

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way	565	Fate of Public Worship	570
Unconventional People	566	Shakspeare's Play 'The Tempest.'	
L. S. A. Notices	566	Address by Rev. J. Page Hopps	571
Source of Mediumistic Utterances	567	'Spiritual Foreshadowings'	572
Sleep and Dreams	567	Protest against Dark Circles	573
Weird Experiences in Nyassaland	568	Marriage	574
Indian Rope Trick	569	Spiritual Telegraphy	574
The Medium Bailey.....	569	Have we lived on earth before?	574

NOTES BY THE WAY.

We have lately printed a good deal concerning obsession, and shall be glad to turn our thoughts to other themes; not with any wish to bury our heads in the sand, but because we are persuaded that the law of Suggestion works balefully in this matter.

There have been times when the starting of the subject has led to widespread epidemics of obsession, fanciful or real. Thought and fear attract the objects of thought and fear, and provide nesting-places for what one is anxious to avoid. Spirit influence is often exceedingly mysterious in its operation, acting more as a stimulant than as original and independent spirit action; and it is perfectly conceivable that an inexperienced or frivolous spirit may simply act as a violent energiser of something already in the mind of the medium, and not in its own mind at all: and yet this would appear from our side as a case of obsession.

Swedenborg says, 'The spirit who speaks with man is in the same principles with man, whether they are true or false, and he excites them, and by conjoining his own affection to that of man he greatly strengthens it.' If, then, the mind dwells upon obsessions and their evil manifestations, it practically invites an obsessor who, and perhaps without intending it, excites all the evil that was feared.

The best safeguard against evil influences is loving familiarity with all that is good. 'Devil and demons!' said a wise woman once, 'I have nothing to do with them. I ignore them.' There was real wisdom in that. As old Martin Luther said: 'There is nothing that drives away the devil sooner than silent contempt.' Let the mind be fully occupied with objects better worthy of its thoughts.

To-morrow is the first Sunday in Advent,—a day that will be variously regarded and kept. There is something which touches the heart and captures the imagination and the mind in the thought that the Great Maker of all things came down to earth to rescue it;—that the Creator of Man came down to die for him: and there is a sense in which it is true; but we cannot get beyond the manifestations of God. He, in Himself, remains the great Invisible and Unknown. From Him all things proceed, and in Him all things live and move and have their being: that is the farthest we can go: but that is sufficient. Spiritually considered, God comes with every saint and saviour who appears upon the earth. He is incarnate in every Christ. He is the inspirer of every sage and

prophet. He sings in every psalmist. His is the prayer and he who prays. God spends His martyrs and confessors,—the men of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and even so He comes down to earth to rescue it, and to save the Man He made.

We frequently notice in American Spiritualist papers a disposition to assail Religion, the Bible and Theism, far beyond the wholesome needs of rational criticism. We need hardly say that we are in favour of the freest possible discussion of every subject,—even of 'the hypothesis of God': but discussion is one thing and attack is another: and the tendency referred to goes beyond attack, and borders upon war all along the line of organised Christianity.

It is a mistake. Rough rooting up of the tares regardless of the wheat is bad business; and it will be an ill day for Spiritualism if its advocates turn theological anarchists and religious nihilists. The Bible, for instance, though crowded with inconsistencies and blotted with savageries, is a precious and indispensable book for Spiritualists. The old anthropomorphic ideas concerning God have a great truth at the heart of them, and need careful and not scornful treatment: and the same might be said of all or most of the discredited Christian dogmas. Spiritualists, strong in their facts and in their glorious philosophy, can afford to be patient with the old churches that are feeling their way out of darkness into the marvellous light.

'Healing, by methods various, and the Cure,' by Louie Stacey (London: Stead, Danby and Co.), is a quaint dialogue on medical treatment between an old teacher and a modern student. The conclusion arrived at is that disease is from within, and that a healthy body must be sought in a healthy soul. The teacher says:—

Remember that man is master, or must be master of his beautiful machine: that health means holiness. To be every whit whole is to be every whit healthy. A healthy soul means a healthy body. Thou must remember that quarrelling, fighting, strife of any kind means a discordant soul; that violent passions, such as a bad temper, involve a loss of power in the body, and change the character of the blood. That fear, worry and fretting sap the vitality and prevent the perfect working of the machine. Hatred sent out to others goes back to the sender, and so the human body at the present time is full of disease, and all this comes through a lack of knowledge and self-control.

There is a truth in this, but it is over-driven. There are plenty of souls, not discordant, not bad tempered, not tormented with worry and fear, that tenant bodies which are but battered prisons. No: the mystery of pain is more subtle and complex than this writer is aware of; and the body is more independent and separate than she thinks.

A highly entertaining book is 'Quillet's' 'More Popular Fallacies' (London: Elliot Stock). It takes up

twenty-four of our Popular Proverbs (such as 'If you want a thing well done, do it yourself,' 'Honesty is the best policy,' 'A little learning is a dangerous thing,' 'Rolling stones gather no moss'), and good-naturedly shakes them till the bran comes out, and nothing but a rag remains where there was a respectable doll.

Some of the dolls resist longer than others, and a few preserve a passably sound appearance at the end of the shaking; but, on the whole, this romp amongst our old Proverbs is, as we say, amusing, and not without instruction. Thus, 'Honesty is the best policy' is detected as a 'lower-plane' imposture, and is put in the pillory as a Proverb which 'amounts to an assurance that it pays to keep up appearances,' 'a piece of wisdom which we are better without.'

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS
(From many shrines).

Almighty, lift us up to Thyself, that we may see Thy greatness and gain comfort therefrom. Show us Thy power that we may safely rest in it. It is the strong hand that can safely and tenderly lead the tottering steps of the weak. Show us Thy mighty strength, that we may lean upon it without fear. Look with mercy on this strange life of ours, with all its changes; and in every change be Thou with us, and put Thy hand in ours, both in the time of rejoicing and of trembling. Let peace come, and we shall know the Spirit of God is here. Amen.

UNCONVENTIONAL PEOPLE.

'An Unconventional Maid,' by Mina Sandeman (London: Skeffington and Son), price 6s., is a novel written by one of our Spiritualist friends, describing with a facile pen, in lively and entertaining style, a number of people, among whom the foibles of the too conventional ones are well set-off by the simple yet genuine earnestness of the unconventional. Of course the two who belong to this latter category are the heroine and hero of the book, and their strength of character is well brought out without being made too obtrusive. The author carefully abstains from preachiness, but gets in several incidental expressions of belief, such as the following:—

'I think that if life were meant to end with death, we should feel completely satisfied with our characters and with the world in general; we should neither aspire nor imagine; we should only think about eating and drinking; in fact, our thoughts would be literally chained to the physical plane.'

'If there were no hereafter, what would be the use of gaining knowledge? What would be the use of mind, of intellect, of affection?'

'Why, then, call death "Death"? Was it not the entrance to real life, the golden portal which unclosed to admit us into the unclouded spirit world?'

'Now, we are spirits hidden by bodies; our spirits are veiled, as it were. Why, then, should we fear what is natural, not supernatural? Whether in the flesh or out of the flesh, we are all spirits.'

The heroine is suddenly moved to address a conference on the rights of animals, at which there are bishops! Apologising for her daring, she says: 'If I have taken a man's work on my shoulders, then, pray, why did no man consider the work his?' We fear that it is a fact that the work of pleading for the animals has been too much left to women—but then they are such able and irresistible advocates!

UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS.—The usual monthly conference will be held on Sunday, December 4th, 1904, at the Workmen's Hall, 84, Romford-road, Stratford, E., opposite the Technical Institute (nearest station, G.E.R., Maryland Point). At 3 p.m., Mr. Brierley, of Camberwell, will read a paper; discussion to follow. Speakers at 7 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long, Mr. Brierley, and Mr. G. Tayler Gwinn. Farewell to Mr. J. J. Morse early in December.

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

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, DECEMBER 1st,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY

DR. ABRAHAM WALLACE,

ON

'The Ultra-Normal Phenomena in the Life of Jesus of Nazareth, interpreted by Modern Spiritualism.'

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.

Dec. 15.—MRS. B. RUSSELL-DAVIES, on 'Spiritualism Pure and Simple,' with illustrations from her own personal experiences. Followed by Answers to Questions. At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the subscriptions of Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1905.

Article XVIII. provides that 'If any Member or Associate desire to resign, he shall give written notice thereof to the Secretary. He shall, however, be liable for all subscriptions which shall then remain unpaid.'

SPECIAL NOTICES.

MEETINGS FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF CLAIRVOYANCE will be given at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., by Mr. W. Ronald Brailey on Tuesday next, November 29th, and by Mrs. W. Paulet on December 6th and 13th, at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each.

SPIRIT CONTROL.—Mrs. M. H. Wallis will attend at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., for conversation with her spirit control, on Thursday next, December 1st, 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 Spiritualism and 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 psychic culture and home development of mediumship. The next meeting will be held on the afternoon of Thursday next, December 1st. 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 kindly places his valuable services in the diagnosis of diseases at the disposal of the Council, and for that purpose attends at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on Thursday afternoons during November, 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.

MR. W. J. COLVILLE announces in the 'Banner of Light' that he is now making a farewell tour of the United States prior to his visit to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and England. His present address is 1830, 15th-street, N.W., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

THE SOURCE OF MEDIUMISTIC UTTERANCES.

All students of the complex problem of mediumship recognise the difficulty of distinguishing between the thoughts which originate with discarnate spirits, and those which originate within the medium himself. M. Léon Denis states this very clearly when he says in his book, 'Dans l'Invisible':—

'In spirit communications the difficulty lies in assigning thoughts and vibrations to their several origins. The law of the manifestations includes the combined action of the psychic forces and thoughts of the medium, the experimenters on the one hand, and of the spirits on the other.'

Mr. F. W. H. Myers also dealt with this problem at some length in his address on 'Pseudo-Possession,' delivered to the Society for Psychical Research.

In many cases it is quite impossible to disentangle the medium's thoughts from those of the controlling intelligence so as to detect where one begins and the other ends; though there are other cases in which it is possible or even fairly easy to distinguish them. The medium is not likely to be more capable of making the distinction than anyone else, and it is curious to observe how a question addressed to a medium who is in the passive condition of receiving impressions from some unseen source, will at once awaken the activity of his own normal intelligence, and interrupt the message. Answers to the question will promptly be given, but in this case it is likely that they will originate in the medium's own mind. He is not to blame; he can only express the thoughts that arise; and *sometimes* these thoughts are appropriate, and he is really still receiving impressions from beyond. But it may frequently happen that the impression received is the thought in the mind of the questioner, or the unintentional guess of the medium.

We are assuming that the medium is perfectly honest, and simply considering the difficulties which may arise with the most sincere mediums.

Are there any clues to guide us as to this matter of the source of impressions? And are there ways in which we can avoid being misled? There are, we think, a few. To avoid leading questions, and to avoid interrupting the medium's thoughts, is a caution which it will be useful to remember: and another is, to beware of flattery. We do not mean by flattery the candid statement of gifts and capacities. A medium may usefully inform those who come to him of powers they did not know they possessed. But this is not what we mean by flattery.

The distinction cannot be exactly defined in words, but any conscientious and sensitive mind can detect the difference easily. We know that it is not rarely the case that communications which come through mediums are replete with commendation, and even with laudation. Are these utterances to be received as generally emanating from the other side, and if so do they emanate from wise and advanced spirits? We think not. Are they then to be ascribed to insincerity on the part of the medium? Again we think not; not in many cases at least.

Whence, then, do they originate? If we consider the conditions necessary for the reception of impressions we shall perhaps understand how, without attributing these utterances to insincerity on the part of the medium, or to messages from controls, they may be very naturally accounted for. In the passive state to which a medium has to surrender himself, it is probable that he will give expression to any natural impulse which is not restrained by some stronger principle. For instance, a kindly-natured medium will say kind things, a depressed nature will say sad things, a hopeful nature hopeful things. Controls may be able to over-rule this natural bias and alter the

character of the thoughts that would otherwise spontaneously arise. This we know is often done, so that things foreign to the medium's own impulses are sometimes said. But just so far as the medium is not thus controlled, but is unconsciously uttering his own thoughts, we may expect to find expressed the natural human impulses.

One of these natural human impulses is the desire to please. It is not only natural, it is innocent in itself. It is a human feeling which is born in every nature that is not distorted by morose tempers and thus de-humanised. But reason teaches us that the instinct is one which, like other instincts, must be trained and restrained, otherwise it may easily lead us astray. We must not yield to it without considering whether we are 'pleasing our neighbour for his good.' But one cannot expect this process of reasoned restraint to be continued readily in the trance or passive state. In that state we shall expect to find primitive impulses readily finding expression, and the desire to please will naturally result in the utterance of pleasant things.

It is most important to recognise this, because visiting mediums and exercising mediumship will have a very weakening effect on character if they lead us to complacent self-satisfaction and self-congratulation. It may be disappointing to a man to have to acknowledge that the high estimate of his powers which sometimes is expressed through mediumistic utterances has really no particular value; that it is far more likely that it is due to the desire to please; and that it is the thought suggested by the natural and kindly impulse of the medium, and not any spiritual insight into ourselves, which prompts the utterance. But however disappointing it is probably true, and by recognising this Spiritualists may be saved from that most dangerous of pitfalls, that of thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think.

And perhaps mediums might do something to guard themselves from flattering (for they do not by any means always fall into this snare), by a strong auto-suggestion frequently made in the shape of a desire to please their clients *only* wisely, and as shall best advance their spiritual good. They may thus oppose themselves to the utterance of mere flattery, and become more really helpful in their work.

SLEEP AND DREAMS.

'Luce e Ombra,' for October, gives an extract from the first chapter of a forthcoming work by Professor V. Tummolo, entitled 'Materialism Convicted of Falsity.' The ancient and modern theories as to the cause of sleep are here reviewed, and the conclusion is that, although the external sense-organs may be put out of action by a sort of paralysis of the brain centres through arrested circulation, yet the mental perceptions are awake in another form. Thus an artist, being strongly urged to paint the portrait of a deceased lady from verbal description only, dreamed that he saw a very vivid image of this lady, and from that he painted a startlingly life-like portrait. In fact, it seems impossible to deny that, along with the diminution of physiological activity in the material brain, there is an increase of psychical activity in the mental organism, which may also be said to have its five senses, and perhaps some which are not represented by any sense-organs in the material body.

Professor Tummolo has also, as we learn from the same review, contributed a series of articles to the 'Rivista Cristiana,' of Florence, in which he maintains (1) that Modern Spiritualism is altogether wanting in the character of a religion, although many consider it as such; (2) that the spirit origin of the phenomena may be said to be scientifically demonstrated by a wealth of unimpeachable testimony and proofs. We take it that the eminent Professor means that Spiritualism has no such claim to be a dogmatic religion as would render it unacceptable either to the upholders of Christianity or to those who reject all beliefs which are not capable of scientific proof.

WEIRD EXPERIENCES IN NYASSALAND.

An intelligent and trustworthy correspondent sends us the following narrative of strange personal experiences encountered in the course of investigations regarding a reputed Spirit Deity of the Shire River Valley, Nyassaland. But for the reputation of the writer we should have been compelled to think that he was romancing. As it is, we can only wonder what may be the explanation of his story, and whether there really are occult potencies to which such weird effects may be attributed:—

It having come to my notice that a sort of mental servility existed amongst certain natives of the Wanyanja tribe towards some power whose influence was great, I determined to follow up this question, and learned that at a place named Nsanje, on the Lower Shire River, there lived, or was reported to live, the spirit of a departed chief whose name was 'Mbona,' or 'Good,' and whom the Mbewi, or loyal followers, revered as a god. The Mbewi take their name from an alleged holy family now almost extinct.

It was said and believed that Mbona was in the habit of communicating with humanity through his wife, a negress, and by other ways; that in return for presents he could bring rain; that he could cause 'mfiti,' or witchcraft; that he had the power to turn himself into a snake, sometimes visiting his wife in this form, when he would entwine himself about her; and that he could make himself appear as a dog, lion, leopard, bird, or other creature. Europeans, on visiting the 'sacred' enclosure of the deity, were expected to dress in black clothes or blue calico, and give a present of gold coin. The god's spiritual powers were said to be so great as to be able to cause death to anyone rash enough to violate his sanctuary or otherwise incur his displeasure. Natives held him in great awe and trembled with fear when they came in contact with what was said to be his spiritual power of entering into them, and during such occupation causing those possessed to speak, act, or otherwise do his behest.

Being curious to know more of so interesting a matter, and having occasion to reside temporarily near where the 'shrine' was said to be, I made inquiries, but at first evasive replies were given, to the effect that two minor chiefs were the only fetish men in that vicinity. These men—strangers—were asked to come and see me, as they lived close by; and while on my way home the same evening a vision of two men was seen, or caused to be seen, whose intention appeared to be to cause harm. There appeared to be more reality than imagination in the vision; but by sheer strength of will these intruders were driven off. On the following day, however, the identical natives of my vision replied to my summons, having the exact expression as that which they wore at the close of the vision.

I learned a few days later where Mbona's compound was situated, and I decided to pay him a visit. Upon telling some friendly natives of my intention they begged me not to do so, saying I would die and my death would be upon them for showing where the place was. It was explained, however, that there was no cause for alarm, for, if Mbona was bad, why reverence him? on the other hand, if good he would do no mischief.

While travelling home shortly afterwards, and when still some fourteen miles from Nsanje and the 'sacred' compound, I felt a sickening sensation, a pain in the back of my head, and a feeling as if an invisible creature was trying to get me into its power. With all my strength I fought it off until it left me, weak, but without pain. It then occurred to me that Mbona or an ally had been disappointed.

On the following day, after much persuasion, my bearers finally arrived near to the Mbona gardens. While approaching, and when some five hundred yards away, my attention was drawn to the ground, where, to my astonishment, I saw, *or was caused to see*, what appeared to be a snake some three hundred feet in length. It was an inert mass, and on looking back the head was seen to be severed from the trunk. An angel stood by holding a sword. Further on, to my amaze-

ment, I saw, *or was caused to see*, a beast come from a grove of trees, and which, passing through the air, alighted upon some hills and clung to the rocks with its claws. I particularly noted the creature; its coat was of a short, white, glossy hair; its head somewhat like that of a sea-horse; the eyes were of a lurid red; the open mouth showed the tongue to be pink; the legs and feet were like those of a lion; there were comparatively small wings, and a long white tail with a pair of black nippers or sting at the end.

It was found that there were two villages, one where Mbona lived with his wife Salima, surrounded by attendants, the other owned by a chief whose duty it was to act as caretaker. Being absent, however, his son volunteered to show me the 'sacred' compound, requesting firstly that I should dress in blue calico, or, failing this, divest myself of helmet and boots. He also asked that my native attendant, who with great difficulty had been persuaded to come, and whose teeth were chattering with fear, should strip, he himself having already done so.

The air about Mbona's place was hushed, tranquil, and solemn. The huts lying in the shade of trees appeared not to have been renewed for years. Upon my approach a man, bearing unmistakable mental or magnetic power, rose to meet me. Upon asking to see Salima he called a female attendant to warn her of the presence of visitors. There was a large reed enclosure, inside which it was said to be dangerous to go. Upon entering, it was found that the reed fence extended along two sides of a triangle; opposite was the grove from which the beast had come. A heavy, damp, graveyard air was distinctly prevalent, and birds in the overhanging branches of trees sang in a quiet, dreamy manner.

There were three huts, one occupied by Salima; a second evidently for Mbona, which appeared to be unused; and the third contained food and drink offerings. There was a pool of water by the grove.

Upon asking for Salima an attendant stated that she was in her hut, but would not come out, as she was too great to meet me. She, however, spoke, wishing me 'good morning.' I replied that I had come to see her, and that if she was a bad woman she could remain where she was, but if good, what reason had she to be afraid? Upon that she came out, dressed in blue calico, and shook hands. She had a fine, strong, almost beautiful face, brilliant black eyes, and a soft, musical voice.

In answer to my questions Salima answered, as nearly as I can recollect, that her husband had been absent a short while; that he came to her as a man, she was not quite sure whether as a spirit or a human being; that he told her what to say to people, and how to answer questions; that he had power to transform himself into one kind of animal or another; to make rain, cause destitution (?), famine, punishment, and so on; that he was indeed god of the Senna, Chikunda, and Wanyanja natives who believed, some having fallen off in their allegiance. She admitted that Mbona had power to cause or inspire fear. I pointed out that our God, who had created all things, was paramount, and His rule one of love, justice, and truth—proof lying in myself, as I showed no signs of fear; which she admitted was so.

During this conversation I again felt a strong, living presence trying to overpower or hypnotise me, and it caused the same headache in the back of my head as on the previous occasion. On overmastering this, my mind and strength resumed natural buoyancy; at the same time the sun shone out, the graveyard air vanished completely, and the birds sang out as birds ordinarily do.

I examined Salima's and the attendant's hands. Judging by rules of cheiromancy, they showed signs of clairvoyance and strong determination, more so in the former than the latter. The female attendant present had been hypnotised into a state verging, I thought, on imbecility; she and others had a most diabolical appearance.

Upon returning home, various native employes who previously had acted as if possessed were now found to be quiet and law-abiding.

I learned that, during spirit dances, natives see spirits of

departed relatives, and these spirits can converse by means of a medium with those living in the flesh; that Mbona was reputed to be able to absorb or draw out the spirit of anyone not strong enough to oppose him, or could put his spirit into an individual or group of individuals and cause his wishes to be carried out; for instance, he could possess a river pilot and cause him to run his steamer aground, or make one feel so ill as to lose courage, &c., illustrations of which have been witnessed. Natives allege that they sometimes become possessed by Mbona, who goes into them and causes them to cry out, 'I, Mbona, want palm wine for my wife Salima,' or food, or cloth, as the case may be. Sometimes the native while speaking would lie writhing on the ground; or if Mbona wishes to speak to anyone, even at a distance, his spirit, it is said, could go through space to that one, who would no doubt be of the Mbewi, or faithful people, and would speak to their inner consciousness, and also know their thoughts and direct their actions.

In order to procure a new wife (the old ones are frequently reported to die), Mbona designates the girl, her father, chief, and village, and an attendant is sent to bring her, and he carries a bundle of short spears—the symbol, I take it, of punishment should his desire be disregarded.

Previous to my visit there had been famine, and crops were again dying for want of water; but, curiously enough, during the eight succeeding days rain fell in refreshing showers.

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

In the last number of the *Psychical Research 'Journal'*, there is a minute account, extending to nine pages, of the so-called Indian 'trick' of a strong rope being elevated, and fixed by a juggler, twenty-five feet into the air. On this rope a boy was said to ascend to the top, hand over hand, and there to disappear. In the case given about twenty British soldiers were present and many natives.

Added to this narrative there is another 'trick' described by a Japanese, where there were assembled some dozen friends on chairs surrounding the juggler, who asked the sitters all to shut their eyes till he gave the word to open them, which after a short space he did, when the sitters saw that some half of the chairs were empty. He then asked those remaining to shut their eyes, and after a brief space to open them, when lo! those who had disappeared became again visible on their chairs.

My late brother, Major Wyld, who was some twenty-five years in the Bengal Cavalry, sometimes told me stories about the rope 'trick,' although I cannot say that he ever said he believed in it. The writers in the *Society for Psychical Research 'Journal'* take it pretty much for granted that hallucination may be the key to the mystery, but I would suggest that there may be a psychological explanation of both the tricks. I do not say I believe in them, for I have never given my belief to any spiritualistic narrative unless I was absolutely convinced of its truth, but I beg to offer the following as a possible explanation.

1. Nearly all experienced Spiritualists believe that heavy human beings and heavy dining-room tables and pianos have frequently been raised from the ground to the ceiling of the séance-rooms by occult means. If so, there is no difficulty in believing that a thick rope might be raised, say, twenty-five feet into the air and fixed there.

2. We can all easily believe that a small boy could climb up this rope.

3. We nearly all believe that Home could take incandescent coals into his hand and feel no inconvenience, and my explanation of this is, that a spiritually-formed diaphragm interposed between his hand and the fire.

4. If so, we can easily believe that a like diaphragm was caused to interpose and thus conceal the boy, and also to conceal the six sitters at the séance described by the Japanese gentleman.

Tunbridge Wells.

G. WYLD, M.D. (EDIN.).

THE MEDIUM BAILEY.

SÉANCES HELD BY THE SOCIETY OF PSYCHICAL STUDIES
AT MILAN.

(Abridged from '*Luce e Ombra.*')

(Continued from page 508.)

Thirteenth sitting, Friday, April 8th.—The plant which had been grown during the last sittings was brought out, and watered by the medium, who said that he would exhibit the difference between a plant thus grown from seed by occult forces and one produced altogether by magic power. Soon afterwards it was seen that in the same pot, alongside the seedling, and partly hiding it from view, there was a second plant, of the species called kola, which produces the nuts of that name. This new plant was about four inches in height. At the end of the séance it was found that the 'magic' plant had disappeared, leaving the original one still in the pot.

The control announced that an *apport* was being brought, and asked those present to engage in conversation while waiting; the chairman, however, requested all to keep strict silence. Presently a head-dress, said to be worn by women in India, was brought; it consisted of a band about an inch wide, woven with gold thread, the ends being sewn together to fit a small-sized head. Affixed to the front, so as to stand upright when worn, was a cat's tail. From the lower edge of the band, in front, hung five small coins, and from the centre coin there was suspended a cowrie shell. The control stated that the coins were old, endowed with magic virtues, and came from Cochin. (A note says that four of the coins are of copper, have Arabic legends, and are comparatively modern; the fifth, of silver, is too much defaced for identification.)

A control who came for a few moments seemed greatly confused, asked where he was, and whose body he was in, saying he wanted light. It was explained by another control that this was the spirit of a criminal who had died in prison in New York; he was now wandering in spiritual darkness, and had not yet realised that he had passed through death.

Fourteenth sitting, Tuesday, April 12th.—At this sitting a new chairman was chosen, and some changes were made in the arrangements. The medium's head and hands were enclosed in fine netting, in addition to the sleeved sack in which the rest of his body was enclosed; these modifications were willingly assented to by the control 'Dr. Whitcombe.'

The cage, containing the nest previously brought, was asked for and handed to the medium. In spite of some difficulty caused by the nets on his hands, which caught in the wires of the cage, the medium succeeded in placing in the cage another bird (*munia*) similar to that which had been brought some time before. (Photographs of the two birds, which are still alive, in the cage, and of the head-dress above described, are published in '*Luce e Ombra*' for November.)

The difficulty with the nets gave rise to a curious little scene, the Hindu controls causing some offence by their expressions of impatience, and by inveighing against the stupidity of the 'Feringhi,' or Europeans, in insisting on additional and quite unnecessary tests, contrary to the original stipulations; while the Western controls tried to make peace all round, calling upon a young English lady, who was present, to aid in explaining matters to the members of the committee. It was intimated that there would be no more *apports* until the Hindu controls had recovered their good humour.

Signor Cipriani, in signing the report of the séance, added these words: 'The searching of the medium before the experiment was diligent and most minute, so that for my part I consider it out of the question that the medium could have had a live bird on his person. The examination of the sack, before and behind, was also careful, and no rents or holes were found in it, either before or after the séance.'

THE 'Banner of Light' wisely says: 'Never attempt to convert a sceptic. His mind is not in the mood for conversion. Always try to interest an investigator, for his mind is disposed to convert itself as soon as he sees the way.'

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THE FATE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

We are only indirectly interested in that which is giving others so much concern,—the steady decrease in the number of persons attending Public Worship. We have long ceased to make attendance upon Public Worship the standard of public morality, still less of religion, but there is a point of view from which we also look regretfully upon the decline of interest in churches and chapels. It has still to be proved what will be the effect of doing without 'the assembling of ourselves together' for united thanksgiving, adoration, aspiration and prayer. Certain it is that if this 'assembling' could be continued on rational lines and with extended agreement, only good would result.

We say 'on rational lines,' and by that intend the suggestion that Public Worship has not been entirely rational. We need go no farther than the conventional hymn books to prove that: but that is a subject by itself, and a tempting subject too, for the hymn books of the churches and chapels have very well represented their tone, their atmosphere and their teaching. Custom can make us content with most things, and that is probably why the Christian world has borne with its hymn books so long; but, in fairness, it ought to be said that every 'denomination' has of late wakened up to the need of change, and reconstructed its hymn book; and even the popular, or long tolerated, 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' has been put into the melting pot.

But hymn books have, of course, only been symptoms, not the malady itself. As we have said, Public Worship has tended to part company with rationality. Its dogmas, its outlooks, its threatenings and its promises gradually lost their terrors or their charm, and simply because they became out of harmony with the spirit of the age. The leading doctrines of nearly all the churches, such as the Fall of 'our first parents,' the curse of the earth by God; the wrath of God against the Human Race; the doctrine of a hopeless and eternal hell for a portion of the Human Race, all gradually became obsolete, hollow and untrue: and the tide of the world's life gradually ebbed away from the Church's shore.

Another thing tended to bring about the same result. As a rule, the Church not only clung to unreasonable and out-of-date ideas about Religion and Theology, but it also set itself to regulate society by artificial disparagement of innocent amusements. Cards were denounced as

sinful; the theatre was the door of hell; dancing was an invention of the devil; a Sunday walk was a sin. Of late years the old rigid code has been relaxed, but too late. The world, in the meantime, had set up for itself and gone its own way.

Nonconformity is trying to win back the 'lapsed' multitude with politics, sensational preaching, entertainments, cantatas in the chapel and smoking in the school-room; the Church is striving, with music and millinery, to 'make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose': but both are conscious that Public Worship pure and simple is a failure.

In 1851, according to the Census, 37·58 per cent. of the population of London attended its various churches and chapels, while, according to the late 'Daily News' census, only 22·44 per cent. of its population attended. Liverpool shows a more serious decline. In 1851, its attendances at the various churches and chapels were 45·18 per cent. of the population. In 1902 the attendances were only 25·16 per cent. In Scotland, once supposed to be the great Sabbath-keeping and kirk-going country of Europe, the decline is even more startling.

But there are consolations even in Scotland. The people who are left to the churches and chapels listen, as a rule, to very different teaching. Prayers and preaching have become vastly more rational, spiritual and humane. The Bible is much more reasonably and critically treated, in the direction so vividly indicated lately by the Dean of Westminster. The old absurd programme as to the creation of the world and man, 'the Fall,' the wrath of God, and the 'way of salvation,' is very largely given up, so that, though fewer attend the churches, those who are there hear vastly more sense; and we may reasonably hope that a greater amount of good is done. In the great State Church, it is true, the services are, for the most part, social functions, musical entertainments, and ritualistic ceremonials, but, here again, what teaching there is is usually social, ethical, human: and the gain is great.

On the whole, then, the outlook is not an entirely gloomy one even for Public Worship. It is quite possible that if those who are in charge of it wake up, and bring up the Church abreast of the science and civilisation of the day, it may regain its lost ground, and perhaps conquer more. Above all things it must become real, and deal with realities, not hearsays and traditions. It must base its worship upon present-day needs and aspirations. It must speak for the struggling, sing for the desponding, interpret for the bewildered, give guidance to the doubter and hope to all. God must be, for it, the immanent Life of all life and 'the Altogether Beautiful of the Universe'; and the Immortal Life must be, not only believed, but known.

A LURID ROMANCE.—'For Satan's Sake,' by Elliott O'Donnell (Greening and Co., Limited), is one of those books that may suit the tastes of the age for out-and-out sensationalism, but the tendency of which we deprecate for that very reason. It is a tale that will delight the 'obsessionists,' for it deals with the struggle between good and bad spirits (formerly incarnate) for the mastery over human beings on earth. Apparitions, hypnotism, and other occult phenomena are introduced, while Spiritualism and clairvoyance come in for a rather contemptuous mention. 'For another hour the audience' (at a spiritualist lecture) 'was treated to accounts of supernatural occurrences gathered from strictly authentic sources, and brimming over with unadulterated horror. Most of them concerned apparitions whose only delight and occupation was to appear in tangible form and terrify nervous men and women into fits.' Just the sort of complaint we make of the tone of this book, especially the 'unadulterated horror.' That fits exactly.

SHAKSPEARE'S PLAY 'THE TEMPEST.'

A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL POWERS.

BY THE REV. J. PAGE HOPPS.

An Address delivered to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, on the evening of Thursday, November 17th, 1904—the President of the Alliance, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, in the chair.

The characters represented in this subtle play of 'The Tempest' are Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, but now living on a desolate island; Miranda, his daughter; Ariel, Prospero's airy spirit attendant; Caliban, half-brutal, half-human, Prospero's servant; Antonio, Prospero's brother, who had supplanted him at Milan but who is now wrecked on the island with the King of Naples and his son; a jester; a drunken butler; and others.

Prospero, on his lonely island, has studied mystical arts and gained access to beings such as Ariel, by whose help he raises the tempest that gives its name to the play, and that cast his faithless and usurping brother with others on the island, where Prospero, who by his power had wrought the wreck, now proceeds to his righteous and happy revenge. By spirit-help, the evil deeds of his brother are all unmasked to the king, the king's son very properly falls in love with Miranda, Prospero's daughter, and all ends happily, with Prospero's return, with the king, to Milan: but the pretty love story is not the pivot of the play; neither is the romance of Prospero's dukedom the chief thing in it. In fact these are nothing. The play, in its deepest meaning, all turns upon the mysterious power of Prospero, and his relationship with these two typical creatures—the brute clod Caliban, and the delicate, ethereal, powerful Ariel.

If it were not for the familiar names, Milan and Naples, we should, perhaps, find it difficult to resist the impression that the scene of this play is in dreamland; and, indeed, as it is, there are plenty of 'practical' people who do look upon Shakspeare as a dreamer when he moves about among such characters as we find here. But, of all men that ever lived, Shakspeare was one of the men who dreamt least. What is 'a dreamer'? Nothing is easier than to fling the word at the man we cannot understand: nothing is easier than to say to the man who goes a little deeper or a little higher than ourselves, 'We dismiss you: you are a most impracticable person; a dweller in cloudland; a citizen of Utopia; in fact, a dreamer.' But that fine assumption of superiority, though it may be awe-inspiring, may only be the measure of the speaker's dulness, heaviness, slowness, and general absence of inspiration, light and speed.

All the creative thinkers, philosophers, poets and reformers have been scoffed at as 'dreamers': nay! to come to the more prosy ways of life, so have all the creative engineers, chemists, explorers. The discoverer of America was a great dreamer before he was a great discoverer; so was the discoverer of the circulation of the blood; so was the man who proposed the first railroad, or the man who made and ran the first locomotive. I need not add to the list. But its length and its antiquity ought to make us chary of using the very word.

No: Shakspeare was no dreamer. He saw into men's minds, into men's motives, into men's characters, into men's hearts, and into men's real lives, as perhaps no one man ever had done before, and—so far as we know—as no one has done since. He has climbed all the heights; he has sounded all the depths; he has traversed all the lengths and breadths of human character, and, in his plays, we have as 'twere the mirror held up to Nature.

Perfect in this fine art, we can hardly call him; for who knows what perfection is? but he is so far beyond us all that we are startled when anyone attempts even to question him. Of one thing we may always be sure,—that what he wrote he wrote with a meaning, and that, though he may often seem to trifle, he never either really trifled or played the fool.

But Shakspeare did more than this. He not only read human character perfectly, appearing, indeed, to look us all through and through, but he also seemed to see behind us all, and behind all the shows of things—behind what, in one place, he calls 'this muddy vesture of decay'—as though he caught a glimpse of that which lies beyond the veil.

I have made these observations as the foundation of what I have to say of the mysterious persons who absorb all our interest in this great play of 'The Tempest': and, in trying to get at the real heart of it, I invite you to use your own twentieth century eyes, and believe that Shakspeare understood you, and wrote for you. Herein is his greatness: 'he was not of an age, but for all time': and, though he wrote of fairies, and monsters, and magicians and sprites, be you sure he never had out of his mind shoemakers and carpenters, gardeners and weavers, sages and fools. But we must be careful here, and not make Shakspeare say what he does not say: and, indeed, it will be good to remember that the worst thing we can do for Shakspeare is to act as commentators to him. The commentators have murdered or muddled many a mighty book. There was an amusing suggestion of this in the story told of a good old lady who said of commentators on the Bible: 'Indeed, sir, the Bible helps me wonderfully to understand them.'

While, then, we use our twentieth century eyes, to find in Shakspeare our twentieth century experiences, we must ask him for his own meanings. Do we want, then, to know who Ariel is? Let us ask the creator of Ariel. Or Caliban? Again let us ask the master. Or do we find the root of it all in Prospero? Let us attend to what Shakspeare says. That last I hold:—that Prospero is the root of it all;—the heart of the body, the pivot of the play. Hide him, and all is hidden; misunderstand or know nothing of him, and all is misunderstood or unknown.

Who then is Prospero? The wonder is that anyone should need to ask the question. He is simply a man, the rightful Duke of Milan, a student and one who has mastered mystic lore, such as is open to every man. What Prospero had, he had by virtue of his knowledge as a man. He was not a man and something more; still less was he an unusual kind of man; least of all was he an unearthly being. He was just a man who had learnt things within the compass of all men's knowledge. If other men did not know or did not do what he knew and did, it was because they loved money, pleasure, power, and neglected that knowledge which gave him the mastery of Ariel and Caliban. It does not matter here, at present, whether anybody ever did or ever could gain such power: all I am maintaining is that Shakspeare attributed to Prospero his skill, his knowledge and his power, simply as an ordinary man, but a man who had penetrated beyond the confines of the strange borderland that divides matter from spirit, sense from soul; and it is precisely this linking of the human personality with the unseen powers that gives this play its special significance.

Thus much is clear then,—that a man is put at the head of all the wonderful and diverse forces brought into action here; that a man is not only made the king of the gross and the ethereal types and forms of life, but the actual channel of their influence or power. This will become clear presently.

What, then, was the secret of Prospero's power? He learnt the secrets of Nature by inquiring into them. This is plain from first to last. In the very first Act, when telling the story of his life to Miranda, he describes himself as one rapt in secret studies, the liberal arts being all his study. He is said to be one who neglected worldly ends, and loved his books. Caliban, brutal and ignorant as he was, knew this, and knew that this was the secret of Prospero's power: and so, when he was plotting his murder with Stephano and Trinculo, he tells them, with nervous emphasis, to seize his books first: for, says he, 'without them he's but a sot, as I am.' That was, of course, a gross exaggeration, and yet the brute had got hold of the truth in that.

It may be said that the books alluded to were simply books of magic, and that the knowledge they conveyed would therefore only be that of spells and incantations. That may be true; but the point is that Prospero, the lord and master of the

brute and the sprite, is a student, a man of personal culture, a man who found in knowledge the secret of his power. This is symbolised here in the form of a kind of fairy tale, but take away the imagery, and the fine truth remains—that cultured man is king of the world, ay! and of all the secret, occult, mysterious forces of Nature. It is also true that Prospero talks of his 'magic garment' and his 'auspicious star,' but he does so, not as something peculiar to himself, but as something he knew and understood by virtue of his learning: and, in the end, he says:—

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's my own.

That is to say, he had abjured his art, broken his staff, and drowned his book, that he might henceforth depend simply on himself, and give up his lordship over the higher or more subtle elements. Here, however, is the central fact—that Shakspeare puts a man, a real ordinary man, at the head and heart of all the wonderful forces and beings brought into action in this play. He, a man, is the lord of the brutal Caliban: he, a man, is the master of the ethereal Ariel: he supplies the outlets and inlets for all the marvellous unseen influences and powers.

And now, before I can speak of this lordship, I must ask,—Who was Ariel? The answer is in the play. Ariel is not Prospero, but Ariel: and as much Ariel as Prospero was Prospero:—as real a being and as personal, though, as his name implies, a creature of the air. He has all the marks of proper personality. He has his own hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, sympathies and attachments, duties and destiny. He is imprisoned in a cloven pine by the witch Sycorax, and fills, for many years, the woods with his piteous groans, and is released by Prospero, who then uses him—a very satisfactory proof of separate existence and distinct personality. He is capable of loving and being loved: of being praised and blamed, coaxed and threatened. He comes and goes, and does for his master what his master cannot do for himself. He is so distinct from Prospero that Prospero can say to him, 'I shall miss thee': nay! is so distinct from Prospero that he can even expostulate with him and urge him to pity. The passage is one of the sweetest and profoundest in the play. Ariel has just been to see the king and his followers whom, by order of Prospero, he has 'distracted' or otherwise plunged in misery. 'If you now beheld them,' he says, 'your affections would become tender.' 'Dost thou think so, spirit?' says Prospero. 'Mine would, sir, were I human,' answers Ariel. (You see, then, he is other than Prospero—not human, but a being of another order.) 'Mine would, sir.' 'And mine shall,' answers Prospero.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions; and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passioned as they, be kindlier than thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am stung to the quick,
Yet, with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further.

Granting, then, that Shakspeare intended Ariel to be looked upon as a real person, we ask, 'Of what race or order of beings was he?' The answer to this question must be found in the everlasting belief in unseen creatures who, as fairies, fays or sprites, have had attributed to them marvellous powers unknown to us; creatures of no great initiative, skill or wisdom, but, by virtue of their subtle or ethereal natures, having power over the elements. Of course this may be called nonsense, but Shakspeare can only be understood in the light of such ideas. Many of his plays are full of these unseen persons, these subtle beings, not always tangible but most real.

Did Shakspeare believe in their existence, then? I don't know and, in one sense, I don't care. All I know is that they are here in his plays, and that their place and power are pretty well defined. Themselves imprisoned in no gross body of flesh, but akin to the elements in their own natures, they are described as having wonderful powers over those elements.

This is all in keeping with the deeds set down to them. Of them, Prospero says:—

By whose aid I have be-dimmed
The noon-tide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And, 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault,
Set roaring war. To the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt.

All this indicates power over the elements; and power over the elements is just what Shakspeare always attributes to these beings. But, more than that. Allied to the elements, by reason of their freedom from the gross body of flesh, they can also come into more immediate contact with the mind and soul, with the passions and the affections. Hence, again, we continually see Shakspeare attributing to them the suggesting of thoughts, the awakening of desires and the arousing of passions. All these powers over the elements and over the mind we find in Ariel. Prospero sends him to raise a storm or produce a calm; to flash fire into frightened eyes, or din thunder into startled ears;—to awaken sweet or solemn music, and even produce mimic voices. He also sends him to suggest thoughts, frame motives, and picture dreams. All this is in perfect harmony with the peculiar powers this order of beings were said to possess. They belonged to the sphere of the spirit, and over all things spiritual they had more or less of power.

Shakspeare, then, quietly assumed the existence of these creatures, and the reality of their power; and, whether he believed in them or not, introduced them as actors in the play,—actors as real as his Lear, his Hamlet, or his Macbeth. What his private opinion was we know not. We have only to do with his plays: and in his plays we find such beings as Ariel doing far more than work on the imagination. We find them doing very real and sometimes very startling things,—things that their lords and masters cannot do; and yet things that they do only by command.

(To be continued.)

'SPIRITUAL FORESHADOWINGS.'

Messrs. Gay and Bird have just published a little anonymous work entitled 'Spiritual Foresadowings,' consisting of the recital of some curious personal experiences, with such explanations as the author is at present able to give. She speaks in one place of having felt that she might have made a better use of opportunities, whereupon she—

'became conscious of the presence of a great collection of reasons. . . I simply knew all the reasons for all the episodes of my past life, and so perfect was their perspicuity that I was lost in rapturous admiration of the profound wisdom which was capable of working out so wonderful a scheme, as I exclaimed: "It could not have been otherwise!" Then, in a flash of spiritual light, I was permitted to know that, however trivial our acts, however simple the circumstance which turns us from one course to another, everything has its reason, and there is no such thing in the whole of God's universe as chance.'

The 'foreshadowings' mainly relate to the developments which, we are told, are about to take place through the constraining power of universal love:—

'Love, the most celestial principle of the Godhead, is represented on earth by woman, and because Love is quick to see and to interpret, intuition in its turn forms the most active principle of Love.'

'The suffering devised as a means of development for all Love's (woman's) attributes . . . was that she should be miseducated for hundreds and hundreds of years to a quality on the plane below her, namely, Reason, the highest (masculine) quality of the material mind. At the expiration of the allotted period of martyrdom Love was to be liberated from bondage by her rightful husband, Wisdom. In other words, by the unveiling of Christ (Wisdom) in the souls of men—a pre-ordained result of the gradual growth of human mentality towards Divine Truth, which we recognise in the promise of the second coming of Christ.'

The writer believes that 'there is no further use for the purely material or sensual man upon this plane, by reason of the coming mental elevation of the race,' and that this great change is already in course of outworking upon the earth.

A PROTEST AGAINST DARK CIRCLES.

We have received from George B. Ferris, of Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A., a very earnest protest against the practice of holding dark circles. It is too long to be reproduced in its entirety, but the following extracts will be sufficient to make our correspondent's meaning clear:—

Criticism, though generally disagreeable, is often highly beneficial, and may sometimes be absolutely necessary.

Considering this as an excuse, as well as an introduction, I should like to make a few remarks in reference to the pernicious and, to my mind, unnecessary and injurious practice of holding séances in total darkness. The constant reiteration by fraudulent pretenders to mediumship that darkness is 'absolutely necessary' (and it is necessary for their performances) has caused a widespread misconception regarding the fundamental conditions for mediumistic phenomena, and in many instances even the spirit guides of genuine mediums cannot dispel the illusion and make their subjects realise that it is for their highest good to discontinue dark séances altogether.

I know, positively, that there are many true-souled mediums (honest and conscientious) who hold dark séances, at which they obtain strong and wonderful manifestations, but they sit in the dark only because they believe that the manifestations would not occur under any other conditions—and they are just the persons who suffer most from the curse of darkness.

The sense of sight is indispensable if inquirers are to gain a correct conception of any kind of physical phenomena, for, as a rule, the other senses are only reliable in so far as they are used in connection with sight. Investigators can, therefore, no more estimate correctly the character of spiritualistic phenomena taking place in the dark than a blind man can comprehend the appearance of an elephant. As a natural consequence those who attend dark circles are seldom satisfied—there is almost always a lingering doubt or suspicion that perhaps all is not as represented; and suspicion is necessarily bad for the manifestations; it is injurious to the medium and exerts a harmful influence over the whole circle. The only way by which this state of things can be avoided is, in my opinion, to employ 'light, more light,' so that all doubts as to the *bona fides* of the medium may be dispelled, harmonious conditions be provided, and better manifestations be ensured. Any tendency that the light might have to weaken the phenomena would be more than counterbalanced by the improved mental states of the sitters. Though the fact is disagreeable, we are compelled to admit that there are unscrupulous people who imitate genuine mediumship, and prey upon the faith of Spiritualists and investigators, and they are able to do so because the genuine manifestations do not take place under fraud-proof conditions. Without the darkness which is so common at physical séances these charlatans could not practise their nefarious work, and if darkness can be proved to be unnecessary—need more be said as to the desirability of abandoning dark séances altogether and insisting upon a sufficient degree of light to make satisfactory observations possible?

It is a striking fact that many of the most noted mediums and instructors of the past and present have been opposed to dark séances, and have given evidence to demonstrate that a subdued light is not detrimental—that it in no way violates the conditions necessary for satisfactory manifestations. Those pioneer mediums, the Fox sisters, though they sat occasionally in private without light, were never known to give public séances in darkness. Leah, in her valuable work, 'The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism' (and considering her experience and position her words should carry weight), says:—

'We never gave public séances in darkened rooms. I do not approve of the practice. Many forms of manifestations thus obtained are calculated to prejudice the investigator and excite suspicion of the medium.'

As to the quality of the manifestations that occurred through the mediumship of D. D. Home, I need say nothing; the conditions, however, under which he sat should be of interest to us here. Sir William Crookes has said:—

'Home always refused to sit in the dark. He said that with firmness and perseverance the phenomena could be got just as

well in the light, and even if some of the things were not so strong, the evidence of one's eyesight was worth making some sacrifice for.'

Through Home's mediumship almost all kinds of manifestations occurred in the light; they were exceptional only because they took place under unusually satisfactory conditions. Many mediums now before the public obtain equally as wonderful results, but they are of little scientific value because they do not occur in the light. One faint whisper through a trumpet in a lighted room; one materialised hand without the aid of darkness or a cabinet, would be vastly more important than a whole host of phenomena in the dark—no matter how strong the manifestations might be!

As to the degree of light which should be used, no inflexible rule can be laid down: circle managers must use their own judgment, or be guided by the spirit operators; but it should be sufficient at least to render all movements of the medium and sitters visible. To quote from 'A Guide to Mediumship': 'There is no need to sit in the full glare of day or the blaze of a strong light—the "dim religious light" will be sufficient, and it is conducive to restfulness and receptivity.' For slight physical phenomena such as 'raps' and 'table movements,' as also for clairvoyance and psychometry, a more brilliant light may be used. Mediums can give 'descriptions' and 'readings' in brightly lighted rooms, hence dark circles for the development of these 'gifts' are not necessary and should be discountenanced.

With a fair amount of light a cabinet should be unnecessary, even for materialisations. As Mr. Hudson Tuttle says in his book on 'Mediumship and its Laws':—

'At most a simple curtain drawn across, to darken a space wherein the light may not disturb, is all that is necessary, even in the incipency of the manifestations, and this ought to be dispensed with after they have become established. A bright light may antagonise the spiritual forces, but it is not essential to have absolute darkness, and investigators should hold this in mind and demand sufficient light to make objects clearly visible. No law or condition of the phenomena is violated by such a demand, and had it been rigidly enforced there would have been no opportunity for the exposures which have brought contumely on the cause.'

Sir William Crookes, in his 'Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism' (page 85), says:—

'I have had many opportunities of testing the action of light of different sources and colours, such as sunlight, diffused daylight, moonlight, gas, lamp and candle light, electric light from a vacuum tube, homogeneous yellow light, &c. The interfering rays appear to be those at the extreme end of the spectrum.'

In their 'Guide to Mediumship,' Mr. and Mrs. Wallis recommend the use of a red-shaded light, and both the red and blue shades have been employed with good success. Personally I am inclined to favour the blue, as both blue and green are comforting and restful to the eyes, and, seemingly, the best colours to produce the negative conditions necessary for the proper unfoldment of mediumship. It would be interesting if inquirers would experiment in this direction and publish the results of their observations. It may take the unseen operators more time to get accustomed to manifesting under light conditions, but, with mutual trust and co-operation, the experiences of the best mediums warrant us in affirming that everything that is done in the dark can be obtained in the light when sitters are patient, hopeful and persevering.

It is safe to say that the dark séance furnishes the strongest foothold for fraud of any of the many phases of mediumship, and so long as dark séances continue fraud will flourish, in spite of all opposition. As a natural result, honest, upright mediums, innocent of any wrong or deception, will continue to be maligned and treated with disrespect.

In view of all the facts, is the dark séance worth the price of fraud, doubt, and despair that we pay for it? Do the fancied benefits derived off-set the real evils that may be attributed to it?

GEORGE B. FERRIS.

Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.

MARRIAGE.

I can only thank 'X. Y. Z.' (p. 557) very heartily for having supplemented and brought out more clearly the ideas intended to be conveyed in my article on page 535. In that article I had (as 'X. Y. Z.' evidently perceives) to confine myself to drawing a clear distinction between marriages which are only nominally blessed or consecrated by man-made ceremonial, and those which have their origin in a higher sphere, whether the parties are aware of it or not.

I therefore can see nothing to withdraw in the assertions that where the union is not accepted by the Higher Power, 'the seal of holiness is altogether wanting,' and that without a soul-marriage 'the ceremony is a delusion and a sham.' These last words apply only to cases in which (as said) 'the true essence of marriage' is wholly wanting; but what I mean by this may require a little further explanation.

In referring to cases in which the distinction was obvious and striking, I had no idea of excluding the intermediate ones; I had these in view when I spoke of the union not necessarily taking place 'on a high spiritual plane; enough that the soul of the one responds to the soul of the other'; and again, 'the true marriage is founded on a recognition of mutual completion, mutual helpfulness.'

Perhaps my kindly critic may better understand my position if I explain at once that I should consider that the existence of such bonds as duty, affection, chivalry, even if one-sided rather than mutually felt, would take the marriage into a higher sphere than that of delusions and shams. In some cases these imperfect relations, which serve to bring the parties together, and form the apparent reason for the marriage, may be merely the indications of some deep-seated elements of true soul-fellowship which develop later on, so that the two come eventually to recognise each other's higher qualities, and the feeling of duty or chivalry, which originally brought about the union, becomes forgotten in a deep and abiding sense of mutual necessity. We do not always know the true reason why a given action is inevitable; we only see the subordinate one which affects our outward consciousness and influences our judgment and determination, so as to bring about the result, the true causes of which lie deeper than we are able to perceive.

S.

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPHY.

We take from the 'Light of Truth' the following account of a message transmitted, by spirit aid, from America to England, through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, and an English medium who acted as receiver. Professor Hyslop, speaking at New York on October 29th, said that this message had been transmitted practically instantaneously, and was part of a pre-arranged plan for experiment:—

'The message was sent in English. It consisted of four English words, but was written off by the British medium in Latin. This, says Professor Hyslop, is owing to the peculiar manner in which communications are carried on between "controls" on the other side of death and living mediums. It is a process, he says, not readily comprehended by the unscientific mind. It was not telepathy; that is, a straight communication of one mind with another. Professor Hyslop is certain on that point. It was done through the agency of a spirit.

"I am not at liberty to tell the wording of the message or the exact conditions of the experiment," said Professor Hyslop, when speaking of it. "That will all come out in the next report of the Society, together with a great many advanced experiments which we have been making since our last report. The full publication of the facts will explain why the message was transmitted in Latin. The conditions were such that it came through the medium's subliminal consciousness in that language. Understand, she doesn't know Latin herself.

"The public does not understand the probable relations between a medium and his control—by 'control' I mean a spirit, or whatever it is which is sending the message. The medium, as everyone knows, is in an abnormal mental condition when the message is received—a clairvoyant condition we call it. What everyone does not know is that the control himself probably enters an abnormal mental condition before he, too, can send a message.

"This is not the first instance in our experiments, although it is the first instance in which the attempt has been deliberate. Some time ago one of our members who lives near Chicago was holding communication with a deceased relative through a medium. Suddenly the question was asked: 'Why is Helen playing the piano?'

"Helen is his daughter, and was then at home near Chicago. He took the time at once; it was 11.36 a.m. Computing the difference in time he telegraphed to his wife asking what Helen was doing between 11 and 11.40 o'clock that morning, Boston time. The answer came: 'Practising on piano.'

"The medium herself knew nothing about his daughter Helen and her habits. To the best of my belief, she did not know he had a daughter Helen.

"In the latest experiment with transmission between the United States and England we used every precaution to insure against accident, collusion or fraud. I do not know if it was transmitted instantaneously. It was certainly sent and delivered inside of half an hour. The sentence used was not a stock phrase which might be hit upon at the other end by guesswork. It was an unusual phrase made up at the moment of sending.

"As nearly as we can make out, the conditions in the spirit world are such that space is not a factor with them. The ability to command space seems to be common with them. A thousand miles is no more than an inch. However, we have made only a few experiments in that direction.

"I may say, while we are speaking of Mrs. Piper, that she is not the only medium we have used in our experiments. We have several others. But she is the only one, in this country at least, with whom we have conducted elaborate experiments surrounded by all the precautions of scientific method and carried on through many years. The precautions we took in the beginning were unusual."

HAVE WE LIVED ON EARTH BEFORE?

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace deals lucidly with the questions 'Have we lived on earth before?' and 'Shall we live on earth again?' in the Christmas number of the 'London Magazine.' Although the subject of reincarnation cannot be debated in 'LIGHT' at present, the following summary of Dr. Wallace's thoughts should, we think, be put on record in our pages.

After pointing out that no positive answer, founded on experience, can be given, Dr. Wallace says the questions can be answered with a near approach to certainty if the conclusions arrived at are based upon the phenomena and laws of evolution and heredity. However the human race began on earth, there was a period, not very remote geologically, when the numbers were comparatively small, and therefore their offspring could not have lived on earth before as human beings, nor could the more numerous succeeding generations. Dr. Wallace regards the theory of reincarnation as 'a pure speculation' unable to appeal to 'direct evidence in its support,' and his striking argument, based upon the 'laws of heredity,' must be read in full for its force and cogency to be realised. The conclusion he arrives at is that proof is lacking of 'any exceptional advance in man, such as ought to have occurred if he had really been influenced beneficially by successive reincarnations,' and he claims to have adduced very cogent evidence that no such advance has really been made. Personally Dr. Wallace is unable to 'conceive that any fully-developed human soul, however bad, could be benefited by being again plunged into the midst of the deplorable and degrading conditions now prevailing, whether in mansion or slum,' and he regards the whole conception of reincarnation 'as a grotesque nightmare, such as could only have originated in ages of mystery and superstition. Fortunately,' he adds, 'the light of science shows it to be wholly unfounded!'

SPIRITUALISM IN THE CHURCH.—On Sunday last, in the Parish Room of St. John's Church, Stamford Hill, N., at a meeting of the St. John's Men's Discussion Society, presided over by the Rev. A. N. Guest, Mr. W. Rands, of the Hackney Society of Spiritualists, gave (by invitation) a lucid explanation of the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, and ably answered many questions from the large gathering of men, who were much interested. At the close Mr. Rands was invited to repeat his visit on a future occasion, and, if possible, to produce some examples of control or clairvoyance. Mr. Rands accepted the invitation, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to him. Several earnest friends from Tottenham and Hackney societies were present.

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.

The Yogi and His Message.

SIR,—May I be allowed to express my regret that 'Lux' did not read the pamphlet, 'The Yogi and His Message,' before giving his estimate of the value of the Swami's utterances? For those who, like myself, have read, re-read, and carefully considered it, the opinion of 'The Crank' or any other journal will be of small account.

Whilst recognising that any statement relating to abnormal phenomena must be well evidenced before it is accepted, whether the statement is made by a Hindu Swami or an English scientist, and also recognising that Christian ethics are as liable to be coloured by caste prejudices and Hindu traditions as they are by European customs and Western temperament, it still will remain obvious to an intelligent reader of the lectures that they are the utterances of a man of no little learning and culture, and with intensely strong convictions. There may be a few who 'cannot see the wood for the trees,' who will miss the importance and significance of the discourse on account of its Oriental colour, or its real imperfections, but it is to be hoped that these are in a small minority, and that no one who could benefit by reading it will be deterred from so doing by the criticism of those who have not read it.

H. A. DALLAS.

P.S.—The cost of the pamphlet I do not exactly know, but should guess it to be 1s. 1d. post free from Calcutta.

Spiritualism at Brighton.

SIR,—It is a matter of general regret amongst Spiritualists that Mr. Morse is so soon leaving us to take up his abode in the United States. Although I am not in accord with that gentleman on the subject of reincarnation, yet I confess that I have always regarded him as one of the most able and valuable instruments of the spirit world. It was his voice that conveyed to my ears, in the days of my youth, the first message from Spirit Land, and to him I, therefore, owe a debt of gratitude that I shall never be able to repay in this world. It was at the Brighton Pavilion, nearly thirty years ago, that he brought to us the good tidings of spirit communion. Doubtless many others were attracted to Spiritualism on that occasion, for the room was filled with a most appreciative audience. Soon afterwards Mrs. Cora Tappan and Mr. Colville enchanted Brightonians with their inspired utterances; and later on came Mr. Wallis. Spiritualists owe much to these active and strenuous workers for the cause. They set the ball a-rolling, and for all these years have never ceased in spreading the truth broadcast. Their names are now household words. Through good and evil report they have never flinched in their noble work, and the thousands of Spiritualists to-day who are residing in our beloved country, I trust will never forget that to these highly-gifted and courageous mediums they owe, like myself, a deep and lasting debt of gratitude. Thirty years ago it required much more physical and moral courage to lecture on Spiritualism than it does to-day. After the first burst of this inspirational outpouring many people became enthusiastic Spiritualists, and so the movement rapidly spread for some years. Then came a season of reaction. Many so-called physical mediums were caught tricking, and a period of disappointment, disgust, and apathy spread over the land. But it was but the tide receding, and in its wake we were enabled to discover those dangerous rocks and quicksands of fraud and chicanery which seem bound, by a law of Nature, to beset the path of every great revelation of the truth. Through all this time of tribulation and probation the movement was principally sustained by these good mediums I have mentioned, and strengthened by the aid of Mr. Dawson Rogers and Mr. Stainton Moses, and other able men too numerous to mention. And now the tide of true and scientific Spiritualism is once more flowing in, and this time it will be a flood tide, which will sweep away old superstitions and errors, and plant in their place a religion founded on a scientific basis, a religion which can be proved up to the hilt, a religion not of faith but of knowledge. I am indeed thankful to know there are young gifted mediums coming forward who are equal to the serious responsibility which rests on their shoulders, to instruct the rising generation. At our little Brunswick Hall the platform was recently occupied by a young man, Mr. E. W. Oaten, who resides at Portsmouth. In the course of a long experience I never heard a finer inspirational speaker, or one better adapted to proclaim the truths of Spiritualism. He dealt

with two subjects—'Spiritualism in Relation to Science,' and 'Spiritualism and the Hereafter.' His exposition of these interesting subjects quite electrified his hearers, and one could instinctively 'sense' the true and unmistakable ring of the elevated and scientific spirit control. Mr. Oaten, too, is fully competent to answer questions. He will, I trust, forgive me if I make one suggestion. He is a trifle too impetuous and loud in his delivery; in fact he uses himself up too much, and that must eventually exhaust him. The words come too quickly, but that is a fault which can, by an effort of will, be quickly rectified. A more dignified and slower delivery will but enhance the splendid matter which flows from this gifted medium's lips.

It gives me sincere pleasure, as an old Spiritualist, to welcome the advent of this excellent medium to our ranks. The South of England is in want of such speakers, and we require, above all, the natural enthusiasm of youth, tempered by good judgment, sincerity and modesty. All these good qualities Mr. Oaten appears to possess. In this somewhat eulogistic notice of a new medium I have no fear of spoiling its subject by my praise. He knows well enough that he is but the well-tuned instrument on which his spirit-guides produce such beautiful music. Mr. Oaten is, I believe, engaged in business, and can only devote his spare time to the service of the spirit world.

ROBERT H. RUSSELL-DAVIES.

27, Buckingham-place, Brighton.

The Highest Form of Spiritualism.

SIR,—I have been often told by those who attend séance circles that there comes a time when (to use their own metaphor) they come to 'a brick wall.' They have quite convinced themselves of a future existence, but they desire something more uplifting than mere materialisation. They desire to develop their own spiritual self, and this can never be done by studying only spirit phenomena. They complain, too, that they have to contend with the greatest difficulty in the endeavour to break from the influences which attend séance circles. Only a very determined and persistent attitude of mind can do so.

Now all this is very degenerating, and far from being uplifting. The highest form of Spiritualism does not cause one to lose one's personality, it is to be found within one's self, and not in visible things; although, of course, visible things assist us to understand the spiritual. Let those, then, of your readers who have come to this 'brick wall' stage, and want to know truth for truth's sake, at all costs to themselves, retire within themselves to their inner life, which is the true spiritual; let them develop the light within, which does not require any materialisation, &c., to prove to them that all real power is spiritual, and all who desire the highest form of Spiritualism must seek for it in spirit and not in the material.

88, Eaton-terrace, S.W.

LEONARD HALL.

'An Appeal to the Benevolent.'

SIR,—The following extract is from a letter received from Elsie Neuman on November 2nd, and will be satisfactory to those of your readers who have kindly interested themselves in this case:—

'I have made further improvement by being able to use my crutches to go downstairs as well as up, which I could not do a few weeks back. Also yesterday I felt as though I could manage a few steps alone, which I did by crossing the room from the chair to the sofa quite unaided. Though I did not keep upright I cannot tell you how pleased I felt at being able to do even this little. What hope it seemed to give me!'

Want of space prevents comment on my part beyond recording the fact that I have seen Elsie Neuman's mother, who is naturally overcome with tears of gratitude for her daughter's restoration from the condition of a helpless and bed-ridden cripple.

I am now advising that the patient leave London for her home in Margate during the foggy winter days of London. She will then keep up the home-cure and eradicated treatment and return in the spring to continue the light baths and massage, which I trust Dr. Hooker and Mr. Frank Matthews will then kindly consent to continue for the same nominal fees as hitherto. Meanwhile the limbs will gather strength and establish, on a permanent basis, the curative conditions now started. During her sojourn at home last winter she gained nearly a stone in weight, and the improvement in the straightened and lengthened state of her limbs was not only maintained but increased.

I have to gratefully acknowledge the receipt of half a guinea from Mr. Littleboy towards the Baths and Massage Fund,

This, added to the sums already acknowledged, will enable Elsie Neuman to re-commence the treatment next spring. Further subscriptions towards this encouraging and merciful work will be gratefully stored, and their receipt noted in these columns.

With your kind permission the amount of funds in hand will be notified when I have paid the accounts.

(Mrs.) CHANDOS LEIGH HUNT WALLACE.

38, Russell-square, W.C.
November 14th, 1904.

Proposed Presentation.

SIR,—I desire to call the notice of Spiritualists and societies to the fact that a presentation is to be made to Mrs. L. A. Griffin, of Burnley, at St. Paul's Church, Laisterdyke, on December 19th, as a small token of that lady's inestimable service to the cause of Spiritualism. Mrs. Griffin's departure for foreign lands for a period makes the opportunity a suitable one to show appreciation of her past labours. I am open to receive donations, &c., for this laudable object. All moneys received will be duly acknowledged. Thanking you in anticipation,

7, Rectory-road, JOHN MARSH, Hon. Sec.
Stoneyholme, Burnley.

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.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD.—On the 16th inst. Mr. Ronald Brailey's psychometric descriptions were recognised. On Sunday last Mr. Tayler Gwinn gave an earnest address. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Webb. An after-circle will be held. On the 30th inst., at 8 p.m., Mr. Ronald Brailey will read Mrs. Skillon's 'Psychic Pictures.'

PECKHAM.—CHEPSTOW HALL, 139, PECKHAM-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Burton conducted the circle, and a good time was spent. In the evening Mr. W. Underwood, under control, spoke on 'Spirit Identity' in a very clear and instructive manner. Good after-circle. On Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., public circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. J. Jackson.

HACKNEY.—YOUENS' ROOMS, LYME-GROVE, MARE-STREET.—On Sunday evening Mr. Rands delivered an address, and Mrs. Podmore followed with clairvoyant descriptions. On the 27th inst., at Sigdon-road Board School, opposite Hackney Downs Station, the Rev. F. O. Matthews will give an address and clairvoyant descriptions. Admission free. Reserved seat tickets, 6d. each.—N. RIST.

BALHAM.—4, STATION-PARADE, HIGH-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last 'The Higher Life' was the subject of discussion. In the evening the guides appealed to the audience to unfold within themselves the attributes of 'Love, Wisdom, and Power.' On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., 'The Efficacy of Prayer'; at 7 p.m., Faithist Teachings. Clairvoyance every Sunday.—W. E.

CHISWICK.—AVENUE HALL, 300, HIGH-ROAD.—On Sunday last, at the morning circle, the control of a medium engaged in the discussion upon 'The Bible and Christ's Teachings.' In the evening a very spiritual address by the inspirers of Miss Porter was greatly appreciated. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. H. Fielder. On Monday next, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Clowes, clairvoyance.—R. S.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday evening last, after the usual exercises and clairvoyant descriptions by Mrs. Atkins, the annual general meeting was held, when Mr. Chaplin was made lifelong president; Mr. E. Burton, vice-president; Mrs. Palmer, secretary; Mrs. Goode, treasurer; committee, Miss Maryon, Mrs. Atkins, Mrs. Chaplin, Madame Buckhadner, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Middleton. On Sunday next Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, of Manor Park. Public circle on Thursday, at 8 p.m.—E. B.

CAVENDISH ROOMS.—51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last 'Even the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter,' was the subject chosen by the control of Mr. E. W. Wallis. It was treated with much ability, and the address was highly appreciated. The numerous friends present were glad to again welcome our president, Mr. T. Everitt, and to note how well he was looking. Loving thoughts were sent to Mrs. Everitt, who is still at Brighton, and though progressing slowly, is well on the road to recovery. On Sunday evening next, at 7 p.m., Miss Morse will answer questions written by the audience.—S.J.W.

BRIGHTON.—BRUNSWICK HALL, BRUNSWICK-STREET EAST.—On Sunday last a good address by Mr. Ronald Brailey, on 'The Open Door,' was followed by psychometry, &c. On Sunday next, Mrs. Russell-Davies will give an address upon a subject chosen by the audience at the time.—A. C.

CLAPHAM SPIRITUALIST INSTITUTE, GAUDEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Pettitt gave an address on 'Life.' Mrs. Boddington presided. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle. At 5 p.m., tea; tickets, 6d. At 7 p.m., anniversary; Mr. and Mrs. Boddington, Miss Green, and Mr. Adams. Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., Mrs. Boddington, clairvoyance.

CATFORD.—24, MEDUSA-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Millard addressed a good audience on 'Revealings of the Spirits.' Mr. Love conducted the after-circle.—H. S.

UPTON PARK.—68, PLASHET-LANE.—On Sunday last, at 11 a.m., Mr. Baker spoke on 'Platform Workers' Responsibilities,' giving some practical advice.—W. M.

PLYMOUTH.—108, GRENVILLE-ROAD.—On Sunday last a good address by Mr. J. Evans, and clairvoyant descriptions by Mrs. Evans, were much appreciated by large audiences.

PLYMOUTH.—BANK-CHAMBERS, BANK-STREET.—On Sunday last Captain Greenaway's instructive address, and Mrs. Trueman's clairvoyant descriptions were much appreciated by a good audience.—E. M., Sec.

PLYMOUTH.—ODDFELLOWS' HALL, MORLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. W. H. Evans gave an excellent address on 'Spiritualism and Science.' A solo was nicely rendered by Miss Wakham, and good clairvoyant descriptions were given by Mrs. Pollard.—C.

FINSBURY PARK.—123, WILBERFORCE-ROAD.—On Sunday last a solo (in Spanish) and an earnest address were given by the controls of a lady medium, followed by clairvoyant descriptions and an address by Mrs. Willis.—W. W.

STRATFORD.—84, ROMFORD-ROAD (OPPOSITE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE).—On Sunday last, after a reading by Mr. G. W. Lear, who presided, an impressive address was given by Mr. G. Goich on 'Is Life Eternal?'—W. H. S.

TOTTENHAM.—193, HIGH-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. J. Conolly addressed a good audience on 'The Progressive Soul,' a subject proposed by a member. On the 16th inst. we had a very successful social evening and dance.—N. S.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last 'Will Power in Relation to Health' was again dealt with, and in the evening Mr. John Adams spoke interestingly on 'Spiritualism in the Bible.' Good after-meeting.—J. P.

PLAISTOW.—BRAEMAR HALL.—On Sunday last Mrs. Roberts gave a spiritual address on 'Spirit Communion,' and Mr. Roberts gave one clairvoyant description, which was recognised.—W.

PORTSMOUTH.—LESSER VICTORIA HALL.—Mrs. A. Johnson, of Leicester, has worked hard and successfully, holding séances here from the 13th to the 19th inst., and on Sunday last attentive audiences listened to her addresses and clairvoyant descriptions, and were struck with her sincerity.—H. B.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—NELSON-STREET.—Mr. Boyne's lecture to the philosophy class on 'Spiritualism and Socialism' was much praised. On Sunday last Mr. Davidson discoursed on 'The Higher Phases of Healing.' Mr. W. H. Robinson presided. Good after-séance.—J. L.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—On Sunday last the Rev. F. O. Matthews spoke on 'Christian Spiritualism,' and gave descriptions of spirit sights and scenes. The spiritual blessing was rich, but the material collection was poor, although the hall was crowded.—W. E. LONG.

SOUTHAMPTON SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION.—On Sunday last our worthy president, Mr. E. M. Sturges, having taken up his residence at Reading, gave an address, which he entitled 'Retrospect and Farewell.' No doubt he will find opportunities for work in his new sphere, as he did in Southampton.

LITTLE ILFORD.—CORNER OF THIRD-AVENUE, CHURCH-ROAD, MANOR PARK.—On the 16th inst. Miss Russell gave an instructive address on 'Human Personality.' On Sunday last Mr. Green's scientific address on 'Vibrations' was thoroughly enjoyed. Mr. G. Twidle presided.—A. J.

WEST LONDON SPIRITUALIST CLUB, 61, BLENHEIM-CRESCENT, NOTTING HILL.—On the 15th inst. instructive replies to written questions were given by the control of Miss Florence Morse, which were followed by clairvoyant descriptions and messages from spirit friends, that were much appreciated.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. Fielder expressed his earnest wish for more spiritual thought amongst Spiritualists, and more strenuous endeavours to improve social conditions, which at present are responsible for so much sin and suffering. Miss Morris presided, and made a few helpful remarks. A public circle followed.