

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Dr. Torrey is still harping on Hell. According to 'The Union Gospel News' (Cleveland, Ohio) he has lately put the matter thus:—

I wish I could believe that there is no hell; that is to say, that I could believe that all men would repent and come to Jesus, so that no hell would be necessary. Of course, I say that if men will not accept Christ and give up sin there must be and there ought to be a hell; that it is for the glory of God that under those circumstances there should be some prison to lock them up in. I wish I could believe that all men would give up sin. No man ever tried harder than I did to believe it, and there was a time that I persuaded myself that all men would be brought to repentance and be saved, and that is what I used to preach; but as I went on studying the Bible I found that my arguments would not hold water, and I came to a place where I was obliged to either give up my Bible or this belief. I could not give up my Bible, because I had found proof in it that it was the unerring Word of God, and I could not twist its contents to suit my preconceived notion.

It is absolutely certain that there is a hell. A great many people will tell you that all scholarly preachers nowadays have given up belief in the old-fashioned orthodox hell. It is true that some scholarly preachers have given up the preaching of hell, but never for reasons of scholarship. They have done it for purely speculative and sentimental reasons. No man who is a good Greek scholar can take his Bible and study the subject thoroughly and not believe in an eternal hell.

O men and women, don't wait until to-morrow. Hell is certain. Hell is awful, and there is only one way of escape. Christ. That door is open to-night. No one can guarantee that it will be open to-morrow night.

We do not at all object to a reasonable Hell for undesirable,—even to some sort of 'prison to lock them up in'—until they are fit to be let out. What we object to is unjust imprisonment, wasteful imprisonment, stupidly useless imprisonment, endless imprisonment, such as Dr. Torrey indicates when he talks of 'mercy withdrawn for ever,' the gate possibly closed for ever after 'to-morrow night.'

We do not wonder that many are roused and 'converted' by this kind of thing. Mr. Alexander says he has had a letter telling him that after hearing a service 'over the phone,' a girl gave up a dance and 'gave her heart to God.' That is a phrase with a dubious meaning. It might have been better for her to dance, as well.

Wagner's operas are not having a good time of it just now from the jaded or restless critics: neither can Wagner be entirely happy if he knows precisely what is going on; though what is going on is not over serious. The general charge against Wagner's music is that of over emphasis.

He lacks simplicity and therefore entire reality, it is said. One critic says:—

His long monologues, his endless repetitions, the abruptness of the action after wearisome development, could not be tolerated on the stage but for the restlessness of his orchestral effects. The play drags; the music, however, is incessantly surging, ringing, shrieking, groaning, howling; its appeals to the senses are so crude that people who detest what are called 'classic composers' respond readily enough to the noise and sensuality of the 'Ring.' . . . It would be impossible to deny the vitality of Wagner's characters. His gods and demigods have the strength of the animals in Æsop's Fables; they never rise above that level either in the shamelessness of their egoism or the directness of their various appetites. The feeling is genuine, but it is never sublime; it is never completely human.

We wonder whether this is why, during the long intervals at Covent Garden Theatre, some of the audience drifted into the Lyceum Music Hall. But this critic admits Wagner's immense ability to present the wild and masterful forces of Nature. He 'has seized the music of the earth.'

No one else has caught and enchained forever the mysteries of life 'outdoors'—the sound of the wind in the trees, the fall of night on black mountains, fiercest gales, the melancholy of sunset, the spell of a spring morning, the break of day, the madness of the storm, the flow of the river, the singing of rushes in a pool, the rage and hunger of the sea, and the wrath of the tempest. For these physical forces he shows an unerring and serene sympathy; no 'personal equation' disturbed his genius in this regard, or drove him out of sheer hostility to human nature, as he found it, to utter the word too much.

We think this shows where the criticism breaks down. Wagner was a very great exponent of human passions—a student of spiritual forces answering to 'the sound of the wind in the trees, the fall of night on black mountains, fiercest gales, the melancholy of sunset,' and all the other named manifestations of Nature's intense moods. In the spirit of man are all the possibilities of emotions and passions answering to every one of Nature's tragedies and storms. It is the failure to see this that makes Wagner's human passions seem exaggerated. In spite of all, we regard him as still highest in the spiritual realm of music,—the great master of the intensities of the soul.

The following, from 'Unity,' from 'Editorial wanderings,' is welcome news:—

No Northern man can visit the South and hold himself aloof from the question, 'What of the coloured man?' Indeed, apparently, Southern politics and Southern social problems, as well as economic problems, among the Southern people themselves begin and end in the same question.

'What of the negro problem?' I asked a sturdy, successful farmer who lives in the 'black belt' of Alabama, sixty miles from Tuskegee, who shared my seat in the railroad car. Prompt came the answer, 'There is none, sir! I repeat, sir, there is no coloured problem! If only the politicians and the newspapers would let us alone. I am the son of a slave-holder; I served in the Confederate army, and I tell you, sir, there is no coloured problem. The negro is working out his destiny, and we white people are not only willing he should, but we are helping him. We need him; we cannot do without him; he is our best friend and we are his best friends. If only the

politicians would let us alone! The coloured man is rising, but we are rising, too.'

With such pithy epigrams he proceeded to enforce his thesis with telling illustrations.

This is, indeed, good tidings. There are other countries and other problems concerning which we could also say, O that the politicians and newspapers would let them alone!

As for this 'colour problem,' it will settle itself by the law of the spirit and the necessities of life. Legislation may do something to help on a just solution, but the human spirit—that which works in all for all—will do far more.

In an important work, lately published, 'Letters of John Ruskin to Charles Eliot Norton,' it comes out very clearly that Ruskin wavered greatly in relation to the hidden life. In one letter (1869) he says:—

That I am no more immortal than a gnat or a bell of heath, all nature, as far as I can read it, teaches me; and on that conviction I have henceforward to live my gnat's or heath's life.

But that a power shaped both the heath bell and me, of which I know and can know nothing, but of which every day I am the passive instrument, and, in a permitted measure also, the Wilful Helper or Resister,—this, as distinctly, all nature teaches me, and it is, in my present notions of things, a vital truth.

Seven years later he writes:—

I am being brought every day now into new work and new thoughts, and, whether I will or no, into closer contact with evidence of an altered phase of natural, if not supernatural, phenomena, the more helpful to me because I can compare now, with clear knowledge, the phase of mind in which J. S. and other noble Deists or infidels are, and in which I have been for ten years, with that which I am now analysing in the earlier Florentines, and recognising in some living Catholics.

To me, personally, it is no common sign that, just after the shade of Rose was asserted to have been seen beside Mrs. T. and beside me here, I should recover the most precious of the letters she ever wrote me, which, returned to her before we parted, she had nevertheless kept.

Of this period, Professor Norton says:—

Regaining some fragments of his old religious faith, modified by some conceptions of the faith of the mediæval Church, and by dallying with Spiritualism, Ruskin attained for a time a more cheerful mood and more serenity of spirit than he had possessed during recent previous years.

This inclination to faith in the reality of the hidden life was often with him, and in 1885, somebody's reference to 'the victory of materialism' drew from him the ardent remark; 'I don't believe in any "victory of materialism."' The last two years have shown me more spirituality in the world than all my former life.'

The Church has just kept Ascension Day, and now, in a sense, has lost its Christ again. With what penetrating power Edwin Markham's poem comes home to us!

I cried aloud, 'There is no Christ
In all this world unparadised!
No Christ to go to in my need—
No Christ to comfort me and feed!
He passed in glory out of sight,
The angels drew him into light:
Now in the lonesome earth and air
I cannot find him anywhere.
Would God that Heaven were not so far
And I were where the White Ones are!'

Then from the grey stones of a street
Where goes an ocean drift of feet,
I heard a child's cry tremble up,
And turned to share my scanty cup.
When lo, the Christ I thought was dead
Was in the little one I fed!
At this I drew my aching eyes
From the far-watching of the skies;
And now whichever way I turn
I see my Lord's white halo burn!

Wherever now a sorrow stands,
'Tis mine to heal His nail-torn hands;
In every lonely lane and street,
'Tis mine to wash His wounded feet—
'Tis mine to roll away the Stone
And warm His heart against my own.
Here, here, on earth I find it all—
The young archangels white and tall,
The Golden City and the doors,
And all the shining of the floors!

THE MATERIALISATIONS AT ALGIERS.

Now that confidence in some of the exponents of materialisation phenomena has been rudely shaken, it is refreshing to find that the results of the séances held at Algiers last year, in the presence of Professor Richet and M. Delanne, have stood the test of criticism, sometimes rather unfairly applied. We have not cared to allude to all the discussions as they proceeded, but they are admirably summed up in an article contributed to 'The Annals of Psychological Science,' for May, by Dr. Maxwell, author of 'Metapsychical Phenomena,' whose position as Deputy Attorney-General at the Bordeaux Court of Appeal, and as a medical man and a psychologist, renders him a particularly competent authority to deal with matters of evidence in psychical research.

As Dr. Maxwell points out, the discussion of the observations made at Algiers and since published, independently, by Professor Richet and M. Delanne, is highly interesting from the point of view of the value of human testimony as to matters of fact. Everything turns upon the credibility of the witnesses. Dr. Maxwell dissects, coolly and critically, the value of these investigators as witnesses; he finds that they are 'honourable, disinterested, intelligent, learned, experienced and sincere.' Reviewing next the material conditions under which the séances were held, he finds that sufficient precautions were taken, with the one exception that, for reasons of *convenience*, the mediums could not be searched before entering the cabinet. This, however, is not a vital objection, for he finds that the facts observed are irreconcilable with fraud on the part of the medium, and cites especially the experiment with baryta water, which proved conclusively that the so-called 'phantom' was no lay figure, but a living being whose breath contained carbonic acid. This breathing figure was not the medium, for she was seen at the same time by both observers.

Dr. Maxwell goes on to consider the objections which have been raised against the reality of the observations, and does full justice to the ludicrous puerility of these criticisms. One doctor, a writer on hypnotism and suggestion, intimated that the proper thing to do with a phantom was to strike at it with a dagger or a stout stick. Dr. Maxwell, as a medical man and a magistrate, warns experimenters to abstain from any such violence, for if they harmed anyone by it (by 'repercussion' or otherwise), they might find themselves committed to the assizes.

Another would-be critic brought forward, at a public lecture at Algiers, an Arab coachman who had been discharged from General Noël's employ, and who appeared dressed up in the classical sheet affected by 'phantoms' in order to 'show the public how it was done.' This man explained his presence in the séance room by saying that he went in with the rest, helped them to lift the carpets and search the furniture, then slipped behind the curtains of the cabinet after it had been searched. Simple enough, certainly, only not true; this coachman was never allowed to enter the séance room at all while Professor Richet was at Algiers.

Equally devoid of foundation was the allegation that the medium had confessed that there was a trap-door in the séance room. Professor Richet's reply is curt: 'There is no trap-door'—and an architect's certificate, equivalent to an affidavit, is given in proof of this. Other attacks on the good faith of the medium, founded on alleged facts not witnessed by Professor Richet and therefore not adduced by him, are ruled out of court by Dr. Maxwell and are turned against those who had recourse to them; the summing-up in the form of a

judicial decision, is entirely in favour of the investigators, and declares the various criticisms to be inconsistent with fact and devoid of foundation.

While on this subject, we may mention a controversy in the German magazine 'Psychische Studien,' in which photographs were published to show the futility of the idea that the Algiers phantom was a lay-figure made up out of the medium's clothing.

THE SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE.

EXPERIENCES OF MME. FLORENCE MONTAGUE.

We have just received the following communication from Mme. Florence Montague, giving a graphic description of her experiences on the occasion of the recent terrible earthquake at San Francisco. We publish it because we think that it will be of special interest to her many friends in this country, who will extend to her their hearty sympathy.

237, SANCHEZ-STREET,
SAN FRANCISCO,
April 27th, 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—As memory gradually returns, and the horrors of the last few days become more familiar, it is a great solace to commune with dear friends at a distance, almost the only ones left now, alas! for the remaining few here are mostly wanderers in parts unknown, some crippled, and some demented by the terrible scenes witnessed of late.

The Press must have informed you of generalities, and you must have been already made aware of the total destruction of San Francisco by the frightful earthquake of Wednesday morning, April 18th, and the subsequent fire which completed the work of devastation, so that what was once a beautiful, prosperous city, the pride and glory of the Pacific Coast, is now a heap of smouldering ruins. Three hundred and fifty thousand people were made homeless in a few minutes, and those who have escaped uninjured, or unharmed by exposure or disease afterwards, are among the very few, whilst none have been altogether spared from losses of some kind.

I am among the destitute refugees, as the burnt-out are called, and though very grateful for the safety of life and limb, for the soundness of mind and the restoration of memory, yet I feel more keenly, as time goes, the loss of all my property. I could not rescue a single article, when rushing out of the St. Nicholas Hotel, Market-street, and all my personal belongings, papers, certificates, testimonials and documents of every description became the prey of the flames when that block was razed to the ground.

Indeed, I owe the privilege of getting out with some clothes on, to the fact that I was strongly impressed not to undress, and fell asleep, with nearly all my things on, on the sofa under a shawl till four o'clock, when I had the greatest battle with myself not to go to bed. Had I let reason conquer intuition I could not have left the place. My room was on the fourth floor of that seven-storey building, and as the water tanks burst over our heads, those who were in that wing on that floor were half drowned as well as stunned, bruised and horrified, and the absence of panic among the 800 guests was a marvellous thing during that day of black disaster. The St. Nicholas, though an old building, stood the shock better than any other structure of that size and type in the whole city. It only yielded to the flames when the whole district was blazing, and had to be dynamited in the hope of saving other streets. The complete absence of water with which to fight the fire, the high wind fanning the flames, the constant bursting of gas pipes, oil tanks, and other explosives in different buildings, and the constant shaking of the earth under our feet, the telephone and telegraph wires dropping on our heads, the sidewalk 'pavements' caving in, and flames emerging from them, the buildings toppling into the street from every side, the people frantic to save life and some few things, throwing them out of windows, and some of the people going insane and jumping after them, then the awful heat and peculiar atmosphere thick with dust and burning cinders, oh! it is all simply indescribable. Those who had rescued anything from the crashing buildings lost life or limb in trying to save it afterwards, for there was nowhere to send it to, no one to take it away.

At first we made for the ferries, but half-way there we were stopped by the flames, as the lower part of the town became a molten mass. Then came that road of Calvary climb towards the mountains, fainting with fatigue, terror and thirst, for there was no water to be had. It took me from 6 a.m. till 3 p.m. to reach Sanchez-street, and had it not been for an occasional hand stretched in kindness from unknown unfortunates like myself I must have perished. Of the friends at the hotel I

have not yet had tidings; I lost them in the crowd, and of all the friends in the city I have not seen one, being separated from them by impassable gulfs of sunken ruins, troops on guard, or infectious diseases, such as diphtheria, typhoid and small-pox, which have made their appearance in various parts.

This is the healthiest district, and the spot is isolated and untouched by fire, though toppling from earthquakes which continue mildly and the earth is perceptibly sinking.

I found shelter with a family of poor and humble folk, who were most kind from the beginning, gave me food and water out of their scanty supplies, at a time when they knew not where the next morsel was to come from.

They have kept me alive, for, although unharmed, I have been disabled from nervous shock. I partially lost memory for several days, and could never have gone like the other refugees to stand in line for hours, to await my turn for the rations of bread, water, &c.

For several days we were not permitted even to strike a match in the house, from 7 p.m. till 7 a.m., and anyone who disobeyed was instantly shot by the troops, the town being, until yesterday, under martial law. Now we can have a candle in the house till 10 p.m., but no fires of any description, except in the street, not on the sidewalks, and the food is cooked in a little improvised brick oven, carefully watched during operations. Food is given away free, as it comes from all parts of the world, as well as from the other States of the Union. God bless the givers; it will be returned a hundred-fold to them. We have also water to drink, to cook the food, and to wash our faces with, but none to wash clothes or bathe in. Few would dare to undress yet, and most of us have not taken our clothes off since the day of the great disaster. My address book is gone with the rest, and my memory not coming fully to my aid, I am completely isolated from most of my friends.

Pray be my interpreter to those in England. (Perhaps you would like to publish my letter, in which case you have my full sanction.) Tell them that the remembrance of their kindness and goodness to me has been a sweet comfort in my great misfortune. I owe them gratitude and I love them for it. There are those whose letters, sweet and sympathetic ones, have remained unanswered. It was not from indifference, I beg them to believe, but the troubles of the last two years have saddened and silenced me. I beg the forgiveness of all those who have, or think they have, a grievance, and trust to their generosity to overlook it, and restore me to their hearts.

I am not out of danger yet; the friends in Oakland offer me shelter, but they are all crowded with refugees; and the sick, the wounded, the aged, and the children, must be attended to first. If I can gather a few articles of clothing together, and get a little help for my railway ticket, I would like to return eastward to Canada, where I was to establish a society next winter. I would also like to go back to England; but these are dreams for the present. The care of my dear old father demands that I make great efforts to resume active life and occupation, but I have not much courage to begin all over again. At present I am wrapped in a blanket—borrowed—and you would not know me, save by my eyes and voice. Since newspapers are being printed again, we learn gradually of the extent of our friends' losses, and in sympathy for them we are helped to bear our own.

All the beautiful things that my friends in England had given me as parting souvenirs were burned, all except what I had on when I lay down on Tuesday night.

But I will not dwell further upon the sad picture, and ask you to forgive the harrowing tale. Although my present address is not permanent, letters directed as above will find me, as I shall simply notify the Postmaster of change when I am able to effect it. God bless all dear friends!—Yours, &c.,

FLORENCE MONTAGUE.

A SOUVENIR FROM 'FRISCO.—'From all life's grapes I press sweet wine' is Henry Harrison Brown's motto, and from the catastrophe on the Pacific coast he presses an original looking issue of 'Now,' for May, which he states to be the 'first magazine published in San Francisco after the experience of April 18th, 1906.' It takes the form of a personal letter to his subscribers, dated April 23rd, and he rejoices in the justification of his faith in humanity furnished by the way in which the crisis was met. He appeals for special aid for families interested in 'New Thought,' in order to take women, children and the aged to his 'Mountain Home' and care for them there, and he hopes to build a printing office and issue 'Now' from the same retreat. The little number consists of four pages, each 3½ in. by 5 in., printed on a piece of whitey-brown wrapping paper ten inches square. The address is still 106, Steiner-street, San Francisco, California.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND MODERN THOUGHT.

The cult of that 'poor little one of Christ,' St. Francis of Assisi, is rapidly gaining ground amongst thoughtful people of to-day, and doing much to counteract class prejudice and the evil influences of wealth.

Many may ask, 'Why choose St. Francis as a model? Is not Jesus of Nazareth all-sufficing?' The answer is plain. About St. Francis there are no theological differences of opinion, no burning questions of Divinity or non-Divinity, to separate his followers, but all, of any creed or shade of opinion, may unite in a common love and admiration of the 'poverello.'

An ordinary layman, a gay, 'gilded' youth of Assisi, St. Francis separated himself from the world by no ecclesiastical vows, only by the self-imposed adherence to the virtues of obedience, chastity, and poverty. He and his first followers worked with their hands for their daily bread, keeping ever in mind the 'simple life,' taking no money as payment for their work, but only sufficient food for one day at a time. They courted neither publicity, popularity, nor honour, but tried by love to win all men to God, and with love to pursue an even joyful course through the world.

We speak much nowadays of the spirit of joy which is finding its way into our religion and life, as against the 'miserable sinners,' the 'sinful world,' the 'going to hell,' of a past generation. But St. Francis inculcated this spirit of joy long ages ago. His followers 'had to wear a gallant mien in the warfare and the dungeons of the world, and he held that it was deep discourtesy to the Most High to banish the good guest of joy from one's heart and house.' Cheerfulness was blessed and sadness condemned by him; and as he and his companions journeyed on foot up and down Italy, they quickened their steps and rejoiced their hearts by singing glad praises to God.

Another important characteristic of St. Francis was his absorbing love of Nature. The simple wattle huts which he and his first companions made for themselves outside Assisi were scant shelter from wind and weather, and it may literally be said that they lived night and day in the open air, and in an intimate abiding with Nature, whose forces, in some mysterious way, are so closely bound up with our spiritual development.

The increasing distaste for animal food reminds us also of St. Francis, who ate no flesh. He so sweetly loved 'his little sisters' the birds, all living creatures, all Nature, that he would lift the worm from the path, that others less careful than himself might not tread on it.

His power over all animals was such, that the swallows ceased their twittering when he bade them; the fierce wolf of Agobio 'he made to go like a tame beast in and out the houses from door to door, without doing hurt to any or any doing hurt to him, and was courteously nourished by the people.' For the wild turtle-doves he made nests, and speaking tenderly to them, 'O my sisters, simple-minded turtle-doves,' he put them into the nests and 'they dwelt with St. Francis and all the other brothers.' 'Because he became himself a part of the love of the world, and heard living heart beat in beast and bird and tree and stone, other men grew tenderer, and counted common things not vile.'

For those who are interested in psychical phenomena—and who are not?—St. Francis must appeal as an ideal 'medium,' and indeed a great example to modern mediums. What untold heights of love and knowledge might be opened unto us if the seers, the prophets, the healers, the inspired speakers in our midst would live as he lived, and be known only for the holiness of their lives and the absence of all self-seeking! Living in the world, but not of it; doing manual labour, which we know is necessary for the development of the inner life; going out of themselves in their meditations, wrapt in silent ecstasy, clairaudient, clairvoyant, healers, trance mediums, speaking divers tongues, casting out undeveloped spirits from the obsessed; all these things and more we read of St. Francis and his companions.

The pure mountain air of the Apennines, the quiet of the

pine woods, the majesty of the rocks, and the voices of wind and birds must have played a great part in the training of this band of marvellous men.

Quaint and comical, arousing our merry laughter, are many of the stories of their simplicity, their absolute childishness oft-times, related with great earnestness, as seeing behind the outward foolishness the hidden lesson of absolute unworldliness and love. We read of Brother Juniper that hearing a great crowd of people were coming to meet him from Rome because of the 'fame of his sanctity,' and rather desiring their scorn and ridicule than their reverence, he began to play see-saw with some children as the crowd drew near. And so he continued amidst the derision of some, and the greater devotion of others, until they had all gone away; when, being 'altogether comforted' that 'some had made a mock at him,' he went on his way with 'all meekness and humility.'

Brother Jacopone, a learned doctor of Bologna, became a 'fool for Christ.'

'A wise and courteous choice he'd make
Who'd be a fool for the dear Lord's sake,'

he sang himself in his overwhelming joy and freedom. 'Holy Folly was one of the mistresses that the true sons of Francis were all eager to woo. She released them from the fear of men, and in the degradation of her service were their souls exalted.' By worldly foolishness, humility and poverty, the Brothers Minor broke away from all conventionalities and obtained absolute independence and freedom. In these days of adoration of wealth we may learn from them very refreshing lessons. Our possessions make us their slave, weighing us down to the earth, and crushing all aspirations to true nobleness.

Because of the impress of the Holy Stigmata, St. Francis is known to all, but there are many other wonders in his life that are worth knowing. Visions constantly appeared to him; glorious spirits spoke with him, and showed themselves to him. We are told that 'the blessed father, St. Francis, like a good shepherd, knew by divine revelation all the merits and the virtues of his companions, and in like manner their faults also.' Those whose timidity prevented their asking for the counsel they fain would obtain, were sweetly comforted and strengthened according to the depth and purity of their desire, by his reading of their thoughts.

Of St. Francis' power over animals we have already spoken. His healing power was unbounded. Open sores and ulcers he healed with a kiss; the leper he washed with water and sweet herbs, and 'wheresoe'er St. Francis touched him with his holy hands, the leprosy departed, and the flesh remained perfectly whole.' One, tormented with fits, was cured by eating a piece of bread that St. Francis had blessed; and many other cures were worked by sick people touching things that his hands had touched. The obsessed were freed from their tormentors, and troubled minds and weary souls were relieved of their burdens.

Many times was St. Francis caught up from the earth whilst in prayer or contemplation, and the great light that shone round about on many special occasions was marked with awe and reverence by great wondering crowds. At the time of the imprinting of the Stigmata, 'the whole mount of Alvernia appeared as though it burned with bright shining flames that lit up all the mountains and valleys round, as though it had been the sun upon the earth,' and as before, 'when glory shone around,' the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night and 'were afraid.'

When St. Clare and St. Francis, with their companions, were breaking bread together at St. Mary-of-the-Angels, 'the folk of Assisi and Bettona, and the country round about, saw that St. Mary-of-the-Angels and all the house and the wood that was just hard by the house, were burning brightly, and it seemed as it were a great fire that filled the church and the house and the whole wood together, for the which cause the folk of Assisi ran thither in great haste for to quench the flames, believing of a truth that the whole place was on fire. But coming close up to the house and finding no fire at all, they entered within and found St. Francis and St. Clare and all their companions in contemplation rapt in God, and sitting

around that humble board.' What glorious 'séances' with that band of holy mediums, all pledged to follow the 'Lady Poverty,' ragged, taunted, mocked, but magnificent. Of Brother Bentivoglia we read that he carried a leper fifteen miles, in his arms, between dawn and sunrise, forcibly reminding us of what happened when Jesus of Nazareth appeared to the disciples walking on the sea, 'and immediately they were at the shore whither they went.'

St. Antony of Padua preached unto an assembly of men of divers tongues, and yet each one fully understood him and was amazed.

No matter from what point of view we consider St. Francis and his companions, we must acknowledge their holy peace and deep harmony, and the intense love which animated all their works. 'With the love of God in their hearts and the Gospels on their tongues, without philosophy or speculation, but by love alone, they realised the unity of the universe.' Obedience, chastity, poverty united them in a common brotherhood and led them right away from the world and its fascinations.

'What a man is in the sight of God, that is he and no more,' said St. Francis; and they lived always as in God's sight alone, taking no thought for raiment or food, working for no man's approval or applause.

So far from boasting of or proclaiming their marvellous gifts, these men concealed them as much as possible, only telling such even to each other as would be for their mutual benefit, solace or warning. St. Francis was often watched by sundry of the brothers that they might bear witness to the glories vouchsafed to him, and Brother Illuminato, half-chidingly, says to him, 'Brother Francis, know that not for thyself alone, but also for others' sake, hath God at sundry times revealed to thee His holy mysteries; wherefore thou hast good reason for to fear, that if thou keep secret what God hath shown thee for the benefit of others, thou mayest be held worthy of blame.'

If we believe that each one in the world has, in lesser or greater degree, some mediumistic gift, is it possible to learn how to develop this gift in the most natural manner, better than by imitating, as far as we are able, in these times, St. Francis and the Brothers Minor? But pride and envy and all uncharitableness must be put far away from us. Only for the benefit of our fellow-men may we 'covet earnestly the best gifts,' and by associating ourselves in bands, like-minded for good, pour forth such harmonious vibrations of power, love, and goodwill, as shall tend materially to hasten the world forward to the only true ideal—universal peace and love.

EMMELINE LAURENCE.

NOTE.—The quotations in this article are taken from 'Sons of Francis' by Anne Macdonnell, and from 'Little Flowers of St. Francis.'

A SPIRIT VISITOR FROM INDIA.

Last year, while I was in the Himalayas collecting folk-lore for my book 'Simla Village Tales' (John Murray), I met with a dear little native woman, whose name was Chulnee, and who told me some beautiful little folk-tales. On leaving for Europe, Chulnee bade me 'good-bye,' saying, with tears in her eyes, 'We shall never meet again, mem Sahib.'

In September, 1905, I went on a three months' visit to the Harz Mountains in Germany, and, while there, was awakened one night by the cry 'Mem Sahib! Mem Sahib!' With a start, I replied in Hindustani, 'Ha, kaon hai,' and found myself alone. No answer came; but I had a distinct feeling that a presence had just left my bedside, the direct impression being that a soul had hurried past giving me a cry of farewell, and I knew it was no other than Chulnee.

Next morning I mentioned the fact to a German friend, saying that I felt sure Chulnee had passed away. No one in the house but myself knew a word of Hindustani.

I then wrote the particulars of my visitation to my sister in India, and asked her to ascertain how Chulnee was. For months I have had no reply, but, by last mail, I received a letter with a postscript saying: 'I quite forgot to tell you that the poor little sick woman, Chulnee, died this winter.'

I am now writing to my sister to see if she has kept the letter in which I mentioned the date of Chulnee's visit to me, so that we may compare it with the date on which she passed away.

ALICE ELIZABETH DRACOTT.

DOES PSYCHOMETRY PROVE SPIRITUALISM?

Dr. C. E. Ingram, writing in the 'Progressive Thinker,' propounds the question: 'Are psychometric demonstrations always infallible proofs of spirit communion?' and replies to his own question as follows:—

'I believe that these wonderful exhibitions of the unseen power of the mind are many times simply the results of auto-hypnosis, or hypnosis induced by outside influences, perhaps at times by spirit influence, but more often otherwise.'

The question raised by Dr. Ingram is, it seems to us, based upon a misapprehension, for psychometric delineations are not, as a rule, due to spirit influence, and no well-informed student of psychic science regards them as proofs of spirit communion, unless evidences of spirit action and identity are given in the statements made by the sensitive.

The psychometrist is a sensitive who, by rendering himself passive, introspective and receptive, becomes aware of the psychic conditions of people, places, or things, and describes, more or less clearly, what he feels—or psychically perceives. Many psychometrists are so acutely sensitive to the emanations, or auras, of the objects they touch, or of the persons to whom those objects have belonged, that they seem to become identified with them. They then enter into and describe the experiences, both past and present, and the feelings, thoughts, and peculiarities of those persons. But such psychic realisations as these, although they indicate that the sensitive is conscious of sensations and conditions of which the ordinary individual is oblivious, do not necessarily prove anything as regards spirit presence or spirit identity.

Psychometric 'sensing' often merges into clear-seeing, and the sensitive has visions of people and places of a bye-gone time, and retraces the life record of the person with whom he has come into *rapport*. These clairvoyant visualisings are frequently so clear that the beholder appears to be looking at objects existing at the present time, whereas, in reality, he is perceiving the psychic pictures of incidents of other days. True, some of these visions may be due to spirit operators, who by hypnotic suggestion cause the sensitive to see and to describe old-time conditions and people, but unless something can be imparted by the spirit operator which gives evidence of the presence and action of an intelligence other than that of the psychic, neither psychometry nor clairvoyance can be regarded as 'proofs of spirit communion.'

Dr. Ingram claims to have had much experience with patients undergoing psychopathic treatment, whom he has hypnotised, and he says:—

'We know that we often find subjects who are amenable, after being placed under the hypnotic influence, to the process of sending out the subliminal self, or astral body, to distant points, and there gleaning information that is utterly astounding, and totally unknown to any one present, including the medium, or subject. This is very mystifying to one who does not understand this wonderful science, and who is ready to attribute the phenomena to spirit influences; but on the other hand, no operator has ever been able to induce any subject to give incriminating evidence, or information, which would in any way endanger the subject; no member of any kind of secret society has ever been prevailed upon to give out any secrets.'

'Now I do not attribute this to spirit influence at all, and yet it is precisely the same kind of work as that done by the clairvoyant, while under auto-hypnosis, or spirit influence, as many are pleased to call it, and who thus give the credit to the spirit-world.'

Mediums, says Dr. Ingram, are, as a rule, 'perfectly honest in their convictions,' but he thinks they are mistaken in supposing themselves to be the agents of spirit people, and he attributes their successes to their 'highly-trained subjective minds, acting under suggestion of their own or other minds.'

But, if other embodied minds can enable them to exercise the marvellous psychic powers which he refers to their subjective minds, why may not exarnate minds produce like results by like methods? It is all a matter of evidence, and, while many of the 'readings' given by psychometrists may not be due to spirit influence, yet there are others, a residuum, which require for their satisfactory explanation the recognition of the spirit operator at the other end of the line.

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THE UNSEEN PEOPLE AND BUSINESS.

The 'Los Angeles Examiner' reports pretty fully the thought-provoking case of Mrs. Alden Gaylord, the supposed conductor of a bond investment and brokerage business in Wall-street, New York. She claims to be guided in all her affairs by her late husband, who established the business and who now practically conducts it. She says, 'When my husband died, he said he would not be parted from me for long. And now, whenever I am in doubt about anything, I seek my guidance and advice from him. Yes, I am convinced that I can commune with him in spirit, although I am not a Spiritualist. Every morning after I arrive in this city, I spend a few moments in Old Trinity to pray. That was a custom of my husband's, who was one of the most godly men that lived. Before we begin business here we have a prayer meeting in the office. I have a good many young men here to whom I am teaching the business. I conduct the services, assisted by my partner, Mr. Fletcher.'

Mrs. Gaylord, however, professes to be unselfish in the matter. After providing for her grandchildren, all her profits are, it is said, to go to charity and the missions. Her account of Wall-street is a novel one. 'There is no place in the world,' she says, 'where there are so many Christian and godly men.' Is it possible!

All this raises a very serious question, as to the desirability or rightness of attempting to hold communications with the so-called 'dead' for 'worldly' purposes. A great deal that is sufficiently serious can be urged against it; but we have never been quite satisfied that the arguments are all on one side. What if the 'dead' see and understand what we cannot,—say about mining, or electrical operations, or engineering, or even of trade and commerce;—is it altogether certain that communications on these subjects are wrong? We are fully aware of the dangers attending it: but what about the advantages? We would not encourage it, but do not feel moved to entirely condemn it. It is quite possible that we are still too much controlled by the old sentimental and conventional picturing of spirits as awe-inspiring ghosts.

What if Mr. Gaylord is, in spirit life, deeply interested in his wife's efforts, and anxious to help? May it not be the merest surmise on our side that to do so would 'retard his progress' or do him harm? It is a purely arbitrary suggestion that it is the business of a spirit to 'pass on to higher spheres.' It is at least as reasonable a suggestion that the lost earth-life may be recovered for precious uses, either for the spirit's own self or for the helping of others. 'How

can spirits return?' said a sceptic to William Howitt. 'You have first to prove that they go away,' was the reply: and there was reason in that. But, if they do not go away, they are surely occupied, and for uses either on their own account or for others.

It is perfectly conceivable that vast multitudes of the spirit-people would be advantaged by remaining here, to see life and take part in it from the other side; to learn lessons that had been impossible or that had been neglected; to set right things that had been tangled; to continue help that had become a necessity: to give guidance to investigators in the field of science, or light to the inventors of useful appliances; to direct the struggle between the positive and negative forces of the world, in social life, in politics, in trade and commerce, and in religion. It is quite possible, it is even probable, that we are largely under a delusion in imagining that we who are on the material plane are conducting its affairs. More than we know, we may be, to a considerable extent, only instruments, or, at best, co-operators in the great game of life.

This fact, if fact it is, may be mercifully or necessarily hidden from most of us, to prevent us relying on the unseen helpers, and to secure the development of our own minds and wills: for there is a real danger here. The sense of responsibility is always weak as it is, but it might be much weaker if we knew that we were little more than instruments; and the path of least resistance would, with multitudes of us, be chosen, as the path of reliance upon the unseen powers. But that is no reason why, as our education advances, the co-operation may not become a conscious one, as seems to be the case with Mrs. Gaylord, and, we believe, with many others.

At present, the danger would chiefly be in the direction of inability to secure right guidance, or, rather, of inability to identify the professed guide; and there is also danger here. But do we get rid of that danger by not knowing anything about the fact of guidance? If our theory of spirit-life is correct, we are all open to spirit-influence, and the only difference between us is that some are influenced who do not know it; that others are influenced who know it, but who know not by whom; and that others are influenced who think they know by whom. These last may be mistaken, but their error need not injure them, and will not, so long as they really co-operate, and take their full share of judging and deciding. The second class are perhaps most secure, as knowing they are influenced, and as also knowing how much they need to stand on guard. The first class, those who know nothing about it, and who nevertheless are influenced, are in the worst case because they lie open to all grades of influence without having the advantage of the knowledge that would put them on their guard.

But, it may be said, Is it not a low view of spirit-life,—that the spirit-people are engaged in Wall-street financial transactions? Perhaps it is. But there are spirits and spirits. Vast numbers may be engaged in inspiring preachers, teachers, statesmen, leaders of labour, poets, artists, musicians, nurses, physicians, scientists: and, beyond them all, multitudes may be passing on to the heavenly regions where only imagination can follow them. This, too, needs to be said,—that the common work of the world has to be carried on, and that it may be a low and not an elevated view of life which dismisses railways and mines and banks and even Wall-street as too earthly for spirit cognisance. May we not even look for the time when the laws and the influences of a very lofty spirit-plane may guide us in relation to all these, and so bring to pass at last the realisation of the Prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'?

SHAKESPEARE AND SPIRITUALISM :

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

BY MR. J. W. BOULDING.

An Address given 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 March 29th, 1906; Mr. H. Withall, Vice-President, in the Chair.

MR. BOULDING said :—

When reading and pondering over the supernatural incidents in Shakespeare, I have often been tempted to ask, Are they real? Are they believable? Do they represent anything that exists? Did the poet believe in them himself? Or are they but what he calls them in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream'?—

'Children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,'

merely 'Forms of things unknown' which, with his poetic pen, he

'Turns to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name'?

When the plays in which they appear have passed before us, and, 'the revels ended,' the curtain has been rung down, does he call upon us to subscribe to the declaration of Prospero, and if so, in what sense, when he says :—

'These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits'?

If, as I presume by the continuation, he does not expect us to believe that they were real entities, but only creations of his poetic brain, are we to understand that these quondam spirits are now 'melted into air, thin air,' that is, not only become again invisible but non-existent? Apparently it is so: for he proceeds to institute a comparison between their dissolution and that of the universe itself. He says :—

'Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.'

The 'fabric,' then, of these supernatural visions he evidently regarded as 'baseless'; the 'pageant' insubstantial; there was no reality to correspond to the conception. The visions were nothing but the dreams of 'an idle brain'; and our human life, with all its events and all its phenomena, together with the passions and principles that actuate it, is also

'Such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.'

To speak quite clearly, this is the total impression one gets from all the supernatural elements in Shakespeare. They are beautiful, sublime, grand in conception, clear in delineation, impressive and solemn, elevating and inspiring, but not real, and therefore not believable.

Who believes, for instance, in the reality of Puck and Ariel, Titania and Oberon? Or the ghosts that terrify King Richard? Or the ghost that curdles the blood of the timorous Macbeth? Or even the gold-masked spirits that visit in her dream the broken-hearted Katherine, who congee to her and dance, and dancing, vanish into heaven? With all their poetic beauty and grandeur of invention they never impress me with a feeling of reality: not such a feeling, at least, as one gets from almost every vision of the supernatural in the Bible—that storehouse of spiritual realities, whether it be the visions of Daniel or Isaiah, Peter or Paul, John or Jesus—the most spiritual seer of all.

Now what does this sense of unreality arise from? I think it is due to a lack of personal faith on the part of the writer himself, and that lack of faith arises from a lack of personal proof of the reality of the Hereafter. I know that he says in 'Hamlet'—and it is generally regarded that if there be any self-drawn portrait of Shakespeare at all, it is himself that he paints in Hamlet—

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.'

But can you build any structure upon that sentiment which will sustain the burden of a personal belief in the world unseen? I think not. And reviewing all that the poet says, both in 'Hamlet' and the 'Tempest,' in which plays you find more of Shakespeare's personality than in any other, I feel obliged to come to the conclusion of Samuel Laing, in his 'Problems of the Future,' that 'there is no assurance, absolutely none'; that 'there is no reality' (to Shakespeare) 'but the great unknowable; that all the manifestations of the Universe are' (to him) 'illusive dreams rising and falling like mists from the ocean,' and that 'the individual life' (to him) 'is absorbed like everything else, in the great ocean from which it came, of the Infinite and Absolute.' That is Shakespeare's creed, so far as I can gather it from the utterances in his works. At all events, this at least is certain, that whenever the subject of death arises in his mind it is invariably associated with a melancholy which amounts in most cases to fear. Joyous as his spirit was in relation to life, full of the pleasure of existence, overflowing with animal and intellectual delight, free as Ariel in all that pertains to this present world, its beauty and its bliss, the moment the end floats into his view, a dark cloud gathers on the horizon, an impenetrable gloom settles on his heart, the music of life subsides into a melancholy sigh, or a wondering 'perhaps,' or a wail of wretchedness as if all was lost, and nothing remained but silence and the worm. With him it is

'To die, and go we know not whither;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible, warm motion to become
A kneaded clod: and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; it is too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on Nature is a paradise
To what we fear of Death.'

In the well-known soliloquy of Hamlet: 'To be, or not to be, that is the question,' the element of fear is the predominating quality. There is the doubt expressed of the continuity of life, and if that be taken for granted there remains the worse apprehension of the mystery beyond. Perhaps, he says, it is a long, long, endless sleep; perhaps it is a semi-conscious sleep—a sleep full of horrid dreams and appalling visions; but it may be, after all, no sleep, but a waking to terrible realities, such as Dante pictured. But whether it be the one or the other, the poet's mind is filled with fear; and fear is the deepest note in his melancholy song.

And you will observe that although Shakespeare brings upon the scene the ghost of Hamlet's father, and makes him discourse most eloquently and impressively upon his *post-mortem* experiences, yet there is an air of unreality about the entire apparition such as could not have been possible if the poet had had any real and personal experience of communication with the spirit world which he poetically describes. He could not, for instance, have then spoken of it as the 'undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.' For Hamlet's father has just returned from that mysterious bourne; and the poet's unconscious contradiction of himself shows that he had had no personal experience of spirit return, and was treating the subject only in a theoretical and poetical sense, which had, of course, no reality at all. The conception was designed solely to serve a dramatic purpose, and, that served, was dismissed, like other images and incidents, from the poet's mind. It was, in fact, only a presentation of the ordinary churchyard ghost, with which the age of Shakespeare was eminently familiar. Hence, in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' after the Duke has announced that 'The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve,' Puck enters and sings :—

'Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide
Every one lets forth his sprite
In the churchway paths to glide.'

There you have exactly the belief of the age; and Shakespeare's ghosts—Hamlet's father with the rest—are but

poetic representations of the current belief that the spirits of the dead hovered about the churchyard and apparently found relief to the tedium of their waiting for the resurrection day in appearing to the belated traveller, or frightening the country yokel out of his wits. Not that Shakespeare believed even that. He probably regarded the whole thing as a gross superstition and merely used it for a dramatic end. In any case it is quite evident that, if he had any belief in it as a fact, fear was the predominating feeling in his mind.

Hence the dramatic witnesses of the ghostly apparition in this play of Hamlet speak of it as a nerve-shaking experience; 'harrowing up the soul and freezing the young blood.' There is no emancipation in it from the fear of death; no light breaking from brighter worlds, no glimpse of a serene and golden day; it smacks only of the hearse, the ceremonies and the sepulchre; and even the appearance of the phantom in complete steel, that is in the habit in which it had lived its mortal life, does not make it familiar or homelike or lessen the fear of the witnesses; but on the contrary, makes 'these fools of Nature horribly to shake their dispositions, with thoughts beyond the reaches of their souls.'

And even the circumstances of its environment all tend to heighten the fear which the ghost creates. It comes in the 'dead vast and middle of the night'; the silence and solitude, and dim light of the glimpses of the moon, as she fitfully gleams from her winding sheets of cloud, all combining to create the weird atmosphere in which it can best appeal to the terror of the spectators. So that they are 'distilled almost to jelly with the act of fear'; and it is a great relief to their pent-up feelings when Horatio says:—

'But look! the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill;
For then the spirit hies to his confines
And shrinks with haste away.'

The crowing of poor old chanticleer as he wakes the world with his familiar note, and brings these ghost-spectators back to earth and earthly things, was never appreciated so much, or hailed with such delight as when it caused the ghost to fade, and relieved their nerves of the tension and the strain.

Now you will find nothing in all this to give you any light on the problem of the hereafter or comfort you in the prospect of 'entering into that cloud.' It is all fear—fear of the ghost, fear of the ghostly, fear of the other world (if other world there be); gladness only when the ghost has gone, and the other world has faded before the obtrusive reality, or unreality of this. No! the melancholy Dane cannot break a single fetter of the bondage that holds men captive to their fears. Though he represents the high-water mark of the human intellect in all ages of the world, the only effect he leaves upon our mind is his own melancholy fear. Sublime as he is, all he can say to us is what he says to Horatio, as he passes himself at last into the unseen:—

'Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story. The rest is silence.'

Shall I be wrong, therefore, if I label Shakespeare as the poet of the Agnostics? The poet whose supreme utterance on this vital question was 'I do not know.' I would not libel Shakespeare. God forbid. I reverence, I honour and love him too much for that. But is it not strange that he who uttered all the thoughts and emotions of man, should not have one word of certainty or conviction concerning that greatest question of the ages: 'If a man die shall he live again?' I venture to say that the omission is not due solely to the fact that he was a dramatist, and therefore was not supposed to express any thoughts or emotions but those that were natural to the characters he portrayed, but to the fact that he really did not know, and therefore did not say, and did not create a character that did say, 'I believe in the life of the world to come.' 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' and it is incredible to me that if there had been a solid conviction in Shakespeare's heart of the certainty of the life beyond, he would have been able to suppress its utterance, either in his sonnets, in which he deals with personal emotions, or in the creation of some character for that special purpose.

For who could resist singing of immortality that possessed in his soul the immortal hope? Who, that had an assured conviction of the reality and glory of the life to come, could suppress his emotion and never once chant the jubilant psalm, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' Who, that had such a feeling in his breast, especially a poet, and such a poet withal, could refrain from breaking out into some triumphant note that revealed the ascendancy of the incorruptible spirit over the corruptible body and its prospective joy at its glorious emancipation? And though he might have felt like Tennyson in some philosophic and melancholy moods, that he was but 'an infant crying in the night, an infant crying for the light, and with no language but a cry,' yet there would be other seasons in which faith would be dominant and hope radiant, in which, not like an infant, but a strong, brave man, he would sing with St. Paul, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' Intensely sweet though his singing was, it was still the song of the nightingale, melancholy like the darkness that oppressed him with its gloom; not the song of the lark, the song of the breaking dawn, the song of the rising day, the song that soared and soared till it died in the soaring, and was only lost in heaven. (Applause.)

What was it, then, that Shakespeare lacked? I answer, the truth. But I hear you say: 'He had the truth, just as we have, it was the age of enlightenment, the age of awakening mind, the Augustan age of English literature. And besides all this the Bible was in everyone's hand, the Protestant preacher at everyone's door.' Quite so! But unfortunately Shakespeare, like the rest—the great, myriad-minded, deeply-meditative, and profoundly intellectual Shakespeare—was in the dark and the deeps respecting this, quite as much as the most ignorant rustic in all Stratford-upon-Avon, because the truth, as it was told in the Book, and the truth, as it was taught in the pulpit, was only theoretical and ecclesiastical, not real, personal, proven fact.

The fact of death is too overwhelming for anything to disprove it, except a fact like itself, and a greater fact, too. It is fact *versus* fact, not theory *versus* fact, that can conquer for us here. And so it fell out that this supreme artist of all the ages—this poet who dealt with human life and character in all phases and varieties and made the world more beautiful for us, existence more valuable, and enriched our literature and art with mines of priceless wealth and themes of exhaustless beauty—this man of men, this bard of bards, could only sing of death as the 'bourne from whence no traveller returns'; of the future, as 'the undiscovered country'; of those who had passed into that final shadow, 'as precious friends hid in death's dateless night'; and write as the epitaph of Hamlet, which was doubtless synonymous with his own, 'The rest is silence'!

In this respect I claim that some of us have the advantage of even this great poet of all time. What had not been revealed to him has been revealed to many who have no claim to the world's attention, and the only words that rise to my lips, in considering the great contrast which this fact presents to me, are those beautiful words of the Seer of Nazareth:—

'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

Being one of these myself—a mere babe in intellect when compared with Shakespeare—it has been my privilege, from no merits of my own, to see some of these hidden things, and it would be a treason to my sacred trust if I did not give to others that knowledge which has been so graciously and liberally given to me. And although most of them are matters trivial in themselves, and almost solely related to my personal affairs, yet, as one may see large prospects through small apertures, so, through these individual and insignificant matters, one may rise to the knowledge of the great universal truth that the invisible world is all about us, that its citizens throng about us with interested observation and kindly help, and that a chain of beings rises from our homes and extends through all the tiers of celestial life, till it links itself at last to the Throne of God. (Applause.)

(To be continued.)

SPIRITUALISM AND MR. MASKELYNE.

Some years ago, in 1881, there was quite an epidemic of 'challenges' of one sort and another with reference to Spiritualism and the phenomena occurring in the presence of mediums. Mr. W. P. Adshead, Mr. S. C. Hall and Mr. John Fowler offered various sums of money to different would-be expositors, but nothing ever came of these somewhat senseless proceedings. Perhaps the most important challenge was one made to Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, by a gentleman who signed his letters 'Iota.' The correspondence which passed between 'Iota' and Mr. Maskelyne was published at the time in a penny pamphlet (now out of print), the proof sheets of which were corrected by Mr. Maskelyne. With regard to this matter, speaking at the Church Congress, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1881, Archdeacon Wilberforce, then Canon, said that Maskelyne and Cooke had 'more than once been publicly offered a thousand pounds if they would, *under the same conditions*, imitate the most ordinary spiritual phenomena in a private house; but they replied that, as their apparatus weighed more than a ton, they could not conveniently accept the challenge,' but Mr. Maskelyne has recently denied that he ever declined a challenge on the ground that he would require a ton weight of apparatus, or anything like it.

Our attention has been drawn to this matter by Archdeacon Colley, and we have been at some pains to try to discover the facts. Having carefully read the correspondence between 'Iota' (Mr. Algernon Joy) and Mr. Maskelyne, we fail to find any reference whatever to a 'ton' of apparatus, but there is considerable dispute in regard to the 'conditions,' and at the last 'Iota' advertised in the 'Daily Telegraph,' on July 19th, 1873, saying:—

'I offered Mr. Maskelyne £1,000 if he would do his own stage tricks under the same conditions as a medium to be supplied by me. His only answer was a proposal for a dark séance. I accepted this, provided he submitted to the same conditions as my medium, one of which was that the committee should strike a light whenever they pleased, with three seconds' notice. Mr. Maskelyne has shown no inclination to accept any challenge of mine.'

As regards the statement made by Canon Wilberforce at the Church Congress in 1881, we think he was probably misled by a letter which appeared in 'LIGHT' earlier in that year; for on p. 143 (May 7th, 1881), in a letter regarding Mr. Irving Bishop, Miss F. J. Theobald refers her readers to 'Iota's' pamphlet containing, she says,

'his correspondence with Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, on the occasion of their being obliged to acknowledge their inability to accept his offer of £1,000 to give their *exposés* in any private house and *under the same conditions* as any spiritualistic medium, instead of on their own premises and surrounded by the tons weight of machinery necessary for their use whilst giving their conjuring exhibitions.'

The concluding sentences of Miss Theobald's letter, and her reference to the 'tons' of machinery (which is evidently an inference of her own), were, *as far as we can discover*, the only foundation for the unfortunate statement made by Canon Wilberforce in 1881, and it is but bare justice to Mr. Maskelyne to say that we fail to find in his letters anything to justify it. There are, however, two passages which are worth reproducing. Mr. Maskelyne said:—

'I wish you to distinctly understand that I do not presume to prove that such manifestations as those stated in the Report of the Dialectical Society are produced by trickery—I have *never denied* that such manifestations are genuine, but I contend that in them there is not one iota of evidence which proves that departed spirits have no better occupation than lifting furniture about.'—(July 1st, 1873.)

Again, on July 6th, 1873, he wrote:—

'I have never stated that you cannot produce some phenomena in a genuine manner; I have done this, or assisted in doing it, myself, and tell my audience so at every performance.'

Mr. Maskelyne's contention in reference to the occupation of departed spirits is altogether beside the point; no Spiritualist believes that spirit people have no other, or no better, employment than 'lifting furniture about,' but if by such move-

ments evidence can be afforded to the observers of the manifestations of the presence of a controlling intelligence, who signals from beyond the tomb and spells out messages demonstrating his identity, and thus proves human survival, then even 'lifting furniture about' becomes a sacred service as a means to an important end.

'A CONFESSION OF NEW FAITH.'

In the 'Literary Guide,' for May, a former 'occasional correspondent,' Arthur Collis, who was definitely Agnostic and said so, writes to make confession of a change of attitude on his part, especially as regards 'human survival past bodily death'—a change brought about as the result of an experience of his own, those of some intimate friends, and of his reading and thinking on the subject of Immortality generally and of Spiritualism in particular. Mr. Collis about a year ago joined the London Spiritualist Alliance and the Society for Psychical Research, and as the result of his studies, he says:—

'After making the most generous allowance for fraud, and for hallucinations and automatisms, there remains a residuum of phenomena which amply justifies belief in the agency of discarnate spirits, at least as a working hypothesis; and this residuum is the basis on which belief in immortality is founded by such eminent men of science as Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Richard Hodgson, Professor Hyslop and Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace. For myself, it is the basis on which my own new-found convictions stand, and to it I invite the attention of my Rationalist comrades; not in the expectation that anyone will be convinced by an article necessarily short, but in the hope that they will be induced to acquaint themselves with the facts of the subject.'

After pointing out that there is a vast mass of evidence which is cumulative in character and value, and citing some of the evidence attested by Professor William James, Dr. Hodgson and others, he concludes:—

'My new belief is as scientific a theory, and is based upon precisely the same kind of evidence—observed facts, phenomena—as the theory of gravitation or the theory of the luminiferous ether; I hold fast to Rationalist principles, but I have found new facts for which those principles have to evolve new theories in explanation. I have changed my opinions, but I affirm—and challenge anyone to disprove—my Rationalist consistency.'

CLAIRVOYANT DIAGNOSIS IN FRANCE.

A remarkable case of clairvoyant faculty of perceiving the state of health and the nature of disease is reported by 'L'Echo du Merveilleux.' Some time ago a girl named Mlle. Bar, with her father, brother and a medical man, all of St. Quentin, in the north of France, were arraigned at the instance of the medical profession for alleged illegal practice of medicine. The defence was that the clairvoyant girl was merely the instrument used by the medical man for diagnosing diseases, and her father and brother did nothing but induce the mesmeric state by means of passes. The case was submitted to examination by two experts, one of whom took the very superficial view that even if the young woman was easily hypnotisable, that fact did not confer upon her the power of diagnosis.

The other expert was none other than Dr. Baraduc, who has recently exhibited in England his *biomètre*, or instrument for measuring vital force. His report states that according to his researches each main division of the human organism gives off different vibrations, which are capable of being perceived by a sensitive who has the faculty of transforming them into mental images during the trance state. Dr. Baraduc examined Mlle. Bar by means of the *biomètre*, and found that attraction and repulsion were equal, giving a well-balanced formula. He also found that she had the power of describing in general terms, though not in anatomical language, the state of each organ of the body; she indicated their degree of vitality rather than their exact physical condition.

Dr. Baraduc tried several practical experiments by bringing Mlle. Bar into connection with patients, either directly or through articles of clothing. In each case Mlle. Bar's descriptions were correct as far as they went; 'she did not tell

everything, but she said nothing that was false.' Dr. Baraduc regards her as 'an unconscious psychometrist who registers faithfully the vibrations of disease emanating from our organs when their radio-active condition is unhealthy,' and further says that 'she appears to be incapable of registering vibrations from a higher plane of consciousness; she perceives neither those of physical sensation nor those of spiritual sensitiveness; these domains are closed to her; if she tried to penetrate them there would be danger of setting up confusion and causing her to lose her special faculties.' She is certainly, he concludes, a correct psychometrical instrument, whether the law permits her to be used as a means of diagnosis or not.

CHANGING ASPECTS OF REASON AND FAITH.

The writer of a review of Mr. A. W. Benn's 'History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century,' in the 'Westminster Gazette,' reminds us how greatly the standard of religious orthodoxy has changed during the last century, and 'how far Biblical studies, scientific discoveries and ethical criticism have either eliminated or transformed beliefs which were held without question at the beginning of the period.' He points out that the opposition between reason and faith is to be distinguished from the opposition between science or criticism and the dogmas of particular churches, and even says that 'it would be possible to concede the victory to the Rationalists over the whole field of scriptural criticism and yet to say that the religious spirit had received fresh energy from the change.' A historian writing from this point of view, he says, 'might point out that during the whole of the time that Rationalism has been encroaching upon dogma, science had become subtly spiritualised; that the materialism which was supposed to be the last word thirty years ago had given place to a scientific mysticism in which the boundaries of life and death and matter and spirit faded each into the other. He could point among scientific men to an expectancy of miracles to come, which in a theologian might be denounced as superstition or credulity—to a conception of the world as quivering in all its parts with unknown forces which baffle the imagination and transcend language. This is not to say that science is irrational; the scientific habit of mind requires us to believe that all processes can be rationalised if we can discover the reason. But the wider sweep given to speculation is on the imaginative and religious side an immense compensation for the encroachments which Rationalism has made on religion stated in dogmatic propositions. The older Rationalists believed themselves to be defending reason against credulity and superstition; and in that respect they did real service to mankind. But a great many of them also supposed that the secrets of the universe were on the verge of exhaustion, and that man would shortly be in a position to see the beginning and the end of everything by bringing his experimental philosophy to bear upon accumulated facts. In that respect, at all events, Rationalism received a considerable set-back at the end of the last century, and though no one in these days believes the nature of things to be irrational, more people than thirty years ago believe it to be unsearchable.'

The fact is, that science is gradually extending its methods, both experimental and other, further and further into the fields formerly pronounced inaccessible and forbidden to it, and no one can yet say how far this advance may continue. In its contest with religion the mistake made on the one side is that of claiming all truth as capable of scientific demonstration, and on the other of arbitrarily limiting the sphere of intellectual research. The human mind has always accepted certain truths independently of the power of science to demonstrate them, and may calmly await the forward march of science, confident that truth must always be in agreement with itself.

A HYPNOTIC HOSPITAL.—A telegram from New York, dated May 9th, states that Professor J. H. Hyslop, the former Principal of Columbia University Psychological Department, announced in a public address his ambition to establish a hospital to treat by hypnotism all cases described as 'supernormal.' These, he said, would include cases of hallucination, secondary personality, psychic epilepsy, neurasthenia, functional and mental diseases. Professor Hyslop is reported to have said that, pending the establishment of such a hospital, he has become a peripatetic healer, traversing the streets and public places where he is likely to find drunkards. These he promptly cures

LAW IN THE SUPERNATURAL REALM.

Miss Lilian Whiting, in the 'Banner of Light,' quotes the dictum of Paracelsus: 'The beginning of wisdom is the beginning of supernatural power,' and comments upon it by saying:—

'The word supernatural no longer has a mysterious and even incredible significance. The supernatural is not a synonym for the miraculous, the impossible; for that which occurs in defiance of law; but, rather, that which occurs in accord and in full harmony with law on the superphysical plane. The higher law may, at any time, supersede the lower, but the one is as fully in accord with the eternal verities as is the other. Nature is a storehouse of infinite forces, all of which are at the disposal of man and ready to be harnessed for use. He has only to apply the right key, to discover, to recognise, the right method of appliance, to learn how to co-operate with these potencies which have a transforming effect on his environment.

'One of the special problems of latter-day Spiritualism, in its phenomenal aspects, has been that of materialisation. A French scientist, Monsieur Gaston Méry, has recently said: "The phenomenon called materialisation has entered the sphere of official science. It can now be discussed; it is no longer permissible to deny it purely and simply."

'Nothing has appeared to be more entirely in the realm of the supernatural, so-called, than the phenomenon of materialisation; but if, as Paracelsus declared in the assertion above quoted, "The beginning of wisdom is the beginning of supernatural power," so the converse, too, is true; and the beginning of (apparent) "supernatural" power may be the beginning of wisdom. The problem of materialisation is as old as are the records of apparitions. For what is an apparition but a "materialised" spirit? For that matter, what are we all, at the present time, but materialised spirits? The physical body is the appointed instrument through which the spirit can relate itself to the physical world and accomplish its work; and that the body should thus be kept in effective working condition is as obvious as that a writer should keep his pen, or a painter his brushes, in good condition for work.'

After alluding to Professor Richet's investigations at Algiers, Miss Whiting quotes Professor Duclos, director of the Pasteur Institute, as saying that 'the immortality of the soul has been denied because it was concealed from us; but we have confidence in science and in the conquering power of human thought when brought to bear upon the occult ways of the soul,' and concludes:—

'The more extended the researches into the vast unexplored territory of mind and matter, the more certainly does the student find occult phenomena to be subject to natural laws, and to be as legitimate on their own plane as are any phenomena on cruder or lower and more obvious planes.'

TRANSITION OF MR. G. R. WILKINSON.

On Thursday, the 17th inst., at his home in Manchester, after a paralytic stroke, Mr. Gilbert Robinson Wilkinson passed peacefully to spirit life, in his eighty-first year. He was the second son of the late Rev. William Wilkinson, vicar of Glenthams, Lincolnshire, where he was born on July 6th, 1825, and educated. He afterwards assisted Dr. Wild at the London Academy of Music, by looking after the financial business connected with the Students' Concerts, and in 1858 married Miss Margaret Floyd, sister of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, in the Manchester Cathedral. For twenty-two years he was cashier under the Manchester Carriage and Tramways Company, until failing eyesight and paralysis compelled his retirement. During the last two or three years he was totally blind, an affliction which he bore with exemplary patience.

A private service, conducted by Mr. J. J. Morse, was held at his late home on the morning of the 22nd inst., at which the relatives and a few friends were present, and the *cortège* subsequently proceeded to the Harpurhey Cemetery, where the interment took place in the family grave, Mr. Morse again conducting the funeral service. Representatives from the Manchester Central Spiritual Association and the Salford Spiritual Church, as well as many other persons, were present. Floral emblems from the Spiritualist bodies above named were prominent among those sent by relations and friends. Mrs. Wilkinson will, we are sure, receive the sincere sympathy and

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

'Communism.'

SIR,—I cannot think of a better term than 'communism' to convey the particular idea set forth by Mr. James Macbeth Bain in his book entitled 'The Brotherhood of Healers,' which was so ably reviewed by Mr. Wake Cook, in 'LIGHT' of May 5th. It is true that communism is 'in bad odour' in certain quarters, as Mr. Wake Cook pointed out; but so was Christianity in the early days, and so is Spiritualism even now—there is nothing in that; it only shows that the majority lacks the power which the minority possesses for perceiving the particular phase of the good introduced at certain times.

Mr. Cook tells us that the communism introduced by the apostles, 'flushed in the glorious after-glow of the departed Christ, . . . led to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira.' This is a curious inversion of the logical conclusion to be drawn from the story. Obviously the introduction of better laws or better rules of conduct must necessarily in any age lead to the revelation of sin. The good can never be the cause of sin. Hence, the act of revealing sin is an index of the change which the social organism is undergoing in its effort to adjust itself to the newer and higher conditions of being. Therefore, instead of saying with Mr. Cook that the communism of the apostles 'led to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira,' and consequently to the exhibition of the impracticability of communism, we must say, conversely, that the sin of Ananias and Sapphira showed the need of a communistic conception, and that the sin which this conception revealed was a disruptive force within the social organism.

Christianity brought with it the sublime conceptions of Fatherhood of God and of brotherhood and sisterhood among men—the true communism. Ananias and Sapphira failed to grasp the meaning of this revelation, being still under the dominion of the lower self. Hence the concealment and its tragic end.

Mr. Cook admits the intrinsic excellence of communism, for he tells us that 'communism may be indulged as a pious millennial aspiration. . . . But, surely, what is ideally correct can become also practically correct. Were this not so man's aspirations would be useless and even worthless. There could be no advancement for we should always be exclaiming 'Impossible!' Success or failure depends on whether we say yes or no. If, with Teufelsdröckh-Carlyle, we abandon the Everlasting No and utter the Everlasting Yes, we shall have the pleasure of seeing the ideal translating itself into the practical.

The communism Mr. Bain had in view when writing 'The Brotherhood of Healers' was surely the ideal concept—a fundamental truth depending on the 'Universal process of mediation.' At least that is how I understand it. Our coming into the consciousness of this process must necessarily generate the communistic sense, here and now—not only in the millennium. Communism in this sense is a necessary concomitant of the consciousness of the 'process of mediation.' The two are inseparable, and the one may be taken as a measure of the other.

This has nothing whatever to do with the French Commune, obviously.

Mr. Bain's book is loaded with matter of the deepest philosophic interest, helpful in the highest degree. The Jacob's ladder of physical, psychical and spiritual service, and the light given on the possible meaning of vicarious suffering, are of the utmost importance. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bain may find leisure to enlarge the book and especially to amplify the illustrations in aid of its beautiful philosophy.—Yours, &c.,

BEN DAVIES.

150, Palmerston-road, Bowes Park, N.

'A Mysterious Powder.'

SIR,—I have not received the letter referred to by Mr. B. Woodcock, and if he will give me date and place of postage I will report the matter to the Secretary of the G.P.O. and have it traced. I have received two letters only from Mr. Woodcock, and they contain nothing about the composition of the powder. In a footnote to his communication in your issue of April 28th, you state that he informs you that he knows nothing of its composition.

As to the sample that he sent to me, for which I paid him two shillings and sixpence, and of which I have a small quantity left, I am still of opinion that it is cedarwood *only*, and valueless for occult purposes.—Yours, &c.,

BASIL A. COCHRANE.

32, George-street, Manchester-square, W.

'Automatic Writing.'

SIR,—In answer to 'E. P.'s' inquiry in 'LIGHT' of May 12th, p. 227, I may say that the 'beautiful, helpful, and comforting teachings' of alleged spirit guides are of a general nature, but specific questions remain invariably unanswered or are vague in the extreme. This makes 'E. P.,' and others who possess a critical and open mind, halt, and ask: 'How am I to know whether the writing is due to the action of subliminal consciousness or is what it purports to be?'

I think, from 'E. P.'s' letter, that the vague, contradictory, and confusing answers given to the questions put, justify the conclusion that the automatic writing is not from discarnate intelligences—either of a high or low order, and I would refer 'E. P.' to Thomson Jay Hudson's 'Law of Psychic Phenomena,' especially as regards the séances with the automatic writing medium and the slate-writing medium, which afford conclusive proof of the action of subliminal mind.—Yours, &c.,

W. H. E.

Health in Relation to Psychic Power.

SIR,—I have often pondered over the precise relation which health bears to the manifestation of psychic power, especially in regard to healing; and it appears to me that practical psychology in general would be greatly facilitated by correct ideas on the subject. With this object I would suggest a discussion of personal experiences and of convictions founded on observed facts, apart from mere theorising.

As to healing, the points especially worthy of consideration may be set down as follows:—

- (1) Health in relation to (a) conscious, and (b) unconscious or spontaneous production of psychic phenomena.
- (2) What effect has ill-health on a healer's power of benefiting others?
- (3) What is really the result of treatment at the hands of an unhealthy healer?
- (4) When the disease seems to be aggravated by treatment, is that to be taken as a hopeful sign, or as a warning to desist?
- (5) What effect is produced upon the healer himself by the exercise of his psychic power upon others?

I may add that a temporary aggravation is said to have formed the 'crisis' of Mesmer, who looked forward to it, and always tried to produce it; but I am not now specially alluding to magnetic treatment.—Yours, &c.,

Rawalpindi, India.

N. J. ARRATON.

Symbols.

SIR,—Mr. Jast, in his address, reported in 'LIGHT' of the 19th inst., said that the circle, the cross, the triangle, the pentagram, &c., formed a 'bridge between the physical and the metaphysical worlds,' but beyond the description of the symbols and the ideas they represent, he did not, it seems to me, give us much assistance for the practical application, in our daily lives, of the laws of spirit which are symbolised under those and other figures. Practical mysticism requires something more than mere study if we are to alter our conditions within and without so that we are fitted to receive the great manifestations of spirit.

Mysticism, to be of practical use in our present evolutionary state, must take in the whole of the truth, and must be applicable to all members of the human race, with a symbology and an interpretation suited for modern times. The four great religions of the world were originally constructed by initiates of the highest grade under divine authority, but through the lapse of ages and the intermixture of false doctrines, they are becoming impotent, and Modern Spiritualism is doing a great work in drawing science and religion together, but at present it is not sufficiently far-reaching in its love, wisdom, and power. A brotherhood (with a counterpartal sisterhood) is arising in the West, with irresistible power and love behind it, which is preparing and straightening the path which leads from earth to At-one-ment with the Father. The angelic beings who watch over humanity give, this time, a universal religion, with a Bible that embraces all people, and a science that gives the laws ruling solar systems, and when the light from this supreme arc permeates the people of earth it will transform all that is dark on the earth in all states of manifestation.

The supreme hierarchies and the holy assemblies, known to all advanced initiates, are even now sitting in holy council, preparing for the coming light, and a book on Modern Symbology is being prepared, including combinations of new and ancient symbols, giving interpretations of the great universal truths in modern language, with their practical application, in a manner suitable to the modern initiate.—Yours, &c.,

W. H. WILSON.

Bishop Phillips Brooks and Spiritualism.

SIR,—The following extract from a sermon by the late Bishop of Massachusetts, which I came across recently, may be of interest to your readers. Bishop Brooks was a pretty big man, and is universally acknowledged to stand in the very front of American preachers. In his day he was most undoubtedly one of the greatest of living Americans. The passage occurs in a sermon entitled, 'Natural and Spiritual Forces.'—Yours, &c.,

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLERGYMAN.

'But who can say that the time will not come when, even to those who still live here on earth, the unseen worlds shall no longer be unseen? In all times there have been men who, at special moments, have seemed to see beyond the ordinary bounds of sense, and actually with their eyes to behold the forms of beings who belonged not to the earth but to the heavens. Who can say that some day, centuries off, when the old world shall have been purified by vastly more of pain and labour, it may not be given to men to see those beings of other worlds than ours who even now are round us, and who, we know, are living and seeking the same righteousness with us?'—PHILLIPS BROOKS,

Sermon, 'Natural and Spiritual Forces.'

Summer Social Gatherings.

SIR,—As the winter session of the London Spiritualist Alliance is now over, some of the Members and Associates are turning their attention to summer outings and social events, especially as their efforts last summer were so conspicuously successful.

I shall be glad to receive suggestions and invitations from friends who will again co-operate by inviting us or arranging for picnics, open-air gatherings, &c.

As a commencement, in reponse to my advertisement in 'LIGHT' of the 12th inst., that I was 'at home' on the 13th inst., at the Workmen's Hall, Stratford, some fifty friends met, and we had two interesting meetings, with tea and music. At the evening public meeting Dr. Berks Hutchinson presided, and many local friends and visitors took part. So unanimous was the spirit of fellowship that I trust similar united services may be held periodically at different centres, and I shall be glad if the secretaries of societies will communicate with me, at my new address, Atlantic House, 65, Capel-road, Forest Gate, E.—Yours, &c.,

(MRS.) E. M. WALTER.

South Africa: A Warning.

SIR,—After reading in 'LIGHT,' of March 31st, the report of Mrs. Ellen Green's visit to Johannesburg and the appeal for workers, I consider it my duty to utter a word of warning to mediums who may contemplate coming here. At each meeting during Mrs. Green's visit crowds of people came in when the lecture was nearly over, evidently just for the clairvoyant descriptions, and as soon as the last one was given they went out again, without waiting for the proper closing of the meeting. That is the kind of audience we get now at Johannesburg. I am afraid the people here are not spiritually hungry, but they *are* hungry for phenomena. My reason for writing is to let mediums know what to expect if they come here.—Yours, &c.,

Johannesburg.

A SPIRITUALIST.

April 25th, 1906.

'Good Causes and Bad Arguments.'

SIR,—I am much obliged to Mr. E. Wake Cook for his letter in last week's 'LIGHT,' in which he indicates the 'bad arguments' which he thinks vegetarians should avoid. If, as he avers, there is no cruelty or pain in the production of flesh-meats, then most certainly the 'humane argument' is a bad one. I fear, however, notwithstanding my admiration for Mr. Cook's power, that I, personally, am not prepared to accept his assurance that slaughtering is painless, especially in view of the fact that my own impressions of slaughtering were quite the reverse of Mr. Cook's. I think we must both visit a slaughter-house now in our maturer years, and revise our boyish impressions. Meanwhile, I may mention that I have a friend who, with three others, had, as part of a course of preparation for a public appointment, to study slaughtering in a model up-to-date slaughter-house. They had never thought of vegetarianism before; they have never touched flesh-foods since.—Yours, &c.,

C.

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.

STRATFORD.—IDMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE, E.—On Sunday last Mr. Jones's address was well received. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., discussion; at 7 p.m., several speakers. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday a sale of work will be held.

HACKNEY.—SIGDON-ROAD SCHOOL, DALSTON-LANE, N.E.—On Sunday last Mrs. Effie Bathe, who was very cordially received, lectured on 'The Heaven and Hell of Spiritualism,' and ably answered a number of interesting questions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Robert King.—N. R.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Messrs. Abbott, Ashley, Jee, and Spencer gave interesting experiences. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Harris; Wednesday, at 8 p.m., clairvoyance by Mrs. Roberts, of Leicester.—W. T.

OXFORD CIRCUS.—22, PRINCE'S-STREET.—On Sunday last Mrs. M. H. Wallis gave a powerful and uplifting address on 'Spiritual Spiritualism,' and well recognised clairvoyant descriptions to a good audience. For special programme for Sunday next see advertisement.—P. E. B.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last Mr. E. W. Wallis gave an eloquent and stirring address on 'Some Plain Truths about *post mortem* Life.' Mr. George Spriggs in the chair. Sunday next, Mr. W. Laughton will speak on 'Psychology.'—A. G. W.

CHISWICK.—110, HIGH-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last a large circle was held. In the evening Mr. G. Harris gave an interesting address on the society's motto, 'Forward.' Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. Samuel Keyworth. Choir practice at 10.45 a.m.—A. P.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Tayler Gwinn's address on 'Lead us into Truth' was much enjoyed, and a good after-meeting was held. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., address by Miss A. V. Earle. On Thursday, May 31st, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Roberts, of Leicester.—J. P.

BRIGHTON.—COMPTON HALL, 17, COMPTON-AVENUE.—On Sunday last good addresses were given by Mr. R. Boddington. Speaker on Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mr. H. Boddington. Hall open on Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. for inquiries.—A. C.

PECKHAM.—CHEPSTOW HALL, 139, PECKHAM-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Powell Williams gave an earnest address and clairvoyant descriptions, several being excellent tests. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. F. G. Clarke. Whit Sunday, Miss A. V. Earle. June 6th, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Powell Williams.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—At the half-yearly meeting on Sunday last the officers reported good progress during the past six months. Messrs. Adams, Hough, Thomas and C. Cousins gave addresses. On Sunday and Monday next, Mrs. Roberts, of Leicester. On Sunday, June 3rd, Mrs. Podmore. Social evening gathering on June 9th.

BALHAM.—19, RAMSDEN-ROAD (OPPOSITE THE PUBLIC LIBRARY).—On Sunday evening last an address was given on 'Angelic Associations,' and Mr. Morley gave clairvoyant descriptions. Services on Wednesday next, at 8.15 p.m., and on Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., with clairvoyant descriptions and replies to questions.—W. E.

EALING.—35, WARWICK-ROAD.—On the 18th inst., Mr. E. W. Wallis gave an eloquent address on 'Spiritualism for Thinkers,' and answered several questions. On Friday, June 1st, at 7.30 prompt, friends in Ealing and neighbourhood are invited to meet here to discuss the advisability of hiring a room for regular meetings.—F. M. F.

CLAPHAM INSTITUTE, GAUDEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Boddington gave the spirit name of 'Violet' to the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Murrell, and Winifred as her earth name. Mr. Boddington afterwards gave a vigorous address. On Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle and Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. Conolley. On Thursday, at 8.15 p.m., psychometry and clairvoyance. Silver collection.—H. Y.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday last Mrs. Roberts, of Leicester, gave a splendid address on 'The Orthodox God and the God of Nature.' Mr. Windoe presided, and gave clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. J. Macdonald-Moore on 'Magnetic Healing.' Tuesday, at 2.30 p.m., Mrs. Roberts (ladies only). At 8 p.m., and on Thursday, at 8 p.m., circles.—E. A.

WISBECH PUBLIC HALL.—On Sunday last Mr. Ward gave a stirring address on 'Jesus the Revealer of God.'—H. S.