of the higher self. But Mr. Uniacke may have thought that he had sufficient scientific authority—at least for a work of fiction—in the great book of Frederic Myers. Nor does this brief notice of a fascinating story offer fit occasion for fundamental criticism.

Granting the psychological assumption, the suggestive value of the thought presented to us seems to lie in the consequent transfer of the reality and productivity of sexual relation to a plane higher than the physical. For philosophy, every elevation is *pro tanto* completion, *i.e.*, an organic comprisal of complementary factors which fall apart in descent, and in the earthly sphere can only attain to an imperfect and external co-efficiency under animal conditions. The idea requires recog-

nition of the much neglected distinction between the material and the substantial, a distinction on which, of course, rests the whole conception of another life. To some robust mystics it may be a disappointment that the heroine of this tale has herself no immediate consciousness of her mysterious offspring. A sensible experience indeed is described which may be familiar to initiates of the 'Sympneumatic' school. But there is something perilously near the ludicrous in a maternity first disclosed by an alien clairvoyante. The author's serious intention, however, does not rest in this imperfect phenomenon, which is expressly conceived as a partial or arrested evolution. The idea is that, 'as a rule, psychic union would result in psychic offspring,' and further, that the ultimatum of this offspring through physical birth is only a consequent result of the same spiritual force at its highest efficacy.

'The Blessed Virgin's intense faith generated the force necessary to produce this result. No law was contradicted nor suspended, but it required far stronger exercise of faith than a birth under similar conditions on the psychic plane would have done. This power was provided through the amount and quality of Mary's faith, which acted then as it would act now—*i.e.*, as a true Force. The persistent thought which produces a physical effect, a blister or the stigmata, or a beautiful and peaceful expression of the face, gives a hint of *how* spirit moulds matter. The physical body of our Lord was a more perfect exposition of the same law. The psychic germ was enclosed in a physical covering through the constant action of the Blessed Virgin's faith, working on the higher plane as well as on the normal one, and so our Lord's body was positively *materialised*. Now had it been an outer materialisation only, the constituent parts would have dissolved with the force which brought them together, as you and other psychic students have often seen occur. But in this case the materialisation took place within the womb.' 'There is a great truth underlying the worship of the Virgin and the Blessed Child, for it is the worship of the next spiral in the evolution of the race.'

Passages like the above lose much by extraction from their context, and the curious reader must be referred to the book itself. The thoughts on the relation of the celibate life to the advancement of spiritually organic conditions are well worth consideration. There is, however, no disparagement, but rather the reverse, of the ordinary married state; and the impression of crudeness, which such a notice as this cannot but convey, will be largely removed for the attentive reader of the book. Its interest steadily grows, and the experience with which it culminates prepares us for the suggestion—if it cannot quite be called a theory—bearing on a problem which has lately agitated even the Church of England. The Rev. Mr. Beeby, indeed, might not be indisposed to reconsider his sceptical judgment by the light of Mr. Uniacke's idea; and, on the other hand, his episcopal censor would probably murmur, *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis!*

C. C. M.

EUSAPIA PALADINO.

A correspondent kindly informs us that an exhibition has been opened in Dresden, promoted by Queen Carola of Saxony, in aid of some of her favourite charity schemes. All the royal personages of the empire were asked to send pictures by the old masters, historical souvenirs, portraits of famous kings, and others which would be of interest to the public. The most celebrated artists were also invited to contribute portraits of well-known and distinguished persons. For the exhibition a suite of rooms in the Tachenberg Palace has been lent by King George, and lectures are given there, with pictures, portraits, &c., for themes. A fee is, of course, charged for admission, and the project is well patronised. We mention the fact chiefly because one special item of attraction is a portrait of Eusapia Paladino, contributed by Herr München, a celebrated Munich artist. Anyhow it is noteworthy that the portrait of a well-known medium should have been thought worthy of a place amongst those of other celebrities.

RICHMOND OR TWICKENHAM.—Two gentlemen are anxious to join, or form, a circle in Richmond or Twickenham, and would be pleased to hear from resident Spiritualists or inquirers. Letters should be addressed to Mr. O. Nilsen, Kilmorey House, St. Margaret's-on-Thames, S.W.

* 'The Living Wheel.' A Drama in Five Acts. By T. I. UNIACKE. London: Philip Wellby, 9, Henrietta-street, Covent Garden, W.C. 1903. Price 3s. 6d.

MAN'S FREE WILL.

In writing on such a subject, and discussing such a question, as that of the possession of free will by man, it will be recognised by readers of 'LIGHT' that I am leaving the simpler path of the narration of personal experience to which I have hitherto confined myself, for the more thorny one of theory. But the conclusions at which I have arrived have been so largely influenced by my own experiences and observations that I feel justified in stating them, the subject being one of such importance that a ray of light, from however obscure a quarter, should be welcomed.

Does man possess free will, or is he the creature of circumstances? So many issues are involved in an affirmative reply to the first part of this inquiry that, although accustomed daily and constantly to exercise their judgment on the ordinary affairs of life, many contend that in reality they are irresponsible beings, having, in fact, no choice but to follow the line that destiny has marked out for them—a very comforting conclusion to arrive at, no doubt, and one which, many years ago, I tried to persuade myself I had reached. But I had perforce to change my views, although it was long before I could satisfy my mind and reconcile free will with destiny.

The solution of the problem that has presented itself to me after many years of deep thought is this: Man possesses absolute free will *within certain limits*—limits that it is impossible to define, and which, in all probability, vary with the individual.

What I mean by absolute free will is a will unfettered in every way, and not overshadowed by Divine omniscience. In a word, I believe that, to use the most expressive language at my command, God Himself, i.e., the Divine Spirit in whom we live and move and have our being, does not know how the creature whom He has endowed with this precious possession will use it.

Shortly before leaving England I ventured to state this proposition to one of the most popular, and, I am rejoiced to add, spiritual, preachers of the day, and it was with intense gratification that I heard him fully endorse my view.

Within the limits in which man has the power of exercising his will, it would follow that any certain prediction of coming events is impossible. It is needless to elaborate the point that a decision, often a momentous one, arrived at under certain circumstances, may be totally changed by the occurrence of an unforeseen and quite unexpected event. Possibilities and probabilities, therefore, are all that can be indicated by occult sciences, and the acceptance of this proposition will enable us satisfactorily to account for the frequent falsification of clairvoyant predictions.

Many years ago I consulted one of the most gifted lady palmists of the day. My past and present conditions were faithfully pictured, but when it came to the future the lady confessed herself nonplussed. My 'life line' showed distinctly enough that a crisis was at hand, but the outcome of this crisis was doubtful, and while on the one hand an abrupt termination of life was indicated by some lines, others showed that a calm and peaceful old age seemed to be in store for me. My impression is that the palmist fully expected me to go under when the critical period was reached, and that most probably a less gifted woman would have made a prediction to that effect. Looking back upon that time I can distinctly see that it was nothing but the exercise of my own free will that saved me, and made possible the realisation of the second and more happy alternative. In passing, perhaps I may be permitted to say that while both palmistry and astrology have correctly indicated possibilities in my life, clairvoyance and psychometry have invariably failed to do so, and in many instances have been very wide of the mark as regards future events.

Perhaps no questions of public importance gave rise to a greater divergence of prophetic statement than that of the succession of King Edward VII. to the throne, and his subsequent coronation as monarch of the realm. The predictions made must be fresh in the memories of many. All that happened in connection with the Coronation seems conclusive as to the great probability that untoward events were correctly foreseen. Who can say that it was not by the exercise of his

own free will that the stricken King, in bowing to the dictates of a Higher Power than his own, was enabled, under totally altered conditions—as far as the solemnity of the occasion was concerned—to wear the crown?

The acceptance of the doctrine of the absolute freedom of man to exercise his will brings with it the sense of the great responsibilities it involves. The issues raised would be terrific and well-nigh insupportable to a thinking mind were it not fully apparent that it is only within a very limited range that man's will can be effective.

Circumscribed, however, as the power is, it is yet sufficiently great to cause us to pause and reflect on consequences before we exercise it, even in the most ordinary vocations of life. It will scarcely be denied, whatever view may be taken on the question of free will or destiny, that individual acts often have very far-reaching results.

I am not alluding so much to the ruler who, from mere love of brutality and bloodshed, causes his subjects to be outraged and slaughtered; or to the statesman who, from mere ambition as opposed to sound policy, causes the sacrifice of thousands on thousands of lives, and leads his country on to a ruinous and downward course; nor to the many and flagrant cases of man's inhumanity to man and carelessness of the lives, morals, and health of those for whom he is responsible, with which our newspapers are filled.

What I am thinking of is the responsibility attaching to the humble citizen, the father, the mother of children, the employé, the clerk, the domestic servant. It is beginning to be more fully realised than heretofore how inter-dependent we are, and how much the happiness of those around us is affected by our own individual actions. But the lesson wants forcibly driving home, for as yet the foundations only of a great superstructure are laid, and the dream of universal brotherhood is still only a dream; perhaps will never be anything else in this stage of man's life.

The signs of the times all point to increased effort being made in the right direction, and the optimistic is the prevailing tone nowadays. Individual interest, by which I do not mean self-interest, however, is the motive power by which collective action is made effective, and the freedom each possesses to support by thought, word, and deed the noble efforts that are made in various directions for the good of the people, should be exercised to its fullest extent.

It would be futile to attempt to define the limits within which man has the power to exercise his will. In my own case I have found that while I have been able with perfect ease to give up a life-long habit, such as smoking, others that I have wished to conquer have only been subdued by the invocation of a Higher Power than my own will was capable of exercising, showing clearly that by the indulgence of the desires of the lower self, we open the door to influences that we may find it very hard to dislodge, however anxious we may be to do so. I cannot now enter into the question of obsession further than to say that while I believe that there are those in the unseen who are ever ready to take advantage of mortal weaknesses, I have also come to the conclusion that there are influences other than personal that exercise their powers both on mortals and incarnate souls for good as well as for evil. To me it appears a matter of the supremest importance not to allow one's judgment or free will to be overridden by either, but to cultivate a well-balanced mind that will enable its possessor to weigh well the probable consequences of his actions, and to frame them upon his perceptions of right and wrong.

It should always be borne in mind that there are sins of omission as well as commission. It is proverbial that great events often result from trivial causes. Medical science testifies to the fact that the sins of the father are visited on the children even to the third or fourth generation, while the exclamation 'If I had only acted in a different way,' is one of the most common of every-day utterances. An earnest—nay powerful—wish for guidance to right decisions on matters even of minor importance will, if it does nothing else, help us in our exercise of one of man's most glorious possessions—Free will.

Alexandria, Egypt.

THOMAS ATWOOD.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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JOY IN GOD.

It is perfectly true that the faithful maintainers of the old creeds have good reasons for perturbation in the presence of Spiritualism. It is not sufficient that we explain their Bible, and prove the truth of most of their 'wonders.' That, for which in other circumstances they might be grateful, is lost sight of in the blinding glow of the faith which exposes the unloveliness of their central thoughts of God and of life beyond. Say what they will of the glory and love of God, all is overshadowed by their theory of His gigantic failure in the creation of Man, and their belief in a hopeless eternal doom for a large portion of the human race.

The Spiritualist hesitates or flatly declines belief in this conception of God and of His decrees. He does not believe that God has failed, and that Man is fallen. He believes that God is creating Man by stages now well-known by all students of science. He does not believe in an implacable God. He believes that 'His tender mercies are over all His works,' and that in the end He will prove it: and, for this, he goes to the Bible where, especially in the Psalms, the Spiritualist finds the fullest, the tenderest, the happiest allusions to God as a source of joy. He remembers, too, that the greatest record in the Gospels is that of Christ's 'Beatitudes,' and that, if there are anathemas there, they are not so much against erroneous believers as against evil doers.

In truth, the gospel of joy in God is immensely needed to-day. Humanity has suffered long from its dread of God,—its God who fails and threatens and damns. The pressure of life to-day is hard and grievous for millions, so much so that the keenest atheism of our time is the uprising of the sympathetic against the miseries of the hard hit. Ah, yes! we need indeed to say, as one of the old psalmists said,—'I will go unto God, my joy.' A sensible missionary in the East End of London was once asked, 'And what is it that you principally aim at?' His answer was, 'I try to get people to love God and to laugh';—a lovely programme!

There are Spiritualists who scoff at belief in 'The Devil': we know not why, except for this reason—that they resent the idea that a Spirit of Evil is dominant, or exalts himself above God. Devils there are in plenty, and, for all we know, they have a King: but a Devil, a Satan, who is dominant, or who shares the lordship of the Universe with God—that we must deny while pen can write or body speak. Man is not ruined: he is rising. God was not thwarted: He is creating man in the only possible way. Hell is not for God's hopeless failures, but for His sorrowful wayfarers on their way out of darkness into His marvellous light. God is at the

heart of the world, at the heart of the Universe—ay! in the dark cellars of the Universe, if there are any. Of these, too, we might say,—'Underneath are the everlasting arms.'

This is the vital thought for our day, and upon this all turns, in Religion and Theology. In days of old, the thought of God was mainly a thought of dread; and, indeed, too often the thought of God was not a thought of God at all but, unknowingly, the thought of Satan, or of God with a Satan's attributes; and all Man's beliefs and expectations grew out of that sad thought. To this the Bible itself bears witness—and almost every creed of Christendom. It is this we have to alter: and, above all, is it the duty and the honour of the Spiritualist to testify that it is the all-wise, all-just and all-pitiful God who is supreme, and that man's destiny will be determined by this all-prevailing fact.

No one can deny that there are times when it is extremely difficult to hold by this great faith,—times when we are forced to cry, 'O that I knew where I might find Him!' But the thoughtful Spiritualist, judging of all things from spiritual points of view, is never long at a loss for consolation and hope,—is never long unable to turn to God, his joy. He knows that much of the world's suffering and sorrow is only the price that must be paid for Nature's certainties. The human race must, simply *must*, 'through much tribulation enter into the kingdom.' The absence of Nature's certainties would disable Man just where he needs to be strongest, and put everything in confusion: and, on the other hand, the maintenance of her certainties involves and must ever involve (until we reach perfection) suffering and loss. Even in the midst of these, then, it is possible to say, 'I will go unto God, my joy.'

But we can venture farther. The Spiritualist, looking beneath the surface, sees and knows that much of what we call 'evil' (even moral evil) is undeveloped good. We see this all through. Nature everywhere is aiming at perfection, but everywhere she has to work hard for it, and climb up to sweet through sour. Her untamed fruits are often useless. Her first attempt at a pineapple skinned the tongue of the daring partaker of it: and her first men and women reeked with survivals of the jungle and the cave: and there is a truth in the grotesque old saying that there is a way to Heaven through Hell.

All through the history of the human race, God is discernible as its educator. He is producing the Ideal Man in the only possible way, and, through every stage of Man's evolution, we may trace Him. In the wild strivings of savage hordes, in the reformer's agony, in the martyr's flame, in the slave's cry, in the crushed toiler's broken body, in the cries of the Christs to a God who seems to have forsaken them, we may trace Him. Is it not all a tremendous process of creation?—the workshop the world; the working hours, the myriad centuries; the material, the bodies and souls of men; the result, a self-conscious, self-reliant, experienced Human Race.

But it is when standing before the hiding veil that the Spiritualist responds best to this great faith: for this brief life is, at best, only introductory; and the joy of God is, at best, only a symbol here, among the things of sense and time. It is here that the Spiritualist wins his truest, grandest victory. While others shrink, and doubt, and fear, the black veil seems to become transparent for him. Beckoning hands are revealed for him, and friendly faces, and ever-increasing light, as he nears the veil. The last enemy is destroyed; the last stage of his pilgrimage is reached; he goes unto God, his joy.

THE FAITH THAT SAVES.

As we look out upon life and consider the crying needs of the world of men and women, we are impressed by the conviction that the world's saviours must be optimists. The pessimist may perhaps plead that his creed is true, and therefore must in the long run prevail, but he cannot claim that it is calculated to stimulate progress or to heal the world's sickness.

To believe, as did Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and many another brave soul, that death ends all, that this life, with its pains and joys, its soul-travail and strenuousness, is the beginning and ending of individual consciousness, may be heroic, and just because it is heroic may even be a discipline of grace to the man who, so believing, can yet choose to be good for love of goodness; but such a belief cannot be an incentive to progress for mankind as a whole.

This consideration is of itself a make-weight against any argument on the side of pessimism and materialism, viz., that the story of evolution shows that Hope has been a great factor in progress. In the lower stages of life it is perhaps questionable whether the instinct which prompts the struggle for life should be called 'hope,' because it is unconscious, and the end in view is not rationally apprehended; it is nevertheless of the nature of hope; perhaps we may call it latent hope, the capacity which, under the stimulus of knowledge, manifests as hope. It is the development of this factor in evolution which the materialistic and pessimistic view of the Universe tends to check. Perhaps a few will object to the materialist and the pessimist being classed together. There are those who maintain that the positivist belief that the life of the soul is a product or a by-product of molecular groupings, that soul is a property of protoplasm and non-existent independent of protoplasm, is not synonymous with pessimism. 'We claim,' they will say, 'to be satisfied with this creed; we find sufficient incentive to right living and to noble work in the hope that we are working for the betterment of the race: that some day, in the far future perhaps, there will be a race of men free from the miseries we see about us and feel within us; our happiness is in knowing that we may contribute to this end.' It always seems to us that the defect in this reply is mainly due to a lack somewhere in the logical faculty, and possibly in the region of feeling also. This charge will, of course, be strongly denied. But if this future race of men is to be as ephemeral as the present, and if ultimately the whole sentient Universe is to be resolved into the unconscious nebulae, out of which it is believed by positivists to have been evolved, are we sure that it is desirable to work in order to prolong the existence of the race at all? When we review the history of pain of countless generations in the past; when we contemplate the blood and fire through which countless generations in the future must win their way before this ideal perfection is reached; does the gain seriously seem worth the cost? 'La flamme vaut-il la chandelle?' And when we remember how much of the highest life of man consists in the affections, it seems like playing a trick with the soul to claim that the positivist creed is really a satisfying and an optimistic one, or that it meets at all adequately the needs of human nature. Romanes,* in the days when he had given up all belief in spirit (a belief which he happily regained), was too logical and too honest to deceive himself on this point. 'I am not ashamed to confess,' he said, 'that with this virtual negation of God the Universe to me has lost its loveliness.'

We are convinced that the greatest remedy for the world-sickness is optimism, and that dominant, persistent,

confident optimism is logically compatible only with such a spiritual view of the Universe as shall include human immortality. A great responsibility rests upon all who so think—the great responsibility of propagating by consistent optimistic thinking this renovating force. We are bound to tell all those who indulge in pessimistic views of life that they are propagators of an evil infection, that they are not free, as they sometimes suppose, to wrap themselves up in their own gloom; they cannot do it: thought-microbes are more subtle and more penetrative than material microbes, and pessimistic thoughts are hindering the salvation of mankind even when they are unexpressed in words. On the other hand, optimistic thoughts are powerful factors in human progress.

These reflections have been prompted by the perusal of a little pamphlet called 'From Agnosticism to Theism,' by C. F. Dole (a reprint from the 'Hibbert Journal' of October, 1903). A healthier, more rational specimen of 'straight thinking' we have hardly ever come across. We welcome it heartily and recommend our readers to send for a copy and to circulate it freely, for it is a valuable contribution to the optimistic forces which are destined to uplift humanity entire into a new and better condition of life.

The little brochure is simply a statement of the line of thought which has led the writer from 'Agnosticism to Theism.' He has great sympathy with the agnostic attitude, but he claims that he has been compelled in large measure to relinquish the agnostic position by 'straight thinking' on the facts of the Universe; he has reached belief in God not by closing his eyes to these facts, but by facing them: and belief in God is, in his mind, synonymous with optimism. He says:—

'My thought of God grows out of the facts, and is indeed the only satisfactory interpretation of the facts that I can find. . . . I find in its higher reaches an ethical order or structure; it seems to me singularly purposive; I find it one in essence and nowhere chaotic or dualistic; it exhibits to my mind not ill-will or indifference, but, as I am more and more firmly constrained to think, a predominant good will. Seeking to study all kinds of facts, daring to blink none of them, I am simply compelled by the weight of these facts to call this a Divine Universe—or, using the highest name which man has ever developed to describe reality, I say that the Universe brings me face to face with God.'*

This is the conclusion at which also Sir Henry Thompson found himself 'compelled to arrive' after a similar study of the facts of the world's evolution. In his essay called 'The Unknown God?' he says:—

'I find myself compelled to arrive at a conclusion contrary, I gladly confess, to that which I at first entertained, when engaged with the former part of the inquiry, and depressed by mentally realising the miseries and hardships to which Man was exposed. . . . When the long inquiry came to an end, and not until then, the Truth—as I profoundly believe it to be—almost suddenly impressed me. . . . I was now assured by evidence I could not resist that all which Man—with his limited knowledge and experience—has learned to regard as due to Supreme Power and Wisdom, although immeasurably beyond his comprehension, is also associated with the exercise of an "Absolutely Beneficent" influence over all living things, of every grade, which exist within its range.'

This is the faith that saves individuals and will save the race. It is obvious to anyone who considers attentively the tenour of the Gospels, that Harnack is right when he says that 'a certain intense repose and unflinching assurance' characterises the outlook upon life of the Saviour Christ. He has that trust which Emerson tells us 'carries God with it, and so hath already the whole future in the bottom of heart.'

* 'From Agnosticism to Theism.' By C. F. DOLE. May be obtained from James H. West Company, Boston. Price 10 cents.

* 'Thoughts on Religion.' By ROMANES. Edited by C. Gore. P. 28.

The optimist faith is reasonable, sane, and healthy; it tends to produce just thinking, sanity, and health in all who come under its influence. Let us awaken to our responsibilities, and cease to think and talk as if some evil chance, or worse, some malicious demon, were playing with the forces of Nature and the soul; and let us carry our optimism into our life in all its details, from the smallest to the greatest—from disappointment about the weather to the crucifixion of the soul.

RE-INCARNATION OR RE-EMBODIMENTS.

BY J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.

The long article in 'LIGHT,' of December 26th, by Dr. Helen Densmore, entitled 'The Case for Re-incarnation,' deeply interested me, not because of any new or original thoughts therein, but because of my admiration of the talented writer and her kindly, fraternal spirit.

Mentioning my name several times, Mrs. Dr. Densmore speaks of a 'discussion she had recently had with me in the "Banner of Light" upon re-embodiments.' Hardly that! but rather some interchanges of opinion upon the 'successive embodiments' of conscious immortal men, dwelling in paradisaic spheres, being reconceived and reborn into babyhood susceptibilities, to pass through all 'possible earthly experiences,' some of which would necessarily be detrimental to health, if not paralyzing to progress.

The following admission of Dr. Densmore in her article is worthy of note: 'I fully agree that the fact that some persons think they remember incidents in a previous embodiment is no proof of the truth of the "doctrine" of re-incarnation.' Certainly it is not! Really, the 'doctrine' has no proof, no positive demonstrations of any kind. It is a mere hypothesis, based upon arbitrary assertions, bold flights of fancy, and old Hindu speculations; poor—all very poor—materials with which to vaccinate the stirring Western mind, afire as it is with science, inductive reasonings, and profound critical research. We are further informed in that article by Dr. Densmore that it is taught by Mrs. Richmond that 'every soul that has had an existence, from the South-Sea Islander to the most advanced philosopher of Greece, or Germany, or England, eventually goes through every experience possible to the embodied human spirit.' This is a startling statement, a bold assertion—nothing more! Think of it—crowned heads and street beggars, queens and courtesans! Gambling, drunkenness, licentiousness, bribery, robbery, arson, perjury, shooting, dynamiting, assassinating, kidnapping, murdering, warring, suiciding, &c., all 'possible experiences'; which if we have not allowed through them in the past embodiments, we are destined to dip into and wade through in this or in future re-incarnations—and all for what?

'To gain knowledge, to know; to experience, to appreciate,' I am told.

Most fervently denying the reasonableness of this demoralising theory, I stoutly contend that it is not necessary to be an experienced gutter drunkard to know and enjoy temperance; not necessary in any soul-embodiment to plunge into the pit of prostitution to know and to experience the divinity of purity; nor is it necessary in any soul-embodiment to be a drivelling idiot to know and appreciate wisdom.

Cannot reincarnationists understand that knowledge is not wisdom? that knowledge of the material—and for selfish purposes—is not only ephemeral and useless, but often grossly debasing? Cannot they understand that the knowledge and practice of the spiritual only is morally uplifting, soul-satisfying, and abiding? And further, can they not understand that the invisible spirit-realms of immortality, with the million worlds that dot the starry immensities, afford infinitely better facilities for attaining spiritual knowledge and spiritual unfoldment than this physical world, which, upon the re-embodiment theory, implies round-and-round series of re-conception perils prior to birth into a world of dangers, sordid competitions, and often unperceived degrading environments; and, withal, fated to fight and suffer, again and again, to gain all 'possible experiences'?

If this speculation be not the quintessence of folly I know not what it is.

It should be stated that Mrs. Richmond's theory of re-embodiment differs somewhat from Allan Kardec's, from Mrs. Besant's, Mrs. Tingley's, and the American Koreshites, the last of whom add to their reincarnating dogma the 'hollow globe' theory of our earth. In fact, Mrs. Richmond has a little pocket theory of re-embodiment all her own, and Dr. Densmore is her cleverest exponent.

Personally this re-embodiment doctrine, with its all 'possible experience' attachment, should in nowise trouble me; for am I not safe, high up on the 'seventh round' of this Ego-rotating machinery? I have been gravely and graciously told during the past fifteen years by clairvoyant Theosophists, and two or three re-embodiment-believing mediums, that many thousand years ago I was an adept, functioning on the Ganges' flower-bordered banks; then an Osiris priest in Egypt, then the Bible prophet, Habbakuk, then Herodotus, then Origen, the Church Father; then Peter the Hermit, and now I am plain J. M. Peebles, with a semi-Scotch ancestry. What a fall! What an argument against the upward lift of evolution!

But now, thank the 'Lords of Karma,' I am on my seventh and last round of this cycling oriental whirligig. Yes—no more birth-strugglings into physical life, no more creeping on all fours, no more castor oil stuffings, no more measles and mumps for me, for I wriggled through all these 'possible experiences' as Herodotus, Origen, and other illustrious characters in my past embodiments (?). And how thankful I was to be gravely told by so many psychics that this is my 'seventh and last round.' Hurrah!

MESSAGES BY AUTOMATIC WRITING.

Mr. Harold Begbie tells the two following stories in the 'Daily Mail.' 'They have not been published,' he says; 'they have not been investigated by the Society for Psychical Research; but he who told me the stories is a man eminent in science, whose integrity and critical acumen are not to be doubted, and he himself inquired into both stories, and found them true':—

'A lady, who knew nothing of psychics, and had never heard of automatic writing, was mourning the death of her husband—the best, the gentlest, the kindest of men—when she found herself one evening moved to sit down and write at her escritoire. Until the pen dropped from her fingers she was unaware of how she came to be writing, and of what she had written. When she read the pages it was to find that she had written a painful confession from her dead husband, and a passionate and imploring demand for her forgiveness. A name and an address were given in the letter, and inquiry proved that for many years the husband had been living a double life.

'The second story was told to me during the Boer war. A young girl whose brother was in South Africa suddenly found herself constrained to write, and the words she wrote were from her brother, who told her that he had been shot through the heart at such a place, that he had fallen into the arms of two friends, to whom he desired her to make certain gifts from a specified drawer in his wardrobe, and concluded by telling her that he was in a world like her own, that he suffered no pain in dying, and that he was then about to explore his new surroundings. Telegrams and letters from the two friends who had tended him bore out the facts.'

Referring to the attitude of scientific men towards the evidence for a future life, Mr. Harold Begbie says:—

'One of the most famous French savants was asked by a friend of mine whether he had proofs of the existence of the soul. "While I am Professor —, no!" he replied; "but when I retire and become plain Monsieur —, yes!"

'The layman does not realise, I think, that the orthodoxy of science exercises over the minds of investigators a kind of despotism precisely similar to the old despotism of religious orthodoxy. I have talked to many men who shrink from telling their spiritual experiences for fear of losing their prestige as authoritative men of science. Every age is an attempt to awaken from the hypnotic trance cast upon it by the preceding generation, and at the present time scientific men are still deep in the spells of the agnosticism of the nineteenth century; they give no quarter to the daring soul who challenges the materialistic position and asserts the possibility of the existence of a spiritual world.'

SEANCES WITH MR. PETERS IN PARIS.

I think it will interest the readers of 'LIGHT' to be informed of some very successful sittings which my husband and myself have been fortunate enough to have with Mr. A. V. Peters, during his short stay in Paris.

We were complete strangers to the medium, when he came to our home for the first sitting, on January 12th, and as to some friends of ours, who assisted at the second and third sances, he did not even know their names until he was introduced to them, just before the sitting. Nevertheless, to some of us a great deal was said, mostly by his Indian guide, 'Moonstone,' concerning our past life and character, all of which was absolutely correct. Some of our dear departed ones were described clairvoyantly, others came and controlled the medium, giving many excellent tests, but before they did so, 'Moonstone' explained to us that they probably would be unable to say much, coming through the medium for the first time and not speaking the same language as he.

At the first sitting our beloved and regretted child was described to us and his illness shown. It was also stated that we had lost him three and a half years ago, and that he seemed to have been 'snapped' away from us, being a bright and healthy child who seemed full of life until a few days before his death. This was exactly so.

Among the spirits who controlled the medium during this sitting I will mention one. His movements at once appeared very familiar to me and made me think it was my father. He pushed back his great coat (redingote) and putting a finger of each hand into the arm-holes of his waistcoat (a habit of my father's), he raised his head and looked up with an expression that was strikingly like papa's. This look especially struck my husband as being not only that of my father, but also, at certain moments, mine, and even our little lost boy's. I spoke Norwegian to the spirit, this being his language, and, though he could not say much, he understood me and answered 'Ja' and 'Nei.' He rose from his chair and making a few steps he showed us that he could hardly walk on one foot, after which he sat down again, and, laying his hand on the foot, he shook his head sadly, while uttering a sound as of great pain. Now my father, for several months before his death, suffered in one foot, and was hardly able to walk on it; the doctor proposed an operation, and this unfortunate operation made him suffer terribly and caused his death.

The spirit showed us another characteristic of his illness, and then having quite correctly gone through the different phases of the same, he proceeded to give us another test. He leaned back in his chair with the bad foot stretched out, and showed us that he was smoking. 'Yes, papa, you used to smoke,' said I, but suddenly I understood that there was something more he wanted to indicate while smoking in this position. The fact is that when he was sitting thus, unable to move much, my husband had sent him a pipe from Paris, and the last words of his last letter were the following: 'I am daily using the pipe.' This he wanted to allude to, and he was very glad to see that we understood him perfectly. He squeezed our hands heartily and seemed very happy to have come, and I was greatly moved as my dear father made his personality distinctly felt through the medium. I hardly think that his look and characteristic movements can be explained by thought transmission.

During the second sitting, on January 21st, the deceased husband of one of the ladies present was the most successful in giving good tests, and he was as easily and as perfectly recognised as my father. However, I can only speak with exactitude of the spirits that came for ourselves. To me came a spirit whom I understood to be my grandmother, but no conclusive proof was given while she controlled the medium. Afterwards one of the usual controls came and gave some further explanations. The old lady said that she came from a place where there was much fish (Bergen in Norway), and she spoke about some funny people who did not speak Norwegian correctly, and whose name was something like 'Skrel.' I did not understand what she meant and asked some other questions. But the spirit came back to this—that I 'must remember these "funny people"

who could not talk correctly; they used to come and sell fish, and they were so accustomed to living in boats that they hardly could walk on land.' . . . Of course I remembered them then, those quaint fishermen who lived on naked rocks and islands far out in the sea, and who were so awkward that we children always used to laugh at them. 'Stril' is the name. They surely exist still, but in my grandmother's time they were, of course, a good deal more ignorant and uncivilised than now.

This may not prove with certainty the identity of the spirit; but to me it seems, nevertheless, a very interesting test, for it was far away from my thoughts, and I hardly think it could have been taken from my sub-conscious mind, where other tests more closely connected with my grandmother might easily have been found. The above is a local peculiarity with Bergen, and I do not think it possibly could be known to Mr. Peters, who is an Englishman, and who, though he has spent a few days in Eastern Norway, has never been in Bergen.

At last a spirit came for my husband, in whom he recognised a near relative of his who had not been good to him. The poor spirit begged his pardon, and dropping her head on the table, she sobbed bitterly. My husband assured her that he had forgiven her a long time ago, and that he always prayed for her, and she then seemed a little relieved. He recognised her especially from a very familiar gesture of hers, laying her hand on her chest. She also pronounced the word 'Finistère' (the name of a French department), which, of course, to the medium meant nothing, but which to us meant a good deal.

Both my grandmother and this spirit pointed to our child, who, it appeared, was standing between my husband and myself, and while doing so my grandmother hummed a 'berceuse' which I sometimes used to sing to him.

During the third séance (January 26th) five spirits controlled the medium (besides his guides), three of whom were particularly successful in giving excellent tests, and in manifesting their personality. A spirit who did not succeed so well in proving his identity came for the lady in whose house this sitting was given, and among other tests he pointed to one of his feet, and indicated especially his big toe. The lady knew who the spirit was, or professed to be, but she did not understand what this meant. Afterwards the Irish control came, and explained that the spirit had suffered in this toe some time before his death, and had thought the lady would remember it. She did not, and thinking it a mistake, she felt rather annoyed about it. But a day or two afterwards she suddenly remembered the incident alluded to—it was quite correct, and this test appeared to her the more convincing as it had so entirely escaped her memory.

To all the French spirits who controlled the medium during the different sittings we spoke French, and they understood what we said, and answered 'Oui' and 'Non,' and occasionally a few other French words were uttered by them. Thus, in the beginning of the last sitting, the medium suddenly sprang to his feet, shivering from cold, and exclaiming: 'Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! j'ai froid'; and the Indian guide afterwards explained that it was a poor man who had just died from cold in the streets, and with those words on his lips. The medium neither understands French nor Norwegian.

An interesting feature of this séance was the following: One of the controls told us that he would do some palmistry, and to prove that the medium himself had nothing to do with it, he would bandage his eyes. He therefore put a pocket-handkerchief around his head, hiding his eyes completely, and then, seeing, he said, through the forehead of the medium, he began to study the hand of a young man whom the medium met that evening for the first time, and who was quite unknown to half of the sitters, including my husband and myself. The reading was extensive and absolutely correct; so the young gentleman was greatly surprised.

I must conclude by saying that all who were present are most thankful to Mr. Peters and his good spirit friends for these successful sittings, and feel greatly encouraged and comforted by the convincing proofs that were given us of the presence of our dear departed ones.

23, rue du Bac, Paris.

ELLEN S. LETORT.

CLAIRVOYANCE IN DREAMS.

Mr. Thurstan's interesting article in last week's 'LIGHT' deals with a fascinating subject. It reminded me of several slight dream experiences of my own which may possibly be of sufficient interest to others to be worth recording. I quote from my diary :—

'August 24th, 1902.—On Saturday, 16th, I noted in my pocket-book that I had been dreaming of N., that she wanted to tell me something, but did not quite like to. I wondered afterwards what it might be, and whether her letter would show my dream was correct. I thought in my dream that her hair was tumbled, as it would be if she were in bed. . . Her letter received Monday, 18th, says: "Referring to Wednesday, 13th, at 4 a.m., I was thinking strongly to you—talking to you to shake off the terrible trouble of a dream. . . I thought I would tell you of it, as the matter had a curious side for reflection—perhaps I will yet. Did I reach you?"'

Seemingly this *did* reach me, but not until three nights later. Again :—

'Entry February 26th, 1903: "I wrote to N. that I had dreamed of her on the night between 19th and 20th. Though I could recall little, I remembered to have dreamt that I had seen a sheet or book of accounts, and that I was told that they referred to the expenses entailed by not living in her own house but in rooms. . . She writes back: 'Yes, you got it correctly about my doing accounts on the night of the 19th. I had a good bit of the evening at it. . . And you were even right in detail, for my calculation was to find the average monthly total of expenses here during the eight months past. They worried me—would not come out square.'"

I must not omit to add that in a subsequent letter she told me that before retiring to rest after making her calculations she had taken up my photograph and looked at it. This probably brought the *rapport*, and the incident is another indication of the law that thought can bridge space so completely as practically to annihilate it, for my friend was miles away in the country.

There is a small detail in connection with this incident which I only add because I have found that by careful observation of just such trifles one can get the clue to many a psychic puzzle. When my friend, in dream, showed me the sheet of accounts and made me understand that they referred, not to the necessary expenses of living merely, but to something extra, this idea was conveyed to me by the use of the word 'artificial.' She told me the accounts were 'artificial.' Now, if in waking life she had described them by such an inappropriate term I should not have understood, probably, but in the dream state I quite understood.

It seems to me that this is precisely analogous to the curious phraseology sometimes used by communicators in automatic writing or in trance. *Language is thought* with them; it only becomes words and phrases as it passes through the brain of the more limited incarnate mind, and the form of words used is often only an approximate term, far from exact. In our sleep we approach more nearly to their condition, and although we may dream in words, we understand the words used, whether they are appropriate or not, because in that state we are not dependent on them, being in more immediate mental contact with the ideas behind the words.

I have had other somewhat similar telepathic experiences with this friend, but these two are perhaps the most obvious, and more of a kind that can be fully related than are the others.

H. A. DALLAS.

ILFORD SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY.—Mr. J. H. Kennett, the honorary secretary of the Ilford Spiritualists' Society, desires to offer grateful thanks to the undermentioned societies for their kind response to his written appeal for aid, viz., Burnley Society, 10s.; Boynton Society, 3s. 9d.; Bradford Society, 2s. Mr. Kennett says: 'I trust that many others will express their sympathy in a similar way. I am glad to report that our bazaar brought us in a net profit of just over £10, so that we have now reduced our liabilities to about £28.' Contributions may be sent to Mr. Kennett, at 937, Romford-road, Manor Park, Essex.

A CASE OF DEMATERIALISATION.

At my usual weekly séance this week, with Mr. Williams as medium, the following incident occurred :—

One of the two luminous slates lying on the table was taken up and held to his head by a figure which, in its light, we saw to be that of a frequent visitant to our circle—one to whom, as we were told at his first appearance that he was an offshoot from Buddha, we have given the name of 'The Mahatma.' This figure is tall, some six feet in height, and is always swathed in ample white drapery, but, generally, the face is left free.

Having asked and received permission to do so by three bends of the figure's head, I took the second slate from the table and held it up to the other side of its face from that at which itself was holding the first slate, so that the circle might be able to see the features and form more distinctly. About half a minute after I had done this, the figure threw down upon the table the slate which it had been holding, then crossed its arms upon its chest, and, a moment or two afterwards, began gradually to collapse, in full view of the whole circle and under the light of the slate which I continued to hold up to it, and which I lowered to keep on a level with its head, as that descended towards the floor, until, at length, it disappeared in the mass of spirit drapery on the carpet, which then, itself, quickly melted away.

Towards the close of the séance, one after another of the sitters was led by a spirit hand from the table to a remote part of the room, there to form a new circle. Mr. Williams and I were left at the table till the last (we could not, in fact, either of us, have been removed until some of the other sitters had been displaced), and I continued to hold his hand until I, too, was led by a spirit hand to rejoin the other members of the séance as they stood, with hands all linked, where they had been placed. Mr. Williams himself was next brought to rejoin us. Some members of the circle were then subjected to a vigorous rubbing by spirit hands. We were told that the whole manifestation was an experiment; it concluded the séance.

I have sent the above account to a gentleman who was present at the séance, for verification, and he has returned it to me with the following words: 'My recollection of these transactions is in accord with yours.'

Perhaps I may be permitted to add, to save readers of 'LIGHT' the pain of receiving a refusal, and myself that of giving one, that my séances are entirely private, and that they are held with a fixed circle of my own friends whom I have invited to join, because I know their psychic powers. I am, therefore, quite unable to entertain applications for admission from strangers.

MARY MACK WALL.

BONCHURCH.—Residents at Bonchurch, I. W., already receiving interesting manifestations, would be glad to know of any Spiritualists in the Isle of Wight with whom they (husband and wife) could correspond, or meet for séances (unprofessionally). Letters to 'S. B.,' care of A. J. Bird, 17, Union-street, Ryde, I. W.

'MALCOLM FORBES.'—We have received a copy of a work entitled 'Malcolm Forbes,' which is unlike anything we have yet seen. It is issued by the author, Mr. J. M. Hazlewood Jones, and gives a 'sketch of the career of an impartial investigator and humanitarian' who becomes a Spiritualist from conviction and as the result of the mediumship of his wife. The life-story of 'Malcolm Forbes' is well told and the writer is evidently a keen observer of men and things, and many of his comments are quaint and shrewd. Mr. Jones prefaces his narrative with a detailed statement of how he received from Mrs. Rathbone, a Cheshire lady, in August, 1900, a prediction that the next event of national importance would be the death of Queen Victoria, and that it would occur early in the following year. This account is attested by a photographed reproduction of the written message, and the envelope in which it was forwarded to London, showing the post office date mark of August 24th, 1900. Other experiences of automatic writings and clairvoyance are given, and the book should prove of interest to Spiritualists and psychical researchers generally. The book was published at 2s. 6d. net, cloth boards, 300 pp., but by special arrangements with the printers it is offered to readers of 'LIGHT' at 1s. 3d. post free.

AN UNBELIEVER'S TESTIMONY.

The 'Halifax Courier,' of the 6th inst., contained a long report of a visit paid by two representatives of that paper to a private séance at which Mr. John Taylor, the well-known Lancashire physical medium, was present. The reporter's testimony is perhaps the more valuable because he states at the outset that he is *not* a Spiritualist, and that his colleague also is an unbeliever. After detailing the preliminary proceedings he says: 'The gas was turned down nearly to a spark, and after that, when it was just possible to study the table and the eight folk round, eight pairs of hands were laid flat on the table, fingers and thumbs to the centre.' Yet, after a time, the 'table rose from the floor'! And he thus continues:—

'Every person had, as I say, hands on top, not underneath; nobody could get knees under (such was its construction) to raise it, and it was—as I subsequently found by experiment—utterly impossible to do any of the elevating business by stretching the legs under the table and trying to force up the table with the feet. No; wideawake as I thought I was, I had to confess myself nonplussed. Not long after this the table—once more, apparently, without human agency—tilted on edge, and I was told to try and force it down to its three feet. I meant trying, but the "medium" was there before me, with hands on the upturned top, and he jumped on the leg that was in the air; he exerted so much power that the leg broke off. I was not (because of being robbed of the chance to try myself) much impressed with this incident; I should have been mightily impressed had I found the table would not yield to my energetic persuasions. Next my colleague mounted the table by desire, sat on top on a chair, and we again awaited developments. Twelve seconds later up went table, man, and chair—full eight inches from the floor, and I caused a little degree of confusion by bringing an electric flashlight (which Messrs. Cohen, of Southgate, had kindly lent me) to bear on the underneath part of the table as it ascended. I was just as wise as ever, could not for the life of me understand the antics, and I hardly thought it possible for magnetism to effect so much under these circumstances. Of course the table never remained off the floor above five seconds or so. It soon became my turn, and I gleefully stepped on the table. I rose in the air (and I am no small weight) standing on the hands of the medium—standing on his palms, mind you. If any readers would like to try it I commend to them this one phase of my first "séance," but let the subject who treads on your hands, with the knuckles down on a bare table-top, weigh not less than twelve stone. I guarantee the underneath friends will know about it. Yet I not only stood on this man's hands, but I actually stamped on them; I should not have had the heart to do it had he not invited me, indeed almost insisted. I rose, I should say, when perched on the hands, the table rose as well beneath me, both several inches; then the "medium" drew out his arms quickly, and table and man came to the floor with a thud.'

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.

'Evidence for a Future Life.'

SIR,—The remarks which appeared in your last issue, with regard to the translation of M. Delanne's book, were, as relates to myself, kindly appreciative; at the same time, I feel bound to express my regret that the work should be described as a transformation rather than a translation, and to say it has been very far indeed from my intention to deviate in any way from the sense of the original. I should regard such deviation as quite unjustifiable, and I feel that the author would have just grounds of complaint if he were led to suppose that I had not done my best, conscientiously, to present *his* work to English readers. I can honestly say that this has been my aim throughout. When I have differed from the views of the author, I have allowed myself to express my own opinion in the footnotes, not in the text. It was necessary to curtail the volume, and I received M. Delanne's full permission to do so. The task of elimination was not an easy one: I felt all the more under an obligation to use my best discrimination in selecting what to leave out, because I knew that the author, in granting me free permission to abbreviate, was relying on my judgment and on my honour.

Foreigners, and others who may not read the translation, will, I am afraid, gather from the tenour of the remarks in last week's 'LIGHT,' that I have allowed myself an amount of liberty in the work which, had I done so, would, in my judg-

ment, have been unfair, a breach of honour. I must, therefore, ask you to allow me to take this opportunity of correcting the impression which may thus (I am sure unintentionally) have been given.

H. A. DALLAS.

Madame E. d'Espérance.

SIR,—I beg permission to correct one or two errors which were inadvertently made in my address to the London Spiritualist Alliance in November last, and which appear in the reprint just published.

In speaking of the arrangements made for the séances in Christiania, I stated that 'No other person was to be admitted during the series.' The fact (which I had for the moment forgotten) is that at the end of the first half of the series, four persons, who in most respects fulfilled the prescribed conditions, and were considered by the members to be most desirable allies, were admitted to the second half of the series. A statement to this effect was made in a report of the séances published in 'LIGHT' in 1900.

Various reports of these séances have been published by different writers. The most exhaustive was by the Hon. Alexander Aksakof in 1895-6, compiled from MSS. furnished by one or two of the sitters in the séances, who gave the names of the members. In translating from these several accounts, the whole of the extracts quoted by me were inadvertently accredited to 'Harper i Luften,' instead of, in part, to the reports which were published in the various Continental spiritualistic journals.

These errors were of no serious importance, but, in the interest of truth, they should be corrected.

E. D'ESPÉRANCE.

'When Augurs Differ.'

SIR,—Will you allow me to say, in reply to 'Circumspice,' that my position as to the *bona fides* of 'Stainton Moses' and 'Imperator' using Mrs. Piper is briefly 'not proven'? I do not say they do not communicate through her, but I do say we have not sufficient evidence to prove identity up to the present. And, referring to Mr. Myers' book to see if he expressed any opinion on this point, I find, in speaking of Professor Hyslop's report, these words: 'Neither his records nor the manuscript records which I have seen contain any proof of the personal identity of the alleged spirits called "Imperator," "Doctor," "Rector," &c., or any proof of the identity of these intelligences with those claimed by Mr. Moses.' (Vol. II., par. 964.) Until such time as this proof is to hand we are justified in allowing the alleged recantation to stand over.

I cannot agree with your correspondent that this is in any way but a shifting of the shadow from one part of the picture to another.

The pessimistic tone of his final paragraph evidently indicates disappointment in his investigations. I am extremely sorry for him; but my experience lies in an entirely opposite direction, and that not only occasionally but invariably. Perhaps in this respect I have been peculiarly favoured, but I think if investigation was conducted on systematic lines, carefully making sure of fundamentals before attempting to reach critical finalities, results would be much more satisfactory.

We have yet much to learn before our intercourse with the other side becomes ideal, but the faults are mostly with ourselves if we would only open our eyes to see and admit our errors.

Ilfracombe.

ROBT. JAS. LEES.

'Was it a Lie?'

SIR,—Did it, she, or he, lie? is the thought suggested by the heading of Miss H. A. Dallas's communication on page 80. I thought of a similar experience of mine, though different in one point. I was lying in my bed in Brighton, and given over as 'impossible to recover.' At one o'clock in the day my wife and sister came up to my room and cried: 'He is dead!' Now, had my sister gone to London and met, an hour afterwards, with a medium who said 'He is alive and in the East,' she might, and would, have said: 'It is a lie, for I have just seen him dead!' The fact is, I was at that moment in Jerusalem, as a letter from my friends there in due time informed me, and for several hours seen and recognised. I was in long white vesture as a high priest, with breast-plate, eleven of the stones of which gave out *no light*, and the twelfth a very strong light. This evidently referred to the fact that eleven of a certain fellowship had passed over some time, and one only remained active, which was quite true. It is not always safe to say 'It is a lie,' even though the medium be a 'priest' and not a professional medium.

I. O. M. A.

'Curious Theosophic Claims.'

SIR,—'Carolus Rex' in 'LIGHT,' of January 30th, drew attention to some curious statements made by Mr. Leadbeater, among others, that the movement of Modern Spiritualism was set on foot by the chiefs of a lodge of Atlantean adepts! This claim seems to me to be on a par with the assertion made by Mr. A. P. Sinnett in the first number of his magazine, 'Broad Views,' where, on p. 32, he says: 'I know people who not alone remember their past lives, but are in a position, if it were worth while, to write a complete diary of every day of those past lives!' Does Mr. Sinnett really expect us to accept that assertion without any evidence whatever? What phenomenal memories those people must have! Do any of your readers know an individual who could write a complete diary of every day's doings of his present life, not to mention 'past lives'? Surely this statement is an exaggeration. Mr. Sinnett says they could do so 'if it were worth while.' Why, that is just what the world wants them to do. Surely it ought to be worth while to substantiate reincarnation doctrines with evidence that will lead to identification—just as the *cruz* of Spiritualism is the evidence of spirit identity.

STUDENT.

The Challenge to Mr. Husk.

SIR,—As my challenge to Mr. Husk seems to have called forth protests from many of that gentleman's clients, I would like to say that I have no personal feeling in the matter whatever, and am anxious only for 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' If Mr. Husk can convince me of the genuineness of the phenomena in question I shall feel under great obligation to him, besides owing him a debt of gratitude which it would be difficult to repay in this world. I do not desire tests to which it is impossible for him to agree; all I want is absolute proof of the genuineness of the materialisations. In the absence of any attempt on his part to dispel my doubts, it is only natural for me to conclude that the phenomena are not really what they are represented to be. In the best interests of true Spiritualism I conceive it the duty of all believers to do what they can to clear the atmosphere of the wretched stuff that passes for the genuine article. We do not want to be in a fool's paradise. I do not dispute the possibility of Mr. Husk's mediumship, I only want to be convinced; and if there is any other public medium who will submit to tests I am quite willing to propose the same terms to him in the event of Mr. Husk still declining.

H. C.

'The Purity of the Spirit Spheres.'

SIR,—There was something very suggestive to me in 'Circumspice's' article under the heading 'When Augurs Disagree,' in 'LIGHT' of January 2nd, and in 'George Pelham's' contradiction of 'Imperator's' teaching through Stainton Moses, 'that the soul carried with it at the death of the body all its passions and attitudes and was very slowly purified of them'; and in his saying 'Sinners are sinners only in one life.'

What if the generally accepted teaching of Spiritualism on this question is wrong, and there is no evil or wrong in the spirit world at all? Perhaps evil-disposed people begin life there again as infants! After all, does not evil depend upon a society of separate beings who by their actions can bring harm, so-called evil, upon each other? In a society where all are united together harmoniously, and where no one can in any degree hurt another, how can there be evil? And in such a society will there not be ample stimulus to growth in good deeds were all evil eliminated?

I am reminded of a communication I received when I was investigating Spiritism some years ago (I have long given up sitting with mediums; I find it so unreliable and unsatisfactory, so much flattery and so little honest, outspoken truth-speaking; and I have never had a chance of joining a home circle). I said to a spirit who was trying to flatter me that I felt I had many faults and desires that I did not consider consistent with purity and perfection, and he said: 'Oh! you will leave all that behind with the worn-out body, as you would an old coat.'

Is not this a very fascinating idea, that the fogs of earth life shall roll away and all be bright and pure in the eternal sunshine of the spheres; and would it not, if accepted, remove a vast load from humanity's shoulders? Perhaps we have been dominated all this time by evil in the flesh, and hypnotised by our own thoughts and hereditary influence and pre-conceptions. And who will undertake to say what is possible in a condition about which we know nothing definite?

It should always be borne in mind by those who seek information through mediums, and by 'bewildered students' who are surprised at the contradictions of communications from beyond the veil, that truth is one of the most difficult of all

things to obtain, and can only be obtained by hard work and by being earned, not by asking questions. Truth is said to dwell at the bottom of a well and not upon the earth surface.

A. K. VENNING.

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

An Authentic Ghost Story.

SIR,—Having received the account of what I believe to be an authentic ghost story, I think perhaps it may interest some of your readers. It comes from my daughter, who is living in the town, in South Africa, where it occurred: A short time ago a young married couple took and furnished a house, and in due time went to live in it. Shortly afterwards, upon returning home one evening, the husband found his wife in violent hysterics. When she recovered he was unable to obtain from her any information that would account for the attack. The next evening he found her again in the same state, and immediately sent for a doctor, who had some difficulty in restoring her, but in the meantime had found, as he believed, a clue to the mystery, for he had distinctly seen the form of a Malay with a knife in his throat, and blood streaming from the wound. After much persuasion the lady told the doctor the cause of her terror, which was, as he had surmised, the gruesome phantom. Next day the young people left the house, and the doctor then volunteered to stay there, attended by a Kaffir servant. Two days passed uneventfully, but on the third night, when they were dozing in easy chairs, the doctor was aroused by a loud noise, and found the Kaffir on the floor in a dazed condition, and the figure of the Malay beside him. The phantom then beckoned to them to follow him, which they did, until they came to the door of a cellar, when they appear to have lost all nerve and fled. The house is now to let, and the furniture to be sold, if—as my daughter adds—anyone will buy it, for there appears to be an idea prevalent that the ghost might accompany it.

A CONSTANT READER.

SOCIETY WORK.

Notices of future events which do not exceed twenty-five words may be added to reports if accompanied by six penny stamps, but all such notices which exceed twenty-five words must be inserted in our advertising columns at the usual rates.

CATFORD.—24, MEDUSA-ROAD.—On Sunday evening last Mr. W. Millard delivered an excellent trance address which was much appreciated by a good audience.—R.

BRIGHTON.—BRUNSWICK HALL, BRUNSWICK-STREET EAST.—On Sunday last, an admirable address on 'The Evils and Benefits of War' was given by Mr. Metcalfe.—A. C.

FINSBURY PARK.—51, MONSEL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Willis very ably presided and gave a short reading, which was followed by clairvoyant descriptions by Mrs. Willis.—W.

CHISWICK.—AVENUE HALL, 300, HIGH-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Graddon-Kent gave a practical address on 'Salvation: What is it?'—J. B. T.

LEICESTER.—QUEEN-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. Bibbings gave addresses, afternoon and evening, on 'Japan,' and 'How to be Miserable,' to large audiences.—J. M. W.

CARDIFF.—87, SEVERN-ROAD, CANTON.—On Sunday last, at 6.30 p.m., a fine address was delivered by Mrs. Preece, who also gave good illustrations in clairvoyance.—J. H.

CARDIFF.—ODDFELLOWS' HALL, PARADISE-PLACE.—On Sunday last stirring addresses were delivered by Mrs. Jessie Crompton on 'Revelation versus Modern Spiritualism,' and 'The Spirit World: How far is it?' Both were highly appreciated.—A. W.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday last we had a large attendance, and excellent clairvoyance at the morning circle. The evening address on 'A Living Soul,' was of great interest.—L.

PLYMOUTH.—13, MORLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last a fine address was given by Mrs. Trueman on 'Man Shall Live Again,' which delighted all who heard it. Mrs. Trueman also gave clairvoyant descriptions, all of which were recognised.—T. M.

PLYMOUTH.—ODDFELLOWS' HALL, MORLEY-STREET.—A special mission has been conducted here, Mr. E. S. G. Mayo, of Cardiff, being the speaker. The subjects of his addresses were, on the 10th inst., 'Evolution of Spiritualism'; on the 12th, 'Spiritualism in the Light of Modern Thought.' On Sunday last the lecturer briefly recapitulated his former discourses and pointed out the utter inadequacy of present-day religions to hold the minds of the people, hence the subject, 'Wanted, a New Religion.' In the evening a large audience followed with rapt attention Mr. Mayo's concluding lecture on 'If Spiritualism is not True, What then?'—W. E.