

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

No. 1,446.—VOL. XXVIII. [Registered as] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1908. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.

CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way... .. 457	Spiritualism—Mystic, Mysterious, Occult, or Rational?	464
L. S. A. Notices	Science Proving the Spiritual Universe	464
Spirit Return a Hundred Years Ago	Psychic Research and Spiritualism	465
To Correspondents	A Painting Medium	466
An Erratic Genius Analysed ..	Spiritualism in Belgium	466
The Development of a Medium ..	Jottings	466
Spiritualism a Basis of Religion ..	Society Work	468
The Fear of Death		
A Veteran Spiritualist's Experiences		

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Quite quietly but quite firmly, tenderly but resolutely, we must, at fitting times, make a stand against the tendency to accept too readily the statements of the unseen people as to their identity. No harm will be done if those statements are respectfully received and there left. The harm is done when they are too easily believed and hastily acted upon. The need for wise caution is great.

Some time ago a very curious report of a police court application attracted our attention. The application was made by a man who had not treated his wife at all well. They separated and, after a time, the wife disappeared. The man began to see visions. One in particular he described to the magistrate:—

A wrangling took place outside his bedroom window, as though a dozen men were quarrelling outside. They all seemed to be 'sniffing' at the window. One of them said he was Christ, another said he was Jehovah, another that he was Buddha, and another that he was Mahomet, and they were all wrangling as to what punishment should be given to him for having treated his wife in the way he had done. Since then he had had several visions. The object of his application was to find out the whereabouts of his wife and daughter, and he hoped the Press would assist him.

The average man of the world would say that this vision was the result of an over-excited brain, produced partly by remorse and partly by restlessness; and perhaps the average man of the world would be right: but it by no means follows that it was all mere imagination. What if the unseen people can use remorse and restlessness for their own purposes? The point is that in doing so they could easily play upon the brain and pretend to be Christ, Jehovah, Buddha and Mahomet. Such cases are quite frequent. All we say is that they need prudent self-restraint and patient care.

Mr. H. C. Daniel's minute book on 'Science and Empiricism' (London: The Scientific Press) has, at all events, one notable excellence:—it is exceedingly short. We really mean that as praise, so far as it goes. It tackles five mighty questions—Biology, Pathology, Theology, Education and Government, and it disposes of the lot in fourteen pages. A Preface and an Introduction only occupy six more, and the writer manages to get in such shots as 'empiricism or theoretical rubbish,' 'a gross materialism and an imbecile intellectualism,' 'of all dangerous absurdities or imbecilities, surely this is one,' 'such fustian idiosyncrasy,' 'so hopelessly arrogant, so utterly imbecile.'

We need not inform 'the gentle reader' that this teacher has convictions and—a style.

But he has sense, too, as his curt little sections show. Here is the longest half of his deliverance on Education:—

A man may be a social or political hero, he may be a genius in art, literature, or music, &c., and still be a self-conscious blackguard. Another man may be an ignoramus as far as the foregoing qualifications are concerned, and yet be a self-conscious hero or genius. The first lives upon vanity and fame, principle burns his very finger-tips. The second scorns the other's bag of tricks, and sticks self-consciously to his duty.

Before all, it is character, and not talent, which is the support of a personal universe. All the secular teaching of our universities could never create a Shakespeare or a Newton, neither can it save a nation.

Away, therefore, with all the clap-trap criticism, and let us have healthy minds if we would have healthy times.

Education without character is not only useless, but in its superficial officiousness it is also hopeless. To be out of touch of this fundamental fact, therefore, is to be blind to all that which constitutes education.

There is a great deal of pedantic chatter going on just now about 'Pragmatism,' and yet nobody seems to be clear as to what Pragmatism is. One expert says there are thirteen Pragmatisms, and he confesses he cannot hedge round one of them. They are like the thirteen little white pigs that could not be counted because they were all so much alike and not one of them would keep still.

We always understood that Pragmatism related to causes and consequences, and have taken for granted that a pragmatic view of anything had, for its *motif*, its tendency. Speaking in the rough, that is not only legitimate but it is wise, as a mode of procedure. We are all only feelers after the good and the true, and it is surely our best policy to aim at that which promises best results. Thus, a certain critic of Pragmatism nevertheless says:—

Experience affords some help. In the long past, some theories have been found to be livable, to be, when believed and acted upon, biologically serviceable. More important yet, for we are interested not merely in existence but in noble living, certain ways of reacting toward the world have been found to produce grand and beautiful lives. The results we care most for have been achieved when men and women have assumed that this world is a place for a manly and womanly life, when they have taken and kept the way of courage, hope and love, when they have lived in the conviction that loyalty to the highest, even on the part of the humblest, is the supreme good and has more than temporal significance. Our theodicies, we may as well frankly admit, are all failures. We cannot explain away all the cruelties and brutalities in the universe. Yet in spite of the facts that depress us and the arguments that threaten to reduce us to despair, it is significant that those men have lived most nobly and beautifully, most satisfactorily to themselves and helpfully to others, who have lived as if they were citizens of a moral universe, of God's world. In this spiritual situation we are necessarily pragmatists. Not only is it legitimate to decide which way we shall adventure our lives, but we must do so. And if we are religious men, it is because we have resolved to trust our moral sentiments, because we are following, far off it may be, but still following, and counselling others to follow, those heroic souls who, in the darkest hours and most desperate situations, have said of the God who is a name for our moral ideals, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'

'The Harbinger of Light' continues its useful and informing extracts and translations from foreign journals. In a late number we find the following; the first curious as showing how, even in the Church of Rome, there is progress in our direction: the second encouraging as illustrating how, all over the world, the evidence is compelling belief among men who will be valuable allies:—

'El Faro,' published at Bogota, in Columbia, reports that the worshipers in the church of St. Francis on Sunday, the 2nd of November last, were surprised by a sermon in favour of Spiritualism preached by Father Gordon, who declared that it could not be contrary to Catholicism, inasmuch as the bases of its faith were verified by miracles and apparitions of the saints who were adored at the altars of the Church, and that the life of Jesus Himself proved Him to be a powerful medium both for materialisations and for apparitions.

The 'Revista de Estudios Psiquicos,' of Valparaiso, publishes an article by Dr. Gustave Geley, in which, as the result of patient and scientific investigations of the subject, he asserts the truth of psychic phenomena, and states that, in his opinion, the idealistic origin of these phenomena will furnish us with a key to the solution of the formidable enigma offered by super-normal psychology, and to a still greater extent of all the difficulties of normal psychology. The doctor is the author of some highly important works, one of which has been crowned by the Faculty of Medicine in Lyons.

'The Harbinger of Light' reports the saying of 'a teacher of conspicuous intelligence in the Unseen,' that our planet 'is one of the hells of the universe.' We half believe it, and in one way it is consoling—consoling to those of us who are shrinking from leaving it, and consoling to all of us, as suggesting that the unknown is better than the known.

'Fragments,' by M. H. J. H. and L. C. B. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society) is a book of short poems, some, indeed, mere fragments: but the book gives more than the title promises; for the title looks thin and weak, but the majority of the forty-four pieces are stout and strong, though varying greatly in subject and style. The little book has, in fact, a great deal of character in it. Here is a bit of it—one of the simplest, but it indicates the strength and delicacy of most of the work:—

LADDERS.

Five sages sat a-talking, a-talking hard and fierce,
And that which they disputed o'er was grave—
For each had found a treasure, some truths concerning God,
And each was sure that his alone could save.

The Christian and the Theist, the Mussulman, the Jew,
The Buddhist, with his creed so cold and pure—
Each one had fought the battle, shown light was his alone,
Yet none another's blindness seemed to cure.

A child drew softly near them, a boy with dreamy eyes,
And face illumined now, though somewhat tired—
He'd heard his elders talking, heard all the words so wise,
And each in turn his childish heart had fired.

The sages turned and saw him—observed the shining eyes—
And silence fell upon them for a space,
Then gently fell the question, 'What thinkest thou, my child?'
And all were watching now the childish face.

'Oh, it is all so lovely!'—the words fell soft and glad—
'I've heard you all—I've listened all the time!
'It's like a lot of ladders, all leading up to God,
'And all will serve, if only we will climb!'

THE Greenfield Congregational Church, Bradford, of which the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams is the able and progressive pastor, prints a four-page calendar, monthly, and in the September issue nearly a column is devoted to extracts from the leading article in 'LIGHT' of May 23rd last, entitled 'The Vaster God.' Mr. Williams is a staunch co-worker with the Rev. R. J. Campbell in the 'New Theology' movement, and has published an excellent little pamphlet called 'The Widest Door of the Soul'—the spiritual door.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A CONVERSAZIONE

Of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held

IN THE SALON OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS,

SUFFOLK STREET, PALL MALL, S.W.,

ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22ND, AT 7 P.M.

Music, Social Intercourse, and Refreshments during the Evening.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Members and Associates may have tickets for *themselves and their friends* on payment of the nominal charge of *one shilling each*, other visitors *two shillings each*.

To facilitate the arrangements it is respectfully requested that Members and Associates will make application for tickets, accompanied by remittances, not later than Saturday, October 17th, to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the ordinary annual subscriptions of new Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as covering the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1909.

The following meetings will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, S.W. (near the National Gallery):—

1908.

Nov. 5.—Mr. Angus McArthur, on 'The Spiritualism of Socrates: A Study in Pre-Christian Psychics.'

Nov. 19.—H.E., W. H. Abdullah Quilliam, B.A., LL.D. [Sheikh-ul-Islam of the British Isles], on 'From Orthodoxy to Islam.'

Dec. 3.—Mr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe, B.Sc., on 'Physical Conditions of Life in the Next World.'

Dec. 17.—Interesting Personal Experiences will be given by Mrs. Annie Boddington, Mrs. Imison (Nurse Graham), and Mr. W. Kensett Styles.

[Particulars of subsequent meetings will be given in due course.]

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

MEETINGS AT 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.,

FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—On *Tuesday*, October 6th, and on the 13th, Mrs. Annie Boddington will give clairvoyant descriptions, at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each. Mr. J. J. Vango on the 20th and 27th.

TRANCE ADDRESS.—On *Wednesday*, October 7th, at 8 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis will deliver an address on 'Mediumship: Its Use and Abuse.' Admission 1s.; Members and Associates free. No tickets required.

PSYCHICAL SELF-CULTURE.—On *Thursdays*, commencing October 1st, at 4 p.m., Members and Associates are invited to hold informal meetings for psychical self-culture, without the aid of professional mediums.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—On *Friday afternoons*, commencing October 2nd, at 3 o'clock, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, under spirit control, will reply to questions relating to the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism, mediumship, and life here and on 'the other side.' Admission 1s.; Members and Associates free. Visitors should be prepared with written inquiries of *general interest* to submit to the control.

MEMBERS have the privilege of introducing *one friend* to the *Wednesday and Friday* meetings without payment.

SPIRIT HEALING.—On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Mr. A. Rex, the healing medium, will attend between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., to afford Members and Associates and their friends an opportunity to avail themselves of his services in magnetic healing under spirit control. As Mr. Rex is unable to treat more than four patients on each occasion, appointments must be made in advance by letter, addressed to the Secretary, Mr. E. W. Wallis. Fees, one treatment, 7s. 6d.; course of three, 15s.

SPIRIT RETURN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The following extract from a letter from a gentleman in Barbadoes to a friend, published in a London magazine one hundred and fifteen years ago, has been copied by Mr. E. D. Hammond, of New York, for 'The Progressive Thinker,' and appeared in that paper on August 22nd last:—

Many people will not believe that departed spirits can appear to mortal eyes, and among the incredulous I was one, until convinced to the contrary by the narration of a very affecting story of one that appeared to a youth lately deceased in this place, and which has been so strongly confirmed that I am no longer a heretic.

A great friendship existed between Thomas Ostrahan and Robert Straker, two youths of this island, which was contracted at school in England, and continued after their arrival here. Ostrahan died lately. Straker attended his funeral, and expressed lively marks of sorrow at the death of his friend. On his return at night to rest in his chamber, he there ruminated on Ostrahan's death, and consoled himself for his loss in a hope that his friend would enjoy a degree of happiness in the invisible world that he could not have expected here. Whilst he was thus employed, he on a sudden saw a glimmering light at a distance from him which seemed to approach near him, and directly there appeared to his sight a form that made every nerve in him tremble with fear, and so wrought on him that he sank speechless in his bed. After some little time he recovered from his swoon and saw the same form sitting in a chair by the side of his bed, and notwithstanding the terrific appearance of it he recognised the features of his late departed friend, Ostrahan, who thus saluted him:

'Do not be terrified, my dear friend, at my appearance. Be of good courage. Do not be surprised.'

At these words he re-collected his faltering spirits, and offered to take him by the hand.

'No, my dear Bob,' says the spirit, 'I am not to be touched by mortal hands. I am yet ignorant where I am to go, but at present I have received a command from the Almighty [so regarded by him] to warn you of an impending danger that hangs over your brother's head, which he is yet ignorant of. Tell your father that two intimate friends and companions of your brother will shortly seduce him to the most abandoned wickedness, and that unless he uses some precaution to prevent it, your brother will inevitably be lost. I know you love him, and would not willingly see him undone, therefore fail not to acquaint your father. You, yourself, will shortly die; at what hour I know not, and another of your friends will shortly follow. In order to convince you that I am commissioned from above I will tell you some of your father's thoughts. He designed to have you married at the age of nineteen to Miss W., but this thought and design he has never communicated to any person living. As a further proof, on Sunday night you will be drawn to church by a cause you yet know not of, and you will there hear the Parson S— use these particular words [repeating them]. Fail not to inform your father of your brother's danger.' At this he departed from his sight.

Straker was greatly surprised at what was told him, but feared to communicate it to the family. The Sunday night following, he attended the funeral of a neighbour to church, and there heard the minister S— repeat in his sermon the very sentences which the spirit informed him would be said. This made a deep impression on him, and he returned home very melancholy, of which his mother took notice, and asked him the reason. He told her he should shortly die. She asked how he came to have such a thought, and in answer to her question he told her of his friend Ostrahan's appearance to him, which she laughed at, and told him it was a dream.

'Madame,' says he (a little angry at her unbelief), 'since you will have it so, it is a dream.' At night he retired to rest with his brother as usual, but being kept awake some time by uneasy reflections on what the spirit had told him respecting his brother, he on a sudden saw a very bright light illuminating the whole chamber, which was so beautiful and

striking that it both pleased and terrified him. At the same instant he jumped out of bed in order to alarm the family, but hearing a fluttering kind of noise he looked toward the place and saw his friend arrayed in celestial glory standing before him. Never did his eyes behold a form so beautiful. He was dressed in a long white robe that carried with it an air of inexpressible grandeur. His cheeks appeared adorned with a rosy-coloured hue that surpassed the beauty of the blooming rose. A glorious illumination sparkled around him. Straker beheld the sight with the most rapturous ecstasy, while the spirit stood some minutes silent to indulge the admiration of his earthly friend. At length this celestial inhabitant broke silence and said:—

'My dear friend, once more I am come to visit you. I am in a place of happiness, and sent by the Most High [as he conceived] to repeat the former command respecting that youth who now lies sleeping in the bed. Why did you delay communicating it to your father?'

Straker replied: 'I designed to acquaint my father of it, but my mother ridiculing it as a dream prevented me. Will you permit me to awaken my brother? Your warning him of his danger might have stronger weight.'

'No, it is not permitted,' repeated the spirit. 'Should you awaken him he might see me, because I am at present visible to human eyes; but it would also oblige me to depart instantly. You will yourself bid adieu to this world in a few days! Be resigned and expect the stroke.'

'I am not afraid of death,' replied Straker. 'I think I am prepared to obey the summons of the Most High.'

'Three hours before your death,' says the other, 'I shall appear to you. Be mindful of the injunction laid on you.'

He then walked very leisurely towards the open window. Straker had resolution enough to follow him, and trod upon the skirt of the white robe, but it did not seem to feel like a common substance. At this the shining seraph turned round, and most benignly smiled upon him, and then appeared to soar up to the heavens.

The morning after this, being Monday, Straker told the particulars of this visitation to his father, who was very much alarmed at the recital, and felt all the agonies of a tender parent, at the afflicting thought of losing his beloved child.

'My dear son,' says he, 'I am convinced of the truth of what you have told me, from the circumstance of your marriage. I designed to marry you at the age of nineteen years. I must be content to lose you, my dear Bob, since it is the will of the Almighty. I hope you have made good use of your late hours.'

'Yes, sir,' says the son, 'I have endeavoured to prepare myself by prayer and meditation for the awful summons.'

Straker a few hours after penned every particular of this visitation, and directed it in a letter to his father. He was soon after seized with a vomiting, which turned in a short time to its opposite disorder. After being seated in a chair, he presently raised his drooping head and cried, 'I come, I come, my dear friend. I will soon follow.'

His friends around him being surprised, asked him the reason of his exclamation. 'I have just seen,' says he, 'my dear friend, Thomas Ostrahan. I shall expire in three hours.'

On being told that the young lady he courted was in the house, he desired his friends to introduce her into his chamber. He then embraced her with great tenderness, and kissing her mournfully, exclaimed, 'Farewell, my dear M—! May heaven love you as I have done! Farewell, my dear friends!' After this he prostrated himself on his face, and after lying some time in that posture, he expired with a gentle sigh.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. MCGOWAN AND Co., FALKIRK.—Thank you for sending us the communication, which, however, we are unable to publish. The statements made that Jesus was not dead when taken from the cross, and that he afterwards revived and lived for some time, are not new—but they lack verification. The spirit *may* be telling the truth, but proof is needed.

A. S. BEST.—We wrote to you at Keswick, but the letter was returned owing to the insufficiency of the address.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a Conference meeting on Sunday, October 4th, at Old Council Chambers, Wakefield-street, East Ham. At 3 p.m. Mr. R. Boddington will open a discussion on 'Spiritualism *versus* Politics.' Speakers at 7 p.m., Messrs. G. T. Gwinn, R. Boddington, J. Adams, H. Wright. Tea provided at 5 o'clock, 6d. each.

AN ERRATIC GENIUS ANALYSED.

Lafcadio Hearn was regarded as a remarkable personality during his life, and now that his career on earth has closed, his temperament and character have been freely discussed and their peculiarities have been paraded somewhat unsparingly. Dr. George M. Gould, in his recent biography of this literary artist,* has analysed his character from the psychological point of view, and has presented a picture of a man of strange incongruities. Dr. Gould denies that Hearn can rightly be spoken of as a great man, or as a product of heredity or environment :—

Two talents he had, but these were far from constituting personal greatness. Deprived by Nature, by the necessities of his life, or by conscious intention, of religion, morality, scholarship, magnanimity, loyalty, character, benevolence, and other constituents of personal greatness, it is more than folly to endeavour to place him thus wrongly before the world. . . . Any attempt to estimate what effect heredity had in handing down the strange endowment we find in his early manhood is wholly futile. Moreover, in the last analysis, Hearn was no 'product of his environment.' The great, the distinctive, the dominating force which controlled and created Hearn's literary makings, his morbid vision, was not 'environment' as the critics and scientists mean by the term.

Lafcadio Hearn's great gift appears to have been an exquisitely sensitive receptivity, combined with the faculty of reproducing what he perceived, so as to convey the impression to others. His sensitiveness is represented as greater than his stability :—

Character is the action, or reaction, of personality against circumstances. To have character is to control circumstance: Hearn was always its slave. Except in one particular, the pursuit of literary excellence, Hearn had no character whatever. His was the most unresisting, most echo-like mind I have ever known. It was a perfect chameleon; he took for the time the colour of his surroundings. He was always the mirror of the friend of the instant, or if no friend was there, of the dream of the instant. He was, mentally and spiritually, almost perfectly an echo. His merit, almost his sole merit, and his unique skill lay in the strange faculty of colouring the echo with the hues and tints of heavenly rainbows and unearthly sunsets, all gleaming with a ghostly light that never was on sea and shore. . . . His was the rare power of the iridescent, the winged word. I think it was innate and spontaneous with him, a gift of the inscrutable, illogic, and fantastically generous-niggard fates.

What Hearn will be best remembered for, if not his best work, is his wonderful descriptions of Japan and its people. Yet Dr. Gould tells us that after fourteen years' residence in that country he could not read a Japanese book or speak to his wife and children in their own tongue. It is therefore all the more 'a tribute to the amazing delicacy and receptiveness of his mind that he should still have so accurately caught the Japanese spirit and so admirably conveyed it to us. . . . He finally endowed their national soul-life with a prismatic glory which they themselves had hardly suspected.'

If his strange descriptive faculty was exercised in spite of physical defects (for he was so short-sighted as to be all but blind), so also his philosophy seems not to have been the product of his mind. Dr. Gould tells us :—

Hearn could never make his writings and his art impulses square with his beloved materialistic, deterministic philosophy. He did not believe in soul or in souls, and yet his soul was always treating of souls, and showing the invisible thread of continuity which links souls to Soul. Therefore he is always happiest when his *daimon* breaks from the restraint of theory and fate, and pictures the play of free spirit, of soul unconquered by fate, of life victorious over death in some sad way or bright.

Thus Lafcadio Hearn might almost be said to have had a double personality, or a soul which, in his writings, shone out in defiance alike of body and mind. Dr. Gould well puts the contradiction between the man and his work when he says :—

What irony of fate it is that one almost blind should teach us non-users of our eyes the wonder and glory of colour; that the irreligious one should quicken our faith in the immaterial

and unseen; that a sensualist should strengthen our trust in the supersensual; that one whose body and life were unbeautiful should sing such exquisite songs of silent beauty that our straining ears can hardly catch the subtle and unearthly harmonies! For Hearn is another of many splendid illustrations of the old truth that a man's spirit may be more philosophic than his philosophy, more scientific than his science, more religious than his creed, more divine than his divinity.

Dr. Gould adds some interesting comments as to the way in which Hearn's defective vision influenced his choice of subjects and his mode of treating them, and says that he always rejected artificial aids to sight, apparently preferring his own idealisations to a too literal reality. 'With the subtle wisdom of the unconscious he refused to see plainly, because his successful work, his unique function, lay in the requickening of ancient sorrows, and of lost, aimless, and errant souls. He supplemented the deficiencies of vision with a vivid imagination, a perfect memory, and a perfection of touch' which refashioned and recoloured the world; and the impression is left upon the mind that if Hearn had seen the world more distinctly in form he would have rendered its spirit and its colouring less perfectly than he did through impression and intuition.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDIUM.

In February last we published some 'Answers to Questions' which were signed 'Mano,' and which purported to come from 'the other side.' The following particulars regarding his Spiritualistic experiences, which have been sent to us by the medium through whom 'Mano' communicates, will, we think, be of interest to new readers of 'LIGHT' especially. Our correspondent says :—

It is now more than a third of a century since I became a member of a local Spiritualist society, one of the first, attended séances, heard trance addresses, and saw what purported to be materialised forms. Keeping an open mind I determined to investigate the subject alone, without outside help or influence. I sat at a table, with a sheet of paper before me and a pencil in my fingers, and mentally asked whether any of my departed relatives or friends would use my hand and give me a message, but without result until I had sat a few times. One day my hand began to jerk about a little; gradually it moved quicker, and after scrawling about over the paper in an uncontrolled sort of way, began to form letters into unmeaning words. Then I got short replies to my questions, such as 'Yes' or 'No.' Gradually the answers lengthened, until at the end of a year they would cover a page or two. At first I was anxious to communicate with my relatives, although at that time I had not lost any of my close friends, or dear ones—but there are many on the other side now who were here then. Amongst the earliest messages I got one from 'Mano.' I was told that he was my 'guide,' and that if I would take his advice I should avoid trouble and disappointment. He strongly advised me only to allow such controls as he approved of to influence me. I neglected that advice, however, and suffered very much for a time in consequence. Readers of 'Zanoni,' by Lytton, will remember the 'Dweller on the Threshold,' whom Glyndon met when he acted against Mejnour's advice, and, by inhaling the elixir before he was prepared, passed across the threshold, with dire results. Figuratively I also met the 'Dweller on the Threshold,' and then found what a true friend I had in 'Mano.' Our friendship has grown with the passing years, until he has become my constant companion and adviser.

My progress has been like that of the rising tide. I have been caught in many a strong backwash, but, with the help of 'Mano' and other friends, I have always struggled through, and found myself at a higher point than I had reached before. After practising writing short sentences for some time, the message was written: 'We will magnetise you.' I asked what that meant, and then came: 'Stand up and give us control.' I stood up, allowing myself to remain quite passive, when, to my surprise, my hands began to make passes over my face and behind my head, but with quite different motions from any I have ever seen made by a mesmerist. I said I would allow this to proceed if the control promised to stop before I quite

* 'Concerning Lafcadio Hearn.' By GEORGE M. GOULD, M. D. T. Fisher Unwin, Adolphi-terrace, W.C. Price 8s. 6d. net.

lost consciousness. The promise being given, the passes continued, and I felt a pleasant lethargic sensation creeping over me, and saw waves of beautiful prismatic light following each other before my half-closed eyes (it was bright daylight at the time). My eyes were next closed very tightly, and I saw a marvellous pattern, traced with fine yellow and blue stars, which flashed and changed every moment. I experienced a short period of rapture which it is impossible to describe clearly—a species of absolute forgetfulness of the body—not sensuous, yet very real. My spirit friends have told me since that this was a foretaste of the pure pleasures of the life on the other side. When they have performed some service (and their lives are a continual round of services) this feeling comes to them, affecting their entire being, sending them forward to their next service strengthened and beautified.

From this time I made rapid progress, and began to write more by dictation than automatically. I appeared to hear the words, and my hand put them down rapidly on paper.

I asked 'Mano' to explain the sort of trance I had been in when I was first magnetised. He replied that my spirit friends had used my own hands to pass into my body some of their own magnetic atmosphere (they use the term magnetism for convenience, but 'psychic force' or 'spirit influence' would do quite as well), and having, to some extent, saturated me with their influence, they brought me into closer touch with themselves, and were enabled to control me with greater ease.

With reference to the beautiful prismatic light, I was told that it was the result of their magnetising my eyes—which thus became very sensitive, and the pattern I saw was the surface of the retina glowing under the waves of psychic force. I saw the waves when my eyes were open a little, and the pattern when they were tightly closed. This experience has now become quite familiar, and 'Mano' can produce it almost at any time, with intervals of rest to allow the eyes to become normal. Thus, by a few movements of my hand, the spirits can give me objective and positive proof of their continued presence and association with me.

My next great surprise was when my friends told me that they would dispense with the writing entirely, and speak to me as one person speaks to another in ordinary conversation. I will not say that I did not believe them—my feeling was more one of inability to accept the statement than disbelief. I found, however, that they were able to perform what they had promised. The change was not effected without long and patient sittings on my part, and the most assiduous and affectionate attention and assistance on theirs. At first the messages were conveyed by magnetising my throat and tongue and actually compelling me to form the words. This was a trying period, and I used to suffer somewhat from nervous reaction, which took the form of a slight constriction of the throat for a time after one of these sittings. My spirit friends told me this would soon pass away, but their idea of time differs from ours, and it was some months before the unpleasant feeling ceased, and I found that they could move my tongue and mouth to form the words they wished to convey to me. After this I began to hear the words in my head, and this sensitive condition has gradually progressed, until I can now carry on a long conversation with 'Mano' with less exertion and greater facility than I can with my friends in ordinary life. I feel brighter and stronger after these communications, and they have now become just as much a matter of course as it is to carry on an ordinary conversation round my own fireside.

This is a mere outline of my development, which, although it has been long, and at times very trying, has been a source of joy and satisfaction to me. I do not for a moment regret the time spent; I only regret that I did not start sooner, and make more use of my gifts.

It may be asked, 'What better are you for all the time you have spent and all the trouble you have taken?' and my reply is, 'I have quite lost the fear of death. I find this earth a very good place to live on for a time. I have no desire to leave it at present, but the inevitable change, which most people try to forget as much as possible, has no terrors for me. I was an orthodox believer when I began this investi-

gation. I am far from orthodox now, but my faith in all that was best in the old belief has become the faith of a child in his parents. I know that all is well. My convictions are very much in accord with those expressed by the Rev. R. J. Campbell in his 'New Theology'—but these views of mine were formed years before I saw his book.'

SPIRITUALISM A BASIS OF RELIGION.

Although a Congress of Religions is perhaps the last place at which we should expect to find confirmation of Spiritualist teachings, the recent proceedings at Oxford afforded ample justification for the views so strenuously put forward by Gerald Massey, that religion was based upon direct perception of the existence of spiritual beings, especially of those who had lived on earth. Primitive man was shown to have believed firmly in ghosts, and to have attributed a human nature to those whom he worshipped as gods. When the idea of a Supreme Being gained ground among those who had formerly worshipped these personal spirits, there arose an incongruous conception of an Infinite God who was yet endowed with all the traits of humanity, including jealousy of all worship paid to lower or less universal divinities.

The idea of the survival of the soul is exemplified in the burial customs of many ancient nations. 'Our burial customs,' says the 'Daily Mail' reporter, 'no longer express our belief in continued existence beyond the grave in the simple, childlike manner of the Egyptians.' Professor Schmidt, of Copenhagen, told the Congress that 'the Egyptian idea of the future life was that it must be very like this one. Therefore they put into the tombs food and drink, and even palettes and paints, so that the departed could colour themselves as they did on earth. The living felt themselves under a distinct obligation to do all they could to ensure the happiness of their dead friends.' Another speaker, Mr. T. C. Hudson, said that the hill tribes of Assam supplied tombs regularly with food and drink. Their notion was that the ghosts of the departed remained near until all the funeral ceremonies, lasting months and even years, were complete. He had known a watch to be set over the grave lest a tiger which had killed the man buried there should come back and mangle his ghost. Certain Polynesians, by the way, believed that animals had 'souls but no ghosts.'

From an after-death state in which the individual survives and lives a life comparable with life on earth, it is but a step to imagine the gods leading similar lives, particularly if these gods are supposed to be exalted human souls. Then the worship of these gods will naturally take the form of providing for their wants and respecting their likes and dislikes. In the original Egyptian religion, said Professor Flinders Petrie, the idea of ritual and ceremonial was entirely different from the Western sense of religious service. There was no prayer and but little praise. But as the temple was the House of God copied from a human house, so the king or priest carried out the daily routine of a servant in the house. The changes and developments in the arrangements of the temples implied corresponding alterations of belief about the Divine presence. The gods were not jealous of each other, for the god under whom a man was born was the right one for him to worship, and equally was it right in that man's view for everyone born under other gods to worship them. Personal religion, as distinct from ceremonial observances, was of later growth, part of a general wave of feeling which arose in the sixth or seventh century before Christ.

With regard to supernatural powers, Mr. Marett, of Exeter, said that all through the primitive ideas of the supernatural there ran the notion of some mysterious power which enabled certain objects and certain spirits to do extraordinary things. This belief was never systematised, but it was always there, and it appeared to be the basis of all religious origins, and those who possessed these powers usually turned them to their own profit. The ghosts of great men were regarded as wonder-working and as beneficent; so that, among some tribes, only the good were commemorated, the bad were buried with scant ceremony and as quickly as possible forgotten.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 1908.

EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.
Assistant Editors ... E. W. WALLIS and J. B. SHIPLEY.

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to MR. E. W. WALLIS, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. E. W. Wallis, and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.'

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—'LIGHT' may be had free by post on the following terms:—Twelve months, 10s. 10d.; six months, 5s. 5d. Payments to be made in advance. To United States, 2dol. 70c. To France, Italy, &c., 13 francs 86 centimes. To Germany, 11 marks 25pf. Wholesale Agents: MESSRS. SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, AND CO., LTD., 23, Paternoster-row, London, E.C., and 'LIGHT' can be ordered through all Newsagents and Booksellers.

APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

'Light Arising: Thoughts on the Central Radiance,' lately noticed, fitly discusses, towards the end, 'The Fear of Death.' As might be expected from the placid writer of these thoughtful Essays, the subject is treated tenderly and, in a way, cheerfully. We are too reticent about it, she thinks: 'We add a strange bitterness to the last parting' by our silence concerning it, and so 'doom ourselves to a sort of anticipated loneliness.' 'Few of us have the courage to speak quietly and freely of our own prospects of mortality with those nearest and dearest to us. Tenderness and custom combine to seal our lips; and there grows up a habit of reserve which we scarcely wish to break through.'

Of course this has its cause in the entirely natural shrinking from what is, in most cases, an unspeakable dread; not so much the dread of dying as the dread of parting. The breaking down of the reticence, which may 'add a strange bitterness' to death in the sense of loneliness, might add a strange bitterness to life in the ever-present fear of death. As it is, the reticence breeds forgetfulness, and that is usually best.

This induced habit of reticence is probably strong or weak in proportion as this life is precious or the reverse. The struggling poor are not so reticent. Many of them have a strange habit of reckoning how many children they have 'buried' rather than how many have stood the ordeal and survived. Miss Stephen says:—

Perhaps their habitual plainness of speech about it may contribute towards lessening the fear of it among them. But there is an obvious and deeply pathetic explanation of their calmness in the prospect of it for themselves or for those dearest to them. The hardness and bareness of life lessens its hold upon them; sometimes even makes them feel it not an inheritance to be coveted for their children. The dull resignation with which they often say the little ones are 'better off' when they die, tells a grievous story of the struggle for mere existence.

Another cause of reticence may be traced to the actual forgetfulness of the specially vigorous. Miss Stephen finds in this a cause of dread, and says, 'I believe that the purely instinctive fear is strongest in people of a very high degree of vitality.' We greatly doubt it. 'People of a very high degree of vitality' do not think about it. It is something for others, not for them. The contrast between their

condition and death is too incongruous, so they let death alone; they let the 'last will and testament' wait. On the other hand, it is the failing, they who

Linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away,

that get depressed, though there is also truth in what this writer says of 'the strange and beautiful way in which the fear of death so often disappears as the event itself approaches.' Yes: that is true of the last stages, when the sweet 'old promise, 'where the weary are at rest' grows more and more precious as the haven nears. So, as Miss Stephen truly says:—

It may be one of the natural compensations for a comparatively low degree of vitality that, in thinking of death, the idea of rest predominates over that of loss, so that there is no alloy of pain in the reflection that none of the troubles of this life can be more than passing clouds.

Do we sufficiently recognise and act up to this? There is what one may, without offence or harshness, call the kindly cant of artificial and groundless grief. The vigorous resent the intrusion of death, and feel concerning it that it is a kind of insolence, and the crushing out of everything; and this feeling is insensibly carried over to cases where regret and revolt are inappropriate. It is difficult to do otherwise, but the attempt ought at least to be made, to weigh aright the value or otherwise of the incoming of 'the last enemy' who, in very many cases, would really be the last friend, 'the beautiful angel, Death.' Very wisely, Miss Stephen says:—

We tacitly agree, in common conversation, to avoid the subject as it concerns ourselves and our interlocutors; and, in speaking of others, we make it a point of good manners to refer to it as matter of regret. . . . But is it really the case that, apart from the terrors of religion and the courtesies of feeling, the end of life would always be unwelcome in its approach to ourselves and to others? . . . We speak of survivors as mourners, till we forget that there are survivors who, in place of mourning, may for very love be filled with a solemn joy in the completed course to which added length of days could scarcely have added either beauty or dignity.

The time will assuredly come when we, or those who come after us, will be able to distinguish calmly between death and death, and to be simple and natural and honest about the whole question. We profess far more than we practise, and we might get our feet upon a rock which only a few ever touch. Marcus Aurelius nobly taught the philosophy of life and death. We are here only for a time, and there is, behind and over all, an order or there is not. If there is not, a wise man may be willing to be rid of it all; but if there is an order and a providence and a will, a wise man may go forth with joy. 'What means all this?' he asks, 'thou hast embarked; thou hast made the voyage; thou art come to shore; get out! If indeed to another life, the gods are also there.' And, if there were not another life, as Spiritualists know that there is, it would not matter, for then we should know nothing about it. 'Is it,' asks our gentle modern philosopher, 'is it some mysteriously intense appetite, or an inveterate confusion of thought, which hinders most people from perceiving that *not to exist* cannot possibly be in the slightest degree painful or even unpleasant?' 'Either death leads to nothing at all, and to fear it is unmeaning; or it is a mere parenthesis, and to fear it is unworthy of those who believe in a righteous order.'

Beyond all these considerations lies the immense question of that infinite order and inexorable necessity which, in truth, may be the very highest proof and illustration of perfect wisdom and boundless love. What if death is not merely an absolute necessity, but the expression of an infinite goodness, and the only means by which it can be fulfilled?

A VETERAN SPIRITUALIST'S EXPERIENCES.

Mr. James Robertson's narrative of experiences in Spiritualism* will, we are sure, be welcomed by all his many friends, and by earnest inquirers who seek to know on what kind of evidence the conviction of experienced Spiritualists is based. That this conviction is not the outcome and confirmation of a previous mental bias, as has recently been asserted, is well exemplified by numerous instances within Mr. Robertson's own knowledge. He himself, as he tells us, 'did not start with any thought or desire to enter on a road which would reveal a world beyond the gates of death,' nor did he believe that there was, or could be, any evidence that could prove such a fact to the human senses. But a newspaper report of the trial of Slade suggested to him that there must be something 'behind all this' to make people believe in Spiritualism, even if it was only 'an obscure force' which worked upon the imagination. Along with a friend with whom he had 'wandered in the regions of doubt and denial,' Mr. Robertson attended a Spiritualist meeting and afterwards sat to investigate personally; the result being that they obtained, from movements of a table, 'clear manifestations of intelligence, and that not of the sitters. The names of old friends were spelled out, and incidents which some of the sitters had forgotten were referred to.' Another young man is mentioned who was brought 'out of the darkness of materialism into an assured knowledge of continued existence after death.' Robert Dale Owen, 'at one time the high-priest of materialism,' who is frequently referred to in this book, is another case in point.

Mr. Robertson's book is, as the title indicates, mainly a record of personal experiences, told with a graphic directness that cannot fail to convince the reader of the reality of the occurrences which wrought so great a change in the mental attitude of those who witnessed them. It is full of references to workers in the movement, for Mr. Robertson has met and known most, if not all, of the more prominent figures in Spiritualism for the last thirty years, and he graphically portrays the personal and spiritual characteristics of mediums, speakers and workers, including the Owens, father, son, and daughter, Dr. Robert Chambers, Dr. Andrew Jackson Davis, Madame d'Espérance, Mrs. E. H. Britten, the Duguids, Mr. James Bowman, Mr. Hay Nisbet, Mr. Wm. Oxley, Dr. Peebles, Miss MacCreddie, Miss Wood, Miss Fairlamb, Mr. George Spriggs, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, and Mr. J. J. Morse, who introduces the volume by a short preface. Gerald Massey is many times referred to, and is the subject of a special chapter, in which the fearless character of his spiritual utterances in poems and lectures is ably and appreciatively set forth.

Among the many interesting and instructive features of the book, which will be new to those who have recently entered upon the study of Spiritualism, we may specially call attention to the numerous descriptions of the phenomena obtained by mediums who were highly appreciated in their own spheres of action for a time, but who have passed away and are now scarcely remembered, because their names are not to be found in elementary books on the subject. These early mediums, many of whom gave startlingly clear evidences of spirit activity, were for the most part working men, with no pretensions to learning or intellectuality, and yet they would, under control, deliver lectures on different topics, 'brimful of the most comprehensive knowledge of the subject.'

Another question on which Mr. Robertson provides ample materials for study is that of the personal characteristics of the various controls who used the mediums as their mouth-pieces; each of these exhibited markedly individual traits of character, which could be easily recognised even when speaking through different mediums. Thus, in speaking of Alexander Duguid, Mr. Robertson says:—

The spirit friends who used the voice of his brother, Robert, soon began to influence him also, and it would have

been difficult to recognise any difference between the 'Sabo' and 'Blackhawk' and others who spoke through the brothers—Robert in Glasgow and Alexander in Kirkcaldy. Themes that I had discussed with the spirits in Glasgow were taken up by the spirits in Kirkcaldy, and fully entered upon.

Mr. Robertson was not long in developing mediumistic power of his own, and was frequently impelled both to speak and to write, sometimes by the same spirits with whom he had become acquainted through other mediums. He says:—

The addition of personal spiritual contact in this way was of immense value. Travelling as I did all the time all over the country day by day I led a charmed life, conscious of the companionship and help of the ministering ones. I would sit alone at nights in hotels, and commune with those friends with whom I had been brought into contact in the spirit circle. I would feel the strong 'Blackhawk' or the gentle 'Sabo,' and oftentimes in my heart thanked God for Spiritualism and all it had brought me.

Describing a peculiar form of impressional or automatic speaking, apparently somewhat akin to automatic writing, Mr. Robertson says that he began by repeating a string of words which were almost forced upon him, but of the meaning of which he could make nothing. Later on, after he had 'been impelled to open the way with this torrent of foreign jabbering,' he began to speak in his own language the thoughts of spirits, and as to this he says:—

I do not know that information was conveyed which would be of a test nature, but I would be lifted out of myself and, with a fluency of speech widely removed from the normal, enter on profound questions which I would not have dared of myself to handle. Oftentimes the sitters were persons of intelligence, well read and capable, and these felt the power and comprehensiveness of the talk, and esteemed it more highly than I did myself. At some moments I heard myself expressing ideas which were foreign to my opinions. I wanted to be honest with myself and others, and the spirit of criticising would be carried on by my mind while speaking.

In a similar manner Mr. Robertson was impelled to write messages which, as he says, 'flowed from my pen without thought on my part, and I can honestly say that neither the thoughts nor the expression are my own.' A long message received in this way, under the inspiration of Robert Dale Owen, is given on pages 240-243, describing Owen's change from his former ideas to the 'new knowledge' of an unseen world and the inspiration of spirit communications.

Special chapters are devoted to the author's personal experiences with regard to materialisations and spirit photography, and in other parts of the book there are references to these and similarly conclusive evidences of spirit return. Many interesting details are given as to spiritualistic work, both public and private, in Glasgow and other places, and there is a racily told narrative of an imposture boldly carried out at Glasgow under the pretence of unmasking Spiritualism, and of which several prominent scientific men were the victims. Full credit is given to the life-long labours of workers like Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Wallis and Mr. J. J. Morse, and the periodical and general literature of the movement is frequently referred to as indicating its intellectual vitality. The Society for Psychical Research comes in for occasional good-humoured and well-directed criticism, and Mr. Robertson's Address, delivered in February last to the London Spiritualist Alliance, in which psychical research methods are subjected to the light of positive experience, is printed as an Appendix.

As already intimated, Mr. Robertson's book is of value from the point of view of an observer of calm, critical, and balanced mind, who neither hastens towards a new range of ideas and convictions, nor rejects the evidence when it proves adequate to overcome his previous scepticism, and is sufficiently clear and definite to withstand the objections interposed by reserve and caution. As a business man with a wide practical experience of men and affairs, Mr. Robertson's judgment is worthy of respect, even from the sceptical, and his manner of setting forth the growth of his own convictions is such as must inspire confidence in his emphatic assurances as to the truth, importance, and educative value of the phenomena and teachings of Spiritualism.

* 'Spiritualism: the Open Door to the Unseen Universe. Being Thirty Years of Personal Observation and Experience Concerning Inter-course between the Material and Spiritual Worlds.' By JAMES ROBERTSON. L. N. Fowler and Co., 7, Imperial-arcade, Ludgate-circus, E.C. Price 6s. net. Or from 'LIGHT' Office, post free 6s. 4d.

SPIRITUALISM—MYSTIC, MYSTERIOUS,
OCCULT, OR RATIONAL ?

It is frequently urged as a reason why Spiritualism is dangerous that there is a tendency in the human mind to dabble in the mysterious—that men crave for excitement and are attracted to, and fascinated by, Spiritualism because of this love of the marvellous and the credulity with which ‘occult secrets’ are received. There may be truth in this view, but our experience does not confirm it. The greatest difficulty which we find is, not to hold people back from the investigation of psychical problems, but to arouse them from their apathetic indifference, or from their ignorant and unreasoning prejudice, or to allay their superstitious fears and win them to take a reasoning, sensible, and level-headed view of the subject.

The idea that certain superior powers, or a controlling influence over unseen entities, can be attained by the study of ancient mystic or occult lore, and by magical processes—by ascetic practices and evocations—and that secret knowledge of this kind may give one person power to influence others and to secure his own ends—this idea doubtless affects a few individuals, but there is nothing in Spiritualism, rightly understood, that gives sanction to such ambitions or such practices. In fact, Modern Spiritualism from the first has invited investigation and has appealed to the scientific and rational consciousness. The object of the promoters of this movement on the other side has always been to overcome fear by knowledge : to make manifest the simple facts of human continuity and the naturalness of spirit life.

In his ‘Human Personality,’ Vol. II., page 277, Mr. F. W. H. Myers says :—

I will not say that there cannot possibly be any such thing as occult wisdom or dominion over the secrets of Nature, ascetically or magically acquired ; but I will say that every claim of the kind which my colleagues or I have been able to examine has proved deserving of complete distrust, and that we have no confidence here, any more than elsewhere, in any methods except the open, candid, straightforward methods which the spirit of modern science demands.

We have had occasion in ‘LIGHT’ from time to time to speak out warningly against the pretensions of self-advertising ‘Professors’ who claim to be able to teach in so many ‘lessons’—for a high financial consideration—the secrets of occult power, of psychical culture, and even of mediumistic development, and to point out that there are no secrets to learn which are worth learning. The fact is if one is not naturally ‘sensitive,’ or psychically alert, all the ‘lessons’ in the world cannot create the power—any more than lessons in music or singing can make a musical genius, or a ‘star’ singer, of one who has not the natural qualifications.

But apart from this, Spiritualism does not delight in mysteries, ‘divine’ or otherwise ; its object is to reveal the truth. The editor of ‘The Harbinger of Light’ recently quoted the following significant spirit message :—

The divine mystery about which occultists write so glibly is open to all—a doorway by which all souls who learn the lesson of love and service enter without so-called initiation. . . . You do not speak to dense dark souls of your divine experiences, because as long as they live the material life, a glimpse even of such cannot be obtained. There is no mystery, except the mystery of Godliness, and the sooner all future attempts at subjugating the heart and intellect are discouraged, so much the better for humanity. . . . There has always been an attempt to coerce the mind and we shall do all we can to help you break a yoke, as dubious and galling as any cast round by priest or pope.

After all, knowledge, whether occult, scientific, theological, mystical, or ‘forbidden,’ does not necessarily bring us the one thing which we all desire, *viz.*, happiness. Knowledge may mean power, but it also means responsibility ; and if it be not employed for worthy, useful and beneficial ends it cannot confer blessing upon its possessor. St. Paul, one of the most enlightened and ardent Spiritualists who ever lived, puts the matter as clearly as concisely when he says : ‘And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all

knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing !’

It is then a question of motive, of attitude, of desire, of love. Not that knowledge is to be deprecated : by no means ; we plead for fuller, freer, truer, purer knowledge. We are for revelation as against occultism, for manifestation as against secrecy, for explanation as against mysticism, for plain truth as against symbols and parables which hide and obscure the principles they are supposed to indicate ; but all such bringing to light should be undertaken and carried out reverently, loyally and lovingly ; not for personal gratification or mercenary ends, but for the good of all.

X.

SCIENCE PROVING THE SPIRITUAL
UNIVERSE.

Quoting from the ‘Chicago Tribune,’ the ‘Progressive Thinker’ gives us the following from Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace :—

All the most powerful and universal forces of Nature are now referred to minute vibrations of an almost infinitely attenuated form of matter ; and by the grandest generalisations of modern science the most varied natural phenomena have been traced back to those recondite forces. Light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and probably vitality and gravitation are believed to be but modes of motion of a space-filling ether ; and there is not a single manifestation of force or development of beauty but is derived from one or other of these.

The whole surface of the globe has been modelled and remodelled, mountains have been cut down to plains and plains have been grooved and furrowed into mountains and valleys, all by the power of ethereal heat vibrations set in motion by the sun. Metallic veins and glittering crystals buried deep down under miles of rock and mountain have been formed by a distinct set of forces developed by vibrations of the same ether.

Every green blade and bright blossom that gladdens the surface of the earth owes its power of growth and life to those vibrations we call heat and light, while in animals and man the powers of that wondrous telegraph whose battery is the brain, and whose wires are nerves, probably are due to the manifestations of a yet totally distinct mode of motion in the same all-pervading ether. In some cases we are able to perceive the effects of those recondite forces yet more clearly.

We see a magnet without contact or impact of any ponderable matter capable, to our imagination, of exerting force, yet overcoming gravity and inertia, raising and moving solid bodies. We behold electricity in the form of lightning riving the solid oak, throwing down lofty towers and steeples, or destroying man and beast, sometimes without a wound.

And these manifestations of force are produced by a form of matter so impalpable that only by its effects does it become known to us. With such phenomena everywhere around us we must admit that if intelligences of what we may call an ethereal nature do exist, we have no reason to deny them the use of these ethereal forces which are the overflowing fountain from which all forms, all motion, all life upon the earth originate.

Our limited senses and intellects enable us to receive impressions from and to trace some of the varied manifestations of ethereal motion under phases so distinct as light, heat, electricity, and gravity ; but no thinker will assert for a moment that there can be no other possible modes of action of this primal element.

To a race of blind men how utterly inconceivable would be the faculty of vision, how absolutely unknowable the existence of light and its myriad manifestations of form, colour and beauty ! Without this one sense our knowledge of Nature and of the universe would not be a thousandth part of what it is. By its absence our intellect would have been dwarfed, we cannot say to what extent, and we must almost believe that our mind-nature never could have been fully developed without it and that we hardly would have attained to the dignity and supremacy of man. Yet it is possible and even probable that there may be modes of sensation as superior to all of ours as is sight to those of touch and hearing.

That intelligent beings may exist around and among us unperceived during our whole lives, and yet capable, under certain circumstances, of making their presence known by acting on matter, will be inconceivable to some, and will be doubted by many more, but we venture to say that no man acquainted with the latest discoveries and the highest speculations of modern science will deny its possibility. The exist-

ence of such superhuman intelligences, if proved, would only add another and more striking illustration than any we have yet received of the smallness of the portion of the great cosmos of which our senses give us cognisance.

Even such sceptics on the subject of the supernatural as Hume or Strauss probably would not deny the validity of the conception of such intelligences, or the abstract possibility of their existence. They would, perhaps, say: 'We have no sufficient proof of the fact; the difficulty of conceiving their mode of existence is great; most intelligent men pass their whole lives in total ignorance of any such intelligences; it is amongst the ignorant and superstitious alone that the belief in them prevails. We cannot deny the possibility you postulate, but we must have the most clear and satisfactory proof before we can receive it as a fact.'

That 'clear and satisfactory proof' has been obtained by many students in this realm, Dr. Wallace included, is the stronghold of Spiritualism, and he has elsewhere claimed that the fact of the existence of exanimate intelligences has been as well proved as almost any other fact in science.

PSYCHIC RESEARCH AND SPIRITUALISM.

There is a thoughtful article by 'W. H. T.' in the August issue of 'The Harbinger of Light,' entitled, 'Psychic Research and Spiritualism,' which fairly indicates the difference between the methods of Psychical Researchers and those of Spiritualists, and which may serve a useful purpose if reproduced in 'LIGHT,' as it should tend to correct the impression which seems to be entertained in some quarters that Spiritualists are hostile towards the Psychical Research Society. The fact is that, as the columns of 'LIGHT' will show, we have always welcomed and given publicity to the testimony of prominent S.P.R. investigators to the facts which they have attested. We value the work they have accomplished and recognise the influence which they have exerted on those who are not yet prepared to listen to, or accept, the evidence of Spiritualists. But while we appreciate to the full the good which has been accomplished, we cannot fail to recognise the fact that, although working individually, Myers and Hodgson, and more recently Sir Oliver Lodge, arrived at conclusions which merely supplement and confirm those of more intrepid and outspoken investigators, having been *forced* by the facts reluctantly to make admissions which they could not conscientiously withhold. They have not led the van of the army of progress, and seldom, if ever, acknowledged the self-sacrificing labours of the pioneers, who, although they have been ignored and contemptuously dismissed, bore the brunt of the battle and secured the victory.

'W. H. T.' says:—

The antagonism of Psychic Researchers to the spiritualistic hypothesis for the occurrence of the physical and mental phenomena generally attributed to Spiritualism seems, in view of the stated objects of the Society, somewhat singular; especially to those who have carefully studied the subjects enumerated in their programme, familiarised themselves with them, and are in frequent communication with individuals whom they have identified, beyond peradventure, in the spirit world. If this were a theory instead of a comparatively easily demonstrable fact, there would be nothing remarkable in the pitting of other theories against it, or even if the spiritual hypothesis gave promise of an unattractive future, there would be an incentive to discover some more comfortable solution. When, however, the millions who have successfully investigated (among whom are thousands who are the peers of the Psychical Researchers) unite in proclaiming: 1st, That the human spirit, with its soul body, persists after the death of the body, retaining all its essential qualities, and memory of its earthly experience; 2nd, That the future life is a continuation of this, with greater facilities for progress and less incentive to the manifestation of selfishness; 3rd, That we shall meet there sooner or later all those who were dear to us in this world, one would think that if there were ten chances to one of these things being true, it would be well worth devoting a year or two to a careful and unprejudiced investigation, and, as a preliminary, to a study of the methods adopted and results obtained by those who had satisfied themselves of the fact. But this is not the method of the Psychic Researchers, whose object seems to be to find some plausible theory other than spirit, to account for the marvels which they are compelled to admit do

occur, and for which their materialistic science can find no reasonable explanation.

For over twenty-five years the Society for Psychical Research has been investigating, and the only positive results so far are the acceptance, as real, of phenomena usually called spiritual, and of telepathy, with some admission of clairvoyance. They have not determined the origin of the phenomena, nor does it seem likely (unless they utilise the experience of those who have reached the goal they profess to be seeking) that they will do so during the present generation. They appear to be ignorant of psychometry—discovered, formulated, and demonstrated by Professor Joseph Rodes Buchanan in 1885,* and amplified and applied to geology and history by William Denton in his three volumes, 'The Soul of Things,' published about the same time, both of which are strictly scientific works; and they seem to ignore the evidence of such experienced mesmerists as Chauncey Townsend, Drs. Elliotson, Esdaile, Gregory, Ashburner, Dods, Deleuze, Billot, Teste, and Du Potet (six of whom became Spiritualists through the revelations given by their mesmeric sensitives), or they would know that clairvoyance and thought-reading are common phenomena in the mesmeric 'sleep-walking' state. Nearly all their mental phenomena have been through one medium. Mrs. Piper, and they were, according to Sir Oliver Lodge, inclined to leave out chapter eleven of M. Sage's summary of the phenomena occurring through her mediumship, which chapter is the most enlightening in the whole book, being the explanation by the communicating spirit, 'George Pelham,' of the nature of the soul, of which the following is a condensation: 'The soul (*i.e.*, spirit) is in truth the motor, and the body is merely a machine used temporarily by the soul to act upon the obscure world of matter. Thought is outside matter, and is in no way connected with matter. The destruction of the body does not have as its consequence the destruction of thought. After the dissolution of the body the Ego continues its existence, but it then perceives thought directly, is much more free, and can express itself much more clearly than when stifled by matter; the soul and thought are one; thought is the inseparable attribute of the Ego or individual soul. On its arrival in this world the soul is ready to register innumerable new thoughts; it is a *tabula rasa* upon which nothing has been inscribed.' He further refers to having an 'astral body,' which is, properly speaking, the soul, the spirit being the Ego. This, it will be observed, is exactly in accord with the standard teachings of Spiritualism, and was consequently repugnant to an average Psychical Researcher. There is ample evidence in this summary † to convince any unprejudiced person of the intelligent source of the communications, which invariably profess to come from disembodied human spirits. It is weary work wading through the many hundred pages of the original reports of the 'proceedings' relating to Mrs. Piper previous to the advent of this George Pelham; the sending of either Mrs. Piper's secondary self, or the professed spirit, to see what people at a distance were doing, describe persons, or read what was in a letter enclosed in a tin box, which are repeated *ad nauseam*, though generally with successful results, but without making any apparent impression. But these, when successfully performed, only prove psychometry, a faculty of the embodied spirit, possessed by many people. Professor Denton told me that he had met with twenty-eight good psychometers in Australasia during his tour here. The ignoring of what has been done by competent investigators outside of the Society is unphilosophical, and in that sense unscientific, for a true scientist should have no prejudice, his central object being the elicitation of knowledge for the benefit or enlightenment of his fellows.

* 'Psychometry, the Dawn of a New Civilisation.' (Boston: Holman Bros.)

† 'Mrs. Piper and the Society for Psychical Research, translated from the French of M. Sage.' R. B. Johnson, Adelphi, London.

'Does Spiritualism benefit the Spiritualist?' is a question which is often asked, and our answer is that it depends upon the Spiritualist himself. That it is capable of exerting a beneficial influence is undoubtable, and that it *has* done so in an immense number of instances is equally certain. Perhaps no better testimony to this fact can be found than the following extract from a letter written by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, shortly before he passed over, in which he said he was busily occupied writing a big book which he did not expect anyone to read, but he was writing it for the satisfaction of his own conscience. Continuing, he said, 'My researches have at any rate made me very happy, and I want to make as many other people follow the same line of happiness as I can, though we are all booked for such a good thing in the next world, that it matters comparatively little how we fare in this.'

A PAINTING MEDIUM.

A report in the 'Washington, D.C., Times Magazine' states that Mr. Abel Taylor (who lives in what is called the President's Cottage), a quiet, earnest man, who speaks of his spiritual experiences reverently, is a medium who has been painting excellent pictures for the last fifteen years. Mr. Taylor states that at one time he was addicted to taking liquor in injudicious quantities, and that one day the bottle from which he was about to drink was suddenly shivered into pieces, but without injuring him. A friend induced him to attend a séance, at which his sister made her presence known and informed him that it was she who had broken the bottle. He says :—

She reasoned with me against my habits of intemperance, and then told me that I should become a painter. 'But,' said I, 'I never handled a paint brush in my life!'

'No matter,' she replied, 'the spirit of Raphael is here and says he will guide you.' Then she gave me directions to go home and secure the necessary materials, and await the coming of my spirit guide. Sure enough, one day as I sat helplessly before the untouched canvas, with my brushes and paint, the inspiration came. It was like an electric shock passing over me at first, and then, clearly in my mind's eye, I saw the scene I was going to paint. It was a bit of woodland through which a stream ran, and I recognised it at once as being near my birthplace in England. Often as a boy I had spent happy hours in this spot, fishing and romping with companions.

These I began to paint, and somehow it didn't seem so difficult. The picture in my mind began rapidly to take form and colour on the canvas. I worked faster and faster, and in a couple of hours there was the picture. Here it is, and you can see for yourself that, although somewhat cruder than my later work, it is not so bad for an utter novice.

Since then, I have painted more than a thousand pictures, and have sent them all over the country. Some points in my work have attracted the notice of artists, who can hardly believe that I have never taken lessons. But to those who do not know the influence of the spirits it is useless to endeavour to explain. Latterly, I have actually seen the hand of my spirit guide, who I have been told is none other than Raphael, upon my wrist as I paint. At night the spirits come around me, and I see them plainly. I have frequent conversations with my sister, who has wrought this great good in my life, and other relatives. I never sell my paintings for more than the paint and the canvas cost me.

Sometimes my spirit guide comes to me in the night, and once actually induced me to commence and finish a painting in the dark. There was absolutely no light in the room, yet the ghostly hand guided mine with the utmost facility and, in the course of a couple of hours, I had dashed off one of my very best efforts. It is a scene in a Californian forest, which I recall very well, for it was here that upon a merry march one day we halted to rest. The trees are so lofty as to cause the lower portion of their trunks to be enveloped in semi-darkness though, as you perceive, a single brilliant shaft of sunlight shoots through the gloom, to fall upon the sombre bark of the giant of the forest. Many persons think this picture is my masterpiece.

SPIRITUALISM IN BELGIUM.

Belgium has long been distinguished for the ardour with which the Spiritualists of that country have put their beliefs into practice, especially in the matter of organisation for the double purpose of promoting inquiry into the phenomena and of spreading the doctrines of Spiritualism. Last Whitsuntide the fourth Annual Congress of the Belgian Spiritualist Federation was held at Liège, and much interest attaches to the occasion, for it marked the thirtieth and twenty-fifth anniversaries of societies at Liège and Seraing respectively. In Belgium the local societies are organised into district federations, and in 1905 the National Federation was formed, both for the more complete organisation of efforts in Belgium itself and for bringing the movement there into touch with similar efforts in other countries. In fact, several delegates from France were present at the Congress, and cordial official relations were being entered into with the German organisation.

The work of the Federation largely consists in arranging for public lectures, often of high scientific interest, and the

formation of classes for the systematic study of spirit phenomena; part of the work of these classes consists in holding séances at which special features of the phenomena are studied and the results recorded. The president of the Federation, and the prime mover in the work, is the Chevalier Le Clément de St.-Marcq, a distinguished officer of engineers of high scientific attainments. Due watch is kept on the organs of public opinion, as to which the president said in his opening address :—

The attitude of the Belgian Press has noticeably changed; papers which were formerly the most bitterly opposed to Spiritualism now speak of our researches and of our phenomena, if not with sympathy, at all events in a serious, reasonable, almost impartial manner. There is, no doubt, still much room for improvement in this respect, but we shall do well to take note of the progress that has been made and to express the satisfaction which we may legitimately feel.

Among the communications read at the Congress may be mentioned one from a French society on physical phenomena; some proofs of spirit existence, contributed by a healing medium from his own experiences; the report of the committee for the collection and investigation of evidence of spirit return, and a report on spirit photography, which is being investigated by a special section of the Antwerp Society. Finally there were communications on social questions from the Spiritualist point of view, and on the adoption of Esperanto as a useful means of intercourse and correspondence between Spiritualists of different nationalities and languages.

Many of the incidents narrated at the Congress were in relation to spirit influence in healing. The following account of an apparition, occurring a few days before the death of the person whose form was seen, was investigated by the committee and accepted as fully confirmed and evidential. M. V. said that one Sunday, on his way to a séance, he was just getting out of a tramcar when he saw, as though suddenly precipitated in front of a large shop, a man with whom he had worked for a long time, dressed in his working clothes, which was contrary to his usual custom on Sundays. The man disappeared in the crowd, and the narrator felt much surprised at the occurrence. On the following Saturday M. V. received a card intimating the decease of this man, and remarked that as he had seen him only the Sunday previous he could not have been long ill. On visiting the house M. V. learned that the deceased man had not been out of doors on the previous Sunday, and that he had worn his ordinary clothes on that day. M. V. described the garments worn by the man whom he had seen, and they corresponded exactly with those of the deceased man. The day of his death is not stated, but it is fully confirmed that he was alive and at home at the time when his form was seen in the street.

JOTTINGS.

'Science Siftings' says that M. Camille Flammarion 'has just unburdened himself of his matured views on Spiritualism.' He 'supposes' that *all* human beings do not survive their death, but that their psychical entity 'almost disappears in the ether, in the common reservoir, in the environment, like the souls of animals.' But 'thinking beings' 'do not close their personality, but continue the cycle of their evolution. It would seem natural, therefore, to see them manifest under certain circumstances.'

The learned astronomer goes on to ask a number of questions which indicate that he has had little or no experience, or that he has profited but little from it. He wants spirits 'to return to accuse assassins' and 'revenge themselves'! He asks: 'Why do not children, whose death is lamented by their parents, ever come to console them? Why do our dearest attachments seem to disappear for ever?' We should recommend a perusal of 'Seen and Unseen,' and the recent issues of 'LIGHT' which contain articles on 'Children in Spirit Life.'

M. Flammarion has dabbled in Spiritualism for nearly forty years and yet he raises the elementary objections that 'one does not see why spirits, if they exist around us, should have need of mediums at all in order to manifest themselves.

I do not say that spirits do not exist—on the contrary, I have reasons for admitting their existence, but as a faithful servant of the experimental method I think we ought to exhaust all the simple, natural hypotheses already known before having recourse to others.' Surely, the Professor is incorrigible.

The London Spiritualist Alliance, as will be seen by the announcements on p. 458, is resuming active work after the summer recess, and in addition to the meetings at 110, St. Martin's-lane, a *Conversazione* will be held on October 22nd in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, S.W., which will afford an opportunity to the Members and Associates to become better acquainted with each other, to relate experiences, and exchange ideas. The fortnightly lectures which will follow are likely to be of more than ordinary interest. The subscriptions of new Members and Associates, who are elected after October 1st, will be taken as covering the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1909, so that now is a good time to join the Alliance, and a large accession of Members and Associates is anticipated and will be welcome.

In its obituary notice, 'The Times' said of Mr. Myers, who shortly before his transition avowed his full belief in spirit communion, that: 'The gradually acquired conviction and intense realisation of the continuity of existence was with him an absorbing passion. No stronger belief could have been found; nor could there be a more heartfelt utterance of the old Psalm than that which will be found to close his very brief and personal biography, hereafter in some form to appear: "He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever."'

The 'Daily Mail' settles the question whether 'Messages from the Dead' have been received in its usual oracular fashion and declares that in the messages which purport to emanate from Mr. Myers 'there is no trace of the elevation of thought and refinement of diction which mark his essay upon Virgil,' and further 'many of the messages are trivial and give no sign whatever of any supernatural knowledge.' 'Visions and messages may be due to hallucination or telepathy,' 'the evidence is still too imperfect and fragmentary to justify any definite conclusion.'

'There is as yet nothing to show that the question of existence beyond the grave has been solved by human observation of objective facts, and perhaps there never will be.' Poor 'Daily Mail'! Poor readers! They will not get much light or leading from its columns on Spiritualism at any rate, for it merely echoes Mr. Podmore and sets up false standards of judgment. There was no attempt to be refined or elevated or to convey supernatural knowledge in the messages in question—only an effort by cross-correspondences to give evidence of purpose and design on the part of an Intelligence other than the medium's.

Mr. John W. Graham has a valuable letter in 'The Nation,' of September 19th, dealing with 'the messages from Frederic Myers' which were given piecemeal through two independent mediums and sent by them direct to Miss Johnson. As neither medium understood the incoherent fragments which were written by her hand, telepathic transference from one to the other was impossible, and, as Mr. Graham says, 'the origin is therefore to be found in an intelligent mind elsewhere, and the nature of the message is such that that intelligent mind can hardly be other than the mind of the man it purports to be.'

The credit for having discovered the ingenious process of communication, which is now known as 'cross-correspondence,' is due to Miss Alice Johnson, and Mr. Graham says that she expounds it 'with extraordinary pains and most loving accuracy. It is possible to think Miss Johnson too sceptical, and to accuse her of pushing incredulity to the verge of a superstition, and almost ceasing to have proper scientific openness through the very excess of scientific caution; but no one can deny the combination of faithful zeal, acuteness, and ability which her article [in the S.P.R. "Proceedings," Part LV.] manifests. The impression produced on the reader's mind is, notwithstanding Miss Johnson's occasional doses of cold water, that the lost leaders, Henry Sidgwick, F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney, and Dr. Richard Hodgson, are engaged in a missionary effort "from the other shore" in continuance of their work here, trying to prove by such evidence as compels belief that the spirit of man survives death.'

'If it were possible for the soul to die back into earth life again, I should die from sheer yearning to reach you, to tell you that all we imagined is not half wonderful enough for the truth. That immortality, instead of being a beautiful dream, is the one, the only reality. . . . If I could only reach you, if I could only tell you—I long for power [to communicate], and all that comes to me is an infinite yearning, an infinite pain.' Thus wrote Mr. Myers through the hand of Mrs. Holland, and Mr. Graham says, 'the pathos of Frederic Myers's long failure to obtain recognition from those whom he fain would serve, is moving indeed!' It is not only pathetic but it is, in a sense, an instance of poetic justice. Mr. Myers and his co-workers, when on this side, raised all sorts of difficulties and objections, and formulated unproved theories, which were unwarrantably supposed to explain away all the facts without admitting spirit agency, and now—on the other side—they have to labour painfully to get recognition, and to invent a method by which to demonstrate their presence which will not be open to the 'explanations' which they themselves invented, and they have had to work for two years before the 'cross-correspondences' were discovered.

There seems to be an idea abroad that only those persons become Spiritualists who desire to do so, but, while this may possibly be true in a few instances, our experience is that generally the very opposite is the case. Dr. A. R. Wallace has told us that he once had no room in his fabric of thought for the word spirit, and that it was not until his scepticism was beaten down by the facts that he could begin to admit the spiritual explanation of them. Mr. Myers, too, was an Agnostic until the evidences of spirit presence and identity led him to a more appreciatively spiritual attitude.

Speculation regarding the future of mankind on this earth is seldom profitable, but it is often amusing. There are few who, like prophet Baxter, fix the time, and he has been so frequently in error—or mother Nature has refused to stop her proceedings to oblige him—that he is discredited. The following forecast by an 'eminent writer,' quoted in the 'Progressive Thinker,' is interesting, but we have no means of verifying the prediction—or of disproving it! 'Americans,' we are informed, 'are the germs of the sixth sub-race, and in some few hundred years more will become most decidedly the pioneers of that race which must succeed to the present European or fifth sub-race, in all its new characteristics. After this, in about twenty-five thousand years, they will launch into preparations for the seventh sub-race, until, in consequence of cataclysms, the first series of those which must one day destroy Europe, and still later the whole Aryan race, the sixth root race will have appeared on the stage.'

Mediums, or persons possessing psychical powers, have been regarded by some individuals as 'delusive wild beasts,' but according to this 'eminent writer' the time is coming when they will be able to have their revenge, for we are told that the number of people who are now regarded as 'abnormal oddities' will increase until 'one day they will awake and find themselves in a majority. Then the present men will begin to be regarded as exceptional mongrels, until they die out in civilised lands, surviving only in small groups on islands, the mountain peaks of to-day, where they will vegetate, degenerate, and finally die out, perhaps millions of years hence, as the Aztecs have, as the Nyam-Nyam and the dwarfish Moola Koorumba of the Nilghiri hills are dying.' But what a long, dreary time of waiting—millions of years hence. By that time the 'abnormal oddities' will probably have become accustomed, or acclimatised, to the conditions of life beyond the grave.

A thoughtful writer recently stated that 'The purpose of life is self-development. Each mortal is meant to work out his own destiny, his own "salvation," which means using all his own powers of body, mind and spirit while on this sphere. If he does this he will be helped by spirits from the higher spheres—the realms lying beyond the earth plane. They will give him electric force, courage and inspiration.' And, we may add, if spirits visit him who are *not* 'from the higher spheres' it may be his happy privilege to help and encourage them. There is no reason why we should always be striving to 'get into the upper circles'—it may only be a form of spiritual selfishness or pride on our part. Intercourse should be natural, mutually helpful and pleasurable, and it *will* be when we recognise that spirits are people.

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 which may elicit discussion.

Advice Wanted.

SIR,—I write to ask if any of your readers would kindly say what to do in the case of a member of a circle going off into a trance, as although I have had a good deal of experience in séances, I never met with a case of this kind until recently, and I am anxious to know what to do.

We stopped the sitting for a short time until the lady came out of the trance, and she rejoined the circle on permission being given from the other side. A letter addressed to 'Bon Accord,' care of 'LIGHT,' will reach me.—Yours, &c.,
BON ACCORD.

Dreams.

SIR,—In discussions on dreams I have never seen any reference to the fact that in dreaming during sleep we lose physical disabilities. For instance, I am extremely deaf with both ears, so much so that my ear trumpet is of little or no use. But in dream life I hear perfectly, can converse with ease, and hear music, which I am quite unable to do in my waking life. I contend that during sleep the spirit is often out of the body and *minus* all bodily defects.—Yours, &c.,
BASIL A. COCHRANE.

32, George-street,
Manchester-square.

An Appeal.

SIR,—Permit me to appeal to the readers of 'LIGHT' on behalf of Mrs. Jones, who is nearly eighty-three years of age and quite blind. She is in very poor circumstances and is so ill that she is unable to leave her bed. Mrs. Jones has been a Spiritualist since 1873. In 1880 she opened her rooms for meetings, free to all mediums, often paying the medium's expenses herself. Mr. J. Burns, Mr. Duguid, Miss Samuel, Mr. Robson, Miss Young, Mrs. Simpson, Mr. Colville, Mr. Walker, Mr. Towns, and many others held meetings under her auspices. If any of her old friends, or other kind-hearted readers, would like to see her or contribute towards supplying her with the necessaries of life, she will feel deeply grateful to them.—Yours, &c.,
M. ROCHE.

89, The Crescent, High-road,
Stamford Hill, N.

Puzzling Psychic Experiences.

SIR,—Having read the experiences of 'Veritas' and 'White Sahib' on pages 346 and 371 of 'LIGHT,' permit me to relate some of my own psychic experiences.

The incidents I am about to relate have occurred more or less frequently since infancy. For many years I attributed them to a form of nightmare, but since learning about Spiritualism I have had various theories as to their cause and meaning explained to me. While sitting at home in a passive condition, or getting tired with reading, I lay aside the book or paper and feel that I am going into an abnormal condition. I have a sensation as if my natural senses were being switched off, and then I apparently travel through space at a rapid rate. Sometimes I am conscious of going journeys on railways, and speaking to the occupants of the carriage in which I am travelling; at other times I seem to be on board ship. On one occasion I thought I was on a large tramp steamer, and the crew appeared to be going from side to side with the motion of the ship, when, suddenly, one of them got up on the rail and leaped into the sea, causing great consternation on board. I seemed to leap over the side to his assistance, and follow him under the surface. Then I realised my condition, and had to exert my will to regain my normal senses.

On another occasion I seemed to be under water; how I got there I did not know, but the sea seemed very turbulent, and I felt as if I was drowning. Then I heard voices speaking as if in anger, but the only words I heard distinctly were, 'God, have mercy on my soul.' Another time I felt as if I was being taken forcibly from my bed by the arm, and with the resistance I made my arm was quite useless when I awoke. I have only felt bodily fatigue after I have apparently been walking in some strange town or country in which I do not remember to have been before. If I could relate all my experiences I could fill a good sized volume.

Now I shall be very pleased if any reader of 'LIGHT' can inform me whether my spirit really leaves my body when these occurrences take place, and whether my bodily health is liable to be affected by these trips (as I call them) that I take while in the passive condition.—Yours, &c.,
GLEBE.

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.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD, MUNSTER-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Abbott delivered a splendid address. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Pateman. Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., public circle.—W. T.

HACKNEY.—SIGDON-ROAD SCHOOL, DALSTON-LANE, N.E.—On Sunday last Mrs. Place-Veary gave an address to a large audience on 'Spiritualism, What is It?' and clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. R. Boddington.—R.

STRATFORD.—WORKMEN'S HALL, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—On Sunday last Mr. S. Keyworth's able address on 'Our State of Transition' was highly appreciated by a large audience. Sunday next, Mr. J. G. Nicholson, on 'Natural Law in the Psychological World.'—W. H. S.

PORTSMOUTH.—VICTORIA-ROAD, SOUTH.—On Sunday last Mr. Nicholls spoke on 'Recent Evidence of the Return of the Dead,' 'Death to us is Gain,' and 'The Work that lies before Us.' Miss B. Fletcher gave good psychometric delineations. Sunday next, Mr. E. W. Wallis.—G. McF.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Imison gave an address and rendered a solo. Mrs. Imison gave clairvoyant descriptions and spiritual advice. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mr. D. J. Davis. Monday, at 7 p.m., and Thursday, at 8.15 p.m., public circles.—O. B.

CLAPHAM.—HOWARD-STREET, WANDSWORTH-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Blackburn gave an address and demonstrations of healing. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. Frost, clairvoyant descriptions; tea at 4.45 p.m., 6d. each; at 6.45 p.m., Mr. Smith, address; Mrs. Smith and Mr. Frost, clairvoyance.—C. C.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. Wright gave a splendid address on 'The Power of Thought,' and answered questions. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; speaker at 7 p.m., Miss Morriss. Monday, Mr. Frost, psychometry; silver collection. Thursday, at 8 p.m., circle.—E. F. S.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday evening last, to a good audience, Mr. E. W. Wallis, after a reading, delivered a timely and educational address on 'The Gates Between.' Mr. Otto finely rendered a solo. Mr. W. T. Cooper presided. Sunday next, at 6.30 for 7 p.m., Mrs. Place-Veary, clairvoyant descriptions; silver collection.

CHISWICK.—56, HIGH-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last 'Hope and Faith' were considered. In the evening Miss Maries and Mr. J. Adams gave eloquent and highly appreciated addresses. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., circle; at 2.45 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Harvest Festival, address by Mr. G. T. Gwinn. Tuesday, at 8.30 p.m., healing.—H. S.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Offer conducted a circle. In the evening Mrs. Webb gave an address and clairvoyant descriptions and Mr. Osborn conducted the after-circle. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public meeting; at 7 p.m., Harvest Thanksgiving Service. Thursday, Mrs. Atkins. Wednesday and Friday, at 8 p.m., members' circles.—J. J. L.

ACTON AND EALING.—21, UXBRIDGE-ROAD, EALING, W.—On Sunday last Mr. J. Jackson's instructive and interesting address on 'Spiritualism' was much enjoyed. Mrs. Ensor ably rendered a solo. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss Chapin, clairvoyante. October 4th, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, address and clairvoyant descriptions; 11th, Mr. W. E. Walker, address and psychometry.

SPIRITUAL MISSION: 22, Prince's-street, Oxford-street, W.—On Sunday evening last Mr. Pearce's eloquent address was greatly appreciated. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Fairclough Smith, on 'Looking Forward.'—67, George-street, Baker-street, W.—On Sunday morning last Mrs. Fairclough Smith's beautiful address was greatly enjoyed, and her clairvoyant descriptions were all recognised. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. H. G. Beard. Doors closed ten minutes after service commences.