

Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

The philosophy of mediumship is a branch of that wider subject of the best methods of intercourse with the world of Spirit that is now claiming a long-deferred attention. The Circular recently issued by the Central Association of Spiritualists, and widely signed, draws the thoughts to a section of the subject already discussed at length in these columns. It is generally admitted, with a few exceptions, which serve only to emphasise the general consensus of opinion, that a clear view of the medium is a necessary pre-requisite for any worthy investigation, in promiscuous public circles, of phenomena in themselves obscure and unfamiliar. It is agreed* that darkness and seclusion of the medium open the way for fraud, or for what looks like it; and further, that they furnish conditions that attract Spirits of an undeveloped order, and enable them to work mischief to the medium, and to cause annoyance and bewilderment to all concerned. The question then arises, and a very serious question it is, Is this law of deterioration (as Mr. Farmer well calls it) of universal application? Is the practice of mediumship detrimental to health of mind and body under all circumstances? Or is it that faulty conditions of investigation react on the medium, and sap his physical health?

So experienced an observer as Mr. T. Shorter is disposed to advocate the total abolition of professional mediumship of a physical nature on this ground amongst others. He thinks that the practice of mediumship for gain and in public cannot be so regulated as to be safely followed as a profession. He quotes a case of "one of the most powerful mediums that has ever been known," who after two or three years underwent a terrible change. "His eyes were sunk, his colour gone, his cheeks hollow; he was spitting blood; there was a hectic flush on his face," and it was only by relinquishing the practice of public mediumship, and by going to a more genial climate, and by careful nursing among friends, that he recovered in some degree. This is evidence of very serious import. Before assigning an exact value to it, it would be essential that we should know whether the seeds of disease were not latent in the apparently healthy body; whether those years of psychical excitement and activity were years in which the laws of hygiene and temperance in all that makes for bodily enjoyment were fairly observed; and whether, irrespective of the exercise of mediumship, the man led a clean, wholesome, and temperate life. We should know whether the abandonment of mediumship, or the genial climate and careful nursing among friends, who would enforce regularity of life and attention to diet, medicine, and the like, had most to do with his recovery. The case must not be pressed too far; but it is unquestionably a possible risk that psychical depletion may lead to nervous weakness, and to a craving for the unhealthy excitement temporarily ministered by a reckless use of stimulants.

* Mr. Smart, whose large opportunities for observation entitle his opinion to respect, says on this point:—"I am inclined to think that if the substantial manifestations that have already taken place, were frequently to occur in strong light, and with mediums in full view, it would mean a comparatively short life to the medium, the drain upon the vital forces being at such times excessive."—*Medium*, September 15th, 1882. Let us have the *shadowy*, then, not the "too too solid flesh." Let us have anything that is not possibly fraudulent and injurious. If we can have nothing that is not one or both of these, then let us have nothing at all, and follow Mr. Shorter.

The possible evil rests, I believe, not on anything inherent in mediumship, but on what I may call its prostitution. I have not myself seen any such deterioration as Mr. Shorter describes, which I could conclusively fasten on the practice of mediumship. I agree entirely in Mr. Shorter's estimate of the risks that attend the abuse of mediumship. I am not very sanguine that public mediums will be able to avoid those risks under present circumstances: and for that reason I have long and strongly advocated a reform of our procedure in public circles. I was once disposed to go further: but more careful thought has convinced me that the abolition of public circles, were it practicable (which it is not), is not desirable, and would, indeed, be productive of more serious evils than any we now deplore. The suppression of the public circle to which the inquirer can resort at will would not check ill-regulated attempts at investigation. The man who is really stirred by some over-mastering power, which drives him on in spite of himself, *will* have his satisfaction somehow. If the public medium is not at hand he will set to work among his friends to make experiments. Probably he may find his own enthusiasm contagious: some excited, unevenly-balanced, hysterical minds may, and probably will, catch the contagion, and there will be an outburst of ill-regulated, half-developed mediumship, which will produce the worst results. I am not blind to the blessings that may follow on a calm, controlled, and patient investigation, pursued without excitement, and with an unemotional and even mind. From such the happiest results have followed. But I am not prepared to face the risks that attend necessarily on widespread, excited, and unwise attempts (as at first they must be) at communion with the world of Spirit: to invoke the danger—the terrible danger—of obsession; or even to contemplate the possibility of a wide outburst of hysterical excitement, and undeveloped mediumship in private families; and I cannot, therefore, think it wise to urge the abolition of public circles. I confine myself to desiring that they be conducted on sane and safe principles.

This is no mere chimera, whether it be advanced by a Spiritualist or by one who does not accept the hypothesis on which I ground my argument. I have passed through the phase of overmastering impulse, when an unseen power drives a man to seek relations with the unseen world. I formed those relations; I studiously and determinedly kept a clear head and a balanced judgment in spite of the power that urged me on. I proved the truthfulness and beneficence of the intelligence with which I found myself in relation. I proceeded cautiously and felt my way gradually. Nearly every phase of objective mediumship was brought under my notice, till I entertained no doubt of the reality of what I observed with all the care I could bring to the subject. I was brought into relation, not only with the wise and good, but with those whom I cannot now think of without a shudder; Spirits of evil in act and suggestion to whom if I had in any degree yielded, of whom if I had been afraid, I cannot measure the disastrous consequences. I fought through it; but no consideration that I can imagine would induce me, with my eyes open, to repeat that experience, though from it has come an access of knowledge and spiritual experience that I could have gained in no other way. I am not prepared as a Spiritualist to contemplate the possible subjection of emotional and nervous natures to such trial. Bereft of a powerful guardian, or guided by one who is neither wise nor strong, they *must* fall, or, if not, they must pass through that which, I sadly think, has contributed to increase the number of those who totter on the edge of the precipice and whom the world calls mad, the victims of inverted mediumship, or of obsession by undeveloped Spirits. As a Spiritualist I cannot contemplate any measure that can even possibly or remotely tend to such a calamitous issue.

If I were only a person who sees certain phenomena that he cannot explain, and who scouts the spiritual hypothesis, I

should equally contend that to encourage the sporadic practice of mediumship, whatever that may mean, is risky. I should declare that the foray into the unknown land, where unknown experiences await the intruder, is one best undertaken by the calm and trained mind that is not swept by gusts of emotion and enthusiasm. I should bethink me that the subject lends itself to mystery, that a glamour is cast round it from the past, and that it is pre-eminently a matter for patient and trained observation and experiment. I should be prepared to welcome such private investigations as might be made by capable observers; but I should deprecate the sporadic practice of what I had found to be specially connected with cases of what I should call hysteria. I should object to encourage this curious meddling, broadcast throughout the land, and among a class of persons who are without any proper fitness or suitability for a very difficult task. Such a contention, however the hypothesis on which it rests be received, is an error, if it be one, that errs on the safe side.

This question of the purification of public circles—the remedy that I am prepared to advocate as against their abolition—I treated recently from a somewhat different point of view when I urged that the sitters were as much in need of purification as the mediums. I need not repeat my arguments. Most Spiritualists, I venture to think, will see cause to agree with me that no care can be deemed too great to fit a man for what they and I hold to be the most solemn act in which he can engage, and which I also believe to be beset with special and peculiar risks. But even the most superficial observer must see that the average public circle is a haphazard and fortuitous concourse, the elements of which do not lend themselves happily to exact and painstaking investigation. Not only is it eminently desirable that the members who compose a circle should be mentally and physically “whole,” free from excitement, whether in favour of or against what they come to seek for, but the harmonious blending of elements, in themselves suitable, is a very important factor in success. I am of opinion that neglect of this is a cause of failure too often left out of consideration. I also think that the disposition of the circle is best arranged by those who alone can see beyond the physical envelope and penetrate to the psychical body. We may well select the circle, and leave its arrangement in wiser hands.

M.A. (Oxon.)

PROFESSIONAL MEDIUMS AND THEIR “GREED OF GAIN.”

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—Statements have been repeatedly made in your columns from time to time as to the greed displayed by professional mediums, and its direct influence upon them for evil. As a medium of some years' standing, permit me to give your readers an accurate statement of my work and income for the years 1877 and 1878. In the twelve months preceding the latter year I gave 189 sances, for 77 of which I was paid £130, the remaining 112 being given in various parts of England without any fee or reward whatever. In 1878 I gave 231 sances, 113 of which brought me an income of £208, the remaining 118 being given free of charge. Thus in two years (1877 and 1878 are chosen because in those years I was busiest) I gave 420 sances, out of which 230 were given “for love,” the remaining 190 bringing me an income of just £169 per annum, or a little more than £3 per week, out of which I paid all railway and other expenses incidental to professional life.

Thus it will be seen that the frequent cry against mediums because of their “greed of gain” cannot hold good in my case; and I have no reason to suppose that my brother and sister mediums made a larger income than I, because, during the two years named, my services were very much in demand. I trust these statistics, which I have been careful to make as accurate as possible, will serve to waken in the minds of those who persistently slander the professional medium, a sense of the injustice done to this body of workers, whom I have conclusively shewn to have been inspired by other feelings than gain in the charges of fraud brought against them. It is time, in the light of sense and reason, that these wholesale libels should be disproved; and you, sir, will not cement the existing feeling between the medium and Spiritualist if you permit such statements to be published in your columns without contradiction. I enclose my name and address, and remain, yours, &c.,

VERITAS.

He who comes from the kitchen smells of its smoke.

AN ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH OF VERY OLD INVENTION.

The following communication reaches us, as will be seen, from a well-known author. The fact that Mr. Tupper addresses “LIGHT” shews that he takes some interest in Spiritualism—how much or how little we do not know. We are glad to know, however, that we shall shortly be able to give our readers some of his “Experiences” on the subject, as a free and fair inquirer:—

In the 241st Number of Addison's *Spectator*, bearing date Thursday, December 6th, 1711, and, as signed “C.” (one of the letters of the mystic Clio), by the great Joseph Addison himself, occurs the following remarkable anticipation of our presumably most modern discovery. Those who have access to the London edition of the *Spectator* of 1841, published by J. J. Chidley, 123, Aldersgate-street, can verify the verbatim faithfulness of the following extract from page 274:—

“Strada, in one of his Prolusions (Lib. II. prol. 6), gives an account of a chimerical correspondence between two friends by the help of a certain loadstone, which had such virtue in it, that if it touched two several needles, when one of the needles so touched began to move, the other, though at never so great a distance, moved at the same time, and in the same manner. He tells us that the two friends, being each of them possessed of one of those needles, made a kind of dial-plate, inscribing it with four-and-twenty letters, in the same manner as the hours of the day are marked upon the ordinary dial-plate. They then fixed one of the needles on each of these plates in such a manner that it could move round without impediment, so as to touch any of the four-and-twenty letters.

“Upon their separating from one another into distant countries, they agreed to withdraw themselves punctually into their closets at a certain hour of the day, and to converse with one another by means of this their invention.

“Accordingly, when they were some hundred miles asunder, each of them shut himself up in his closet at the time appointed, and immediately cast his eye upon his dial-plate. If he had a mind to write anything to his friend, he directed his needle to every letter that formed the words which he had occasion for, making a little pause at the end of every word or sentence, to avoid confusion.

“The friend in the meanwhile saw his own sympathetic needle moving of itself to every letter which that of his correspondent pointed at. By this means they talked together across a whole continent, and conveyed their thoughts to one another in an instant over cities or mountains, seas or deserts.

“If Monsieur Scudery, or any other writer of romance, had introduced a necromancer, who is generally in the train of a knight-errant, making a present to two lovers of a couple of these above-mentioned needles, the reader would not have been a little pleased to have seen them corresponding with one another when they were guarded by spies and watchers, or separated by castles and adventures.

“In the meanwhile, if ever this invention should be revived or put in practice, I would propose that upon the lover's dial-plate there should be written not only the four-and-twenty letters, but several entire words which have always a place in passionate epistles, as flames, darts, die, language, absence, Cupid, heart, eyes, hang, drown, and the like. This would very much abridge the lover's pains in this way of writing a letter, as it would enable him to express the most useful and significant words with a single touch of the needle.—C.”

Thus far Addison, a hundred and seventy years ago, and Strada (whoever he may be, for ordinary biographical dictionaries ignore him), perhaps fifty before him, and the two unknown experimentalists, perhaps twenty beyond that, making in all two hundred and forty or fifty years ago as the date of electrical invention: whereof we see no further mention in the *Spectator*. But is it not also among the “Century of the Marquis of Worcester's Inventions”?—as we think possible; the scarce volume is not near us for reference. Let the curious reader who can, turn to it and see. Meanwhile, how strangely Addison and Strada have anticipated the dial-plate, and the needles, and the letters, and the short forms for common words, all so familiar to our telegraphists. Verily, there is nothing new under the sun.

MARTIN F. TUPPER.

DECEASE.—We regret to have to announce that Mr. T. P. Barkas, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, has sustained a severe loss by the decease of his wife, who “entered the higher life” on Thursday, the 30th ult. Mr. Barkas is so highly esteemed by the great body of Spiritualists that he may be assured of the consolation which comes of a very widespread and genuine sympathy.

Messrs. Griffith and Farran will publish immediately “A Wonderful Ghost Story; or, Mr. H.'s Own Narrative,” reprinted from *All the Year Round*, with hitherto unpublished letters from the late Charles Dickens respecting it. Mr. Heaphy's remarkable experiences attracted very considerable attention when they were first related; and two versions appeared, of which this is the correct one.

"THE PERFECT WAY" AND ITS CRITICS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—A slashing pen is apt to be dangerous to its employer. In the impetuosity of his onslaught, "Trident" has done himself, no less than others, an injustice. Let me, then, once again, enter the lists, this time to tender a helping hand to my too adventurous opponent.

"Trident" cannot really hold that religion bears no relation either to memory or to manner of living. Tradition and intuition—the two factors in religion—are each dependent upon memory, the former dealing with its historical, the latter with its spiritual, element. And if it be indeed true that it is possible for one who has lived on earth in the far past to return and communicate of his knowledge concerning any leading religious founder with whom he may have been associated, such invaluable testimony would be due to the faculty which "Trident" repudiates, namely, memory.

But even more essential to religion than the knowledge of events, historical merely and external, is the knowledge of those interior experiences which represent the Divine operation within the soul of the individual. Here it is that the intuition finds its especial office; and inasmuch as without her recollection of those experiences the soul could not communicate of them to the individual, and without his recollection of them the latter could not impart of them to others, it is upon memory, again, that religion largely depends.

"Perception and recollection—these are the sources of Inspiration." But I forbear to quote, lest your correspondent may again make the mistake of suggesting that I cite from myself.

Having shewn how close is the relation of religion to memory, I come to that between religion and diet. As the regulator of conduct, religion is necessarily the regulator of diet. For diet is a department of conduct, and this as respects quality as well as quantity. To deny the relation in question, is to repudiate the practice of temperance, whether in eating or in drinking, as a religious duty, and to admit cannibals, gluttons, and drunkards to the kingdom of Heaven. The conditions of admission to that kingdom are dependent upon attitude of mind and state of heart. The question between us is whether those conditions are fulfilled by one who, either personally or by proxy, batters in the skull or cuts the throat of a gentle, innocent, highly-sensitive fellow-creature, in order to devour its flesh, when the earth around him supplies in abundance wholesome and legitimate food. Nor is the cruelty to the animals the worst part of the evil involved in such a practice. Men themselves are unutterably degraded by it and kept back. It is not the wolf or tiger, but the lamb, which is represented in the Sacred Writings, as the type of him who finally overcomes evil and attains to perfection and bliss. And there is abundant reason to believe that only from food at once pure in itself, and righteously come by, can the spirit within (the "God of the man," as I have termed it) extract the elements needful for the edification of the individual to the full stature of his due perfection. It may well be that were "Trident" to put himself on this regenerative regimen, he would find it easier to shew himself in print the courteous gentleman he, no doubt, is in reality.

As to my "relying for inspiration upon a phantom," it is necessary only to point out that it is not I, but "Trident" himself, who does this. My "phantom," being a shade of my past self, is but as a note-book, to facilitate the recovery of my own recollections. "Trident" on the contrary, as is shewn by his letters, postulates the intervention of extraneous Spirits, which are veritable "phantoms," and seems to think that without their inspiration man would have little or no knowledge of things spiritual.

I regret greatly having to make this further demand upon your space, but the compulsion is not of my own making. The consolation must lie in the hope that some, at least, of your readers—those who are of teachable mind—will derive benefit from the greater explicitness attendant on each fresh re-statement of opinion.—Yours, &c.,

CANTAB.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is necessary to give a reply, which shall be made as brief as possible, to the questions and statements made on the above subject in a letter printed in a recent issue of "LIGHT," under the heading, "Teachings of 'The Perfect Way.'"

Most modern Christians believe that Jesus ate not only fish,

but flesh, and this impression constitutes for them clear licence and sanction to do likewise, although a careful examination of the Sacred Writings, and a scrupulous comparison of the various statements made in the Gospels, would go far to convince them that the probabilities of the case are strongly in favour of a wholly different view.

In the 2nd chapter of Matthew it is stated that Jesus was a "Nazarene." The fact that the writer refers to prophecy for his authority plainly shews that he means not a Nazarene in the sense of a mere inhabitant of Nazareth, but a "Nazarite," for the reference made can only be to the declaration of Jacob (Genesis, xlix. 26), in which the word *názir* occurs for the first time in the Bible, and in the Protestant version is translated "separate"; to the directions given by an angel to the mother of Samson; and to the vow of Hannah in regard to Samuel. According to ecclesiastical tradition, a Nazarene or Nazarite appears to have been one who wore his hair long, clothed himself in a single outer garment without seam, abstained from fermented drinks, and, in the higher degrees of the order, as among the Essenes, from flesh-meats also, after the manner of John the Baptist. The belief that Jesus was one of this order is not only supported by Gospel statement, but by legendary art, based on early conviction and doctrine, as is conclusively shewn by all the Christian representations of the Master, depicting Him invariably in the Nazarite garb, with flowing hair and beard. That He was an adherent of John's doctrine appears further probable from the fact that He sought and underwent baptism at the hands of the latter, and the very word "Essene" is derived from a root signifying "Bather." To be "bathed" was, therefore, to profess Essenism.

There is no evidence, written or traditional, that Jesus ever partook of flesh. The phrase, "the Son of Man is come eating and drinking," is plainly shewn by the context (in the revised edition) to refer to the eating of bread; and it implies that Jesus did not push abstinence to asceticism, as did John. The Paschal Lamb difficulty (in connection with the Last Supper) arises out of a simple misunderstanding, easily rectifiable. The Last Supper is shewn in the Gospel of John, who himself was a prominent figure on the occasion,* to have taken place on the evening of the thirteenth day of the month of Nisan, that is, as is many times distinctly affirmed, before the day of the Paschal meal, which was the fourteenth of Nisan. On this latter day (Friday) the Crucifixion itself took place, for we are told in all four Gospels that this event occurred on the preparation day of the Sabbath, which Sabbath, being also the Convocation day, was "an high day." The date of the Crucifixion is unmistakably fixed by John in the verse: "They led Jesus, therefore, into the palace; and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover."

That the Crucifixion took place the day after that of the Last Supper, is clearly stated by all four Evangelists, and this fact affords plain evidence that the mention of the "eating of the Passover" in relation to the Supper is an erroneous interpolation, for all of them agree that it was held on the thirteenth of Nisan (Thursday), on which day the Passover could not have been eaten.

In calling attention to these facts, over which Biblical students have been much and hopelessly exercised, we cannot refrain from once more pointing out the uncertainty of the historical data of the Gospels, and the danger—exemplified in your correspondent's letter—of citing from "the plain, clear, unmistakable record" of one Gospel narrative, a statement which is flatly contradicted by another of equal or even greater authority.

But that Jesus ate fish, is, if these Gospel records are to be accepted in their literal sense—an assumption we emphatically contest—pretty well established. Let your correspondent bear with us while we point out the strong indications which exist why the fish-eating and fish-catching attributed to Jesus and His disciples, have, not a literal, but a parabolic and mystic meaning, precisely as have also the many references to the "cup" and to wine-drinking in the same narratives. All these allusions are related to astronomical symbology and identify the hero of the Christian Evangels with His ancient prototypes.

It is admitted by most critics of the Sacred Scriptures, that they are largely based on and governed by reference to that science which in earlier times, and in Eastern lands,—whence both the Hebrew and Christian oracles are derived,—dominated and directed all expressions, whether tabular or written, of

* This observation is not less pertinent if we suppose the Fourth Gospel to have been written, not by John, but according to John, for in either case it would record his version of the event in question.

psychic truths. This science was founded on the study of the Celestial Planisphere, and its earliest and most universal textbook was the Zodiac. The phenomenon known as the Precession of the Equinoxes, causes a different sign in the Zodiac to appear at the vernal equinox about every 2,000 years, and to the character of this vernal sign prominent expression was given by the initiated, in the theological cultus of the period. Thus, history has shewn us successfully the Bull (Apis) and the Lamb (Aries) as the dominant emblems of Egyptian and Jewish worship; and this latter sign has survived in Christian symbolism because Aries is always the first Zodiacal hieroglyph, and thus the permanent emblem of the one eternal year or great sun-cycle. But the sign which actually ushered in the Christian dispensation, and which therefore we should expect to find reflected in the sacred legends of the period, was *Piscis*, or the fish.

Hence the Messiah, who appeared under the auspices of this sign, is portrayed as being followed by fishers; as distributing fishes, (the "two small fishes" of the Zodiac) to His disciples; as preparing fish for the food of His apostles; and as Himself partaking of fish after His resurrection.

Besides, the fish is the maritime emblem, and Jesus is said to have been born of Maria and the Holy Ghost, or of water and the Spirit. The prophet Esdras (Esdras, book ii., chap. 13) sees Christ in a vision coming up out of the sea; and the ceremony of "passing through the sea and the cloud" is still connected with initiation into Christian doctrine.

For these reasons, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a net, and the apostles are told they should be "fishers of men." Clement of Alexandria writes to his people early in the third century: "Let our signets be a dove (the Holy Spirit), or a fish (symbol of the water), or the heavenward sailing ship, or the lyre (of the sea-nymph), or the anchor." All these symbols are found in the celestial planisphere.

In the Roman Catacombs—the home of primitive Christian art—the most remarkable and the most general symbol employed to express the name of Christ was that of the fish, which affords, significantly, a combination of everything desirable in a tessera, or mystic sign. The Greek word for fish—*ἰχθύς*—contains the initials of the words,—*Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ*" (Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour.) Sometimes the word *ἰχθύς* was written at length in place of the graven symbol.

Augustine also applies this emblem to Jesus, and says that "He is a Fish which lives in the midst of waters." Paulinus, speaking of the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, (the mystic number of the planets,) alludes to Jesus as "the Fish of the living waters." Prosper refers to Him as "the Fish dressed at his death." And Tertullian calls the Christians "fishes bred in the water and saved by one great Fish." Jerome, commending a disciple who sought baptism, tells him, "that like the Son of the Fish, he desires to be cast into the water."

As thus the Messiah of the Gospels is associated with the sea and with redemption through and by water, so with perfect reason, the successors of Peter, His chief apostle and vicar, claim as their distinctive title the name of the "Fisherman," and the ring with which each successive Pontiff is invested, in token of his office and authority, is known as the "Fisherman's Ring." It has been observed also, that the mitre, characteristic of ecclesiastical authority in the Christian Church, represents a fish's head, and expresses, therefore, the relation of the wearer to the Founder of the religion inaugurated under that sign. Fish were connected in primitive Christian times with all theological ceremonies; the saints in the sacred mysteries were called "*pisciculi*"—little fishes,—and to this day the water vase at the entrance of Catholic churches bears the name of "*piscina*."

The custom of eating fish on Friday, in commemoration of the chief event in the history of Him whose Mother is identical with the genius of that day, is still common in the larger section of Christians.

We might insist at greater length on the peculiarly symbolical character of the whole 21st chapter of John's Gospel, containing the account of the final fish-miracle, which chapter is appended as an epilogue to the Gospel itself, whose formally concluding verse closes the preceding chapter.

More than one critic has pointed out the strong probability that the episode referred to, with its curiously emphasised numerals,—seven, two hundred, a hundred and fifty and three—and the unlikely character of its literal interpretation (see the

Rev. Malcolm White on the symbolical numbers of Scripture), is altogether mystical and perhaps prophetic in meaning.

But enough has been said to indicate the reasons for attaching a sense, not historical but symbolical to the various statements contained in the four Gospels on the subject of Christ's connection with fish and fishery, and the reason of the substitution of the fish for the lamb, which represented the former dispensation.

His connection with bread and wine is equally mystic in its character, and needs no explanation for those who are acquainted with the facts and doctrines of ancient mythology and the relation of the latter to the religion of which they are the lineal ancestors.

A frank acknowledgment of, and apology for, his error, would, we think, have better become Mr. Tommy than the ingenious (rather than ingenuous) reply he has elaborated. His objection, it is now clear, *really is to the teaching of Jesus* in the verse cited. But he has not the courage to avow this, and tries therefore by means of involved phraseology to shift his strictures on to our shoulders. What we have done is to remove the harsh meaning he ascribed to the words of Jesus, and we therefore surely deserve his thanks rather than his reproaches.

The letter signed "S. C." exhibits the same features which characterise the majority of the criticisms put forth by our opponents. These features are a superficial and inaccurate reading both of "The Perfect Way" and of the Bible; and a manner indicative of a desire to wound rather than to discuss.

We entirely deny that we have "heaped loose and indiscriminate imputations on the ministers of the Gospel." For the true "ministers of the Gospel" we have no words of blame; we spoke of "priesthoods and of their inveterate tendency to materialise spiritual doctrines," not in the Christian religion only but in all others. But it is hardly so strange that "S. C." should misquote and misunderstand us, as that—as his next sentence shews—he should be so ignorant of the plain teaching of his own communion! The Resurrection of Jesus is *not* held by Christians of any recognised Church to have been a *spiritual* resurrection. Both Catholic and Protestant divines have invariably taught that Jesus rose from the dead in the *body*, in that body appeared to His disciples (Luke xxiv. 39), and with that body ascended into Heaven, where, *in that body* He sits at the right hand of God the Father. If "S. C." holds otherwise, he cannot believe the letter of the Scriptures, nor the Articles of the orthodox faith, of both of which he appears to be the champion. As it is, while spiritualising the Resurrection, he seems to ascribe a physical meaning to the Incarnation.

As regards the doctrine of re-births, "S. C." writes as though we had been the inventors, or at least the first promulgators of that doctrine, which, he ought to know, is so ancient that upon it all the early theosophies and philosophies were built. It is really too late in the day to discuss a doctrine which is now,—since the publication of "The Perfect Way"—openly taught and at great length insisted on in the pages of the *Theosophist*, and which has but very recently been clearly expounded in "LIGHT" by "C. C. M." If "S. C." is not content with these, he may turn to some letters on "Re-Incarnation" published in "LIGHT" a year ago, under the signature "Anna Kingsford, M.D." He will there find plainly set forth the true nature of that doctrine, which, in common with most Spiritualists, he wholly misunderstands.* In passing, it is, however, well to remind him that Spirit is Divine in its nature, and therefore, of course, possesses and includes the dual principles. Hence Spirit incarnate must needs comprehend the potentiality of both sexes. Were it otherwise, the "perfected man" could not be in the image of God. A full humanity must comprise all experiences and all human relations. Otherwise all would be disorderly, unsystematised, and unequal. The text quoted by "S. C." is quite foreign to the subject, the physiological fact being the very reverse of the conclusion he seems to draw from it, as it would be easy to shew were the pages of this journal suited to such discussion.

It is not possible within the limits of these columns, already so generously accorded to this discussion, to reply in detail to the many objections raised by "S. C." He completely inverts the purport of our remarks about Swedenborg, and after the example of Mr. Tommy, attributes to us words we never used. Will "S. C." be good enough to read what we say about Swedenborg in Lecture ix. p. 266, and in the letter to which he refers? He will then perceive what our estimate of the seer really is, and will find that so far from supposing Swedenborg

* Also, let him read Appendix VII. of "The Perfect Way."

to teach any such thing as that he asserts we ascribe to him, we declared our conviction that his doctrine on the subject of Spirit and matter was one with our own!

As last words on this controversy, we wish to say generally that we have never put forward any "hypothesis" or "opinions." We have taught, and shall still teach, the doctrine of all mystic adepts from Hermes Trismegistus to the Theosophists of our own century, a doctrine given to us by precisely the same method as to all who live the requisite life. And the rule of that life we have openly proclaimed in both precept and practice. We have been asked by some to shew our credentials for our authority—to give a sign of the truth of our doctrine. Our answer is that the whole of that doctrine, in its minutest details, was obtained independently of any initiation at human hands, independently of any previous study in contemporary schools of Occultism, and by a method so clear, so luminous, so divine in character, as to leave no doubt of its source in the memory of the interior Ego. And since the book which contains this doctrine has been given to the world, it has been made abundantly clear that the recipients of the most venerable traditionary teaching in the world—that of India—are in perfect accord with us. Re-birth in manifold existences both on this planet and in others, the complex nature of the human kingdom, the inevitable relation of cause and effect, the superiority of vegetable over flesh food, respect for innocent animal life, the spiritual character of all mystical scriptures, conditional salvation—all these, and the minor teachings they involve, are now being made public by those from whom we had no possible means of learning them, withheld, as they have hitherto been, from even the admitted disciples of the Adepts on whose authority they are now declared.

There has, then, been neither appropriation nor invention in the case; there has been recovery only, and this not by the mediation of "Spirits," but through interior recollection. Thus the book is in itself, as one of your correspondents has suggested, a proof at once of the doctrine of Re-Incarnation and of the soul's ability to regain and communicate of its memories of the past. And it is upon the appeal of such intrinsic evidence to developed and instructed understandings that we rely for the recognition and appreciation which are its due.

THE WRITERS OF "THE PERFECT WAY."

[The discussion on the "Teachings of 'The Perfect Way'" must end here.—ED. "LIGHT."]

"ALLIED TOPICS."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Student," has, in a very considerate manner, touched a weak point in the conduct of your excellent journal—the want of an open column for the discussion of questions relating to "the highest interests of humanity." On referring to the original prospectus, I read that the promoters promised to issue "a high-toned and impartial weekly journal, devoted primarily to the interests of Spiritualism, and secondarily, to the fair discussion of such other topics as may occupy the attention of men and women of advanced thought." Inquiries have frequently been made by one or another why the "secondary" feature of the undertaking has been so completely ignored, but no satisfactory answer has been forthcoming. To my knowledge, the clóture which the management have exercised towards all reforms has been a disappointment to a large number of subscribers, and I also believe, detrimental to the financial success of the paper. Spiritualists are naturally thinkers and reformers, and they look to see some of the utterances of the earnest men and noble women who are devoting their lives to the abolition of social evils (the existence of which so much wars against a higher spiritual development) in the columns of their journal. I have, on occasions, been present at gatherings of from fifty to a hundred of these social reformers, all interested in particular humanitarian projects, of whom two-thirds, at least, were avowed Spiritualists; but not one word relating to the object that so deeply enlisted their sympathies would be permitted to appear in the columns of "LIGHT." This policy of exclusion has not found favour with "men of light and leading" in other countries any more than at home. William Lloyd Garrison, the leader of the Anti-Slavery movement in America, and one of the greatest reformers of this century, while devoting his journal, the *Liberator*, mainly to the great object of his life—the emancipation of the slave—gave hospitable welcome to Spiritualism, and all other philanthropic movements of his day,

no matter how unpopular at the time. A similar policy governs the leading weekly class-journals in America; and the most liberal of those devoted to Spiritualism is the one that has obtained the widest circulation.

MELANCTHON.

December 4th, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I see with a feeling akin to dismay that "Allied Topics," which have lately slumbered, are again shewing signs of activity. This vivacity is of evil omen. Your readers are probably divided into two broadly defined camps. Of these one contains a considerable number of persons who interest themselves in such subjects as are mentioned in the letter of "A Student." Some would alter the laws respecting the position of women; some would abolish property in land; some think that lunatics should be better looked after. But very few indeed, except some unbalanced minds to whom mere novelty and change are in themselves attractive, agree among themselves. Each has his private fancy. On the other side you have those who are Spiritualists proper, and who are united in a common desire to advance what they believe to be the truth, and to leave absolutely alone, so far as publication is concerned, most questions on which they are by no means agreed, and some of which they cordially detest, and all of which they regard as outside of the sphere of action marked out for them.

This latter body includes within it, as I know, some of the most influential of the present supporters of "LIGHT." It would include all, or nearly all, those members of the Society for Psychical Research whom "A Student" wishes to attract—men who would infallibly be repelled and disgusted by finding the journal, which they read for its news of Spiritualism, filled week by week with discussion of what they would regard as merely irrelevant hobbies or worse. "Student's" two suggestions are incompatible. You cannot attract such minds by such means. You can, indeed, leave them alone, and cater for another class, and I am not prepared to say that you would not be more successful in that way in extending your circulation. But are you prepared for the cost? It will involve nothing less than a complete change in the character of your paper; a change which will sweep away its distinguishing characteristics, and alienate those who now value it for its freedom from those very peculiarities which it is proposed now to introduce. It will involve a complete change of front; and it will compel many who now cordially support its policy to consider how far they can any longer identify themselves with a new departure which is so little to their taste.

For myself, I deprecate the very discussion of such a change, but the suggestion having been made, it is important that there should be no undervaluing of the consequences that would follow on its adoption.

M. A. (OXON.)

December 2nd.

[We give the above letters as specimens of a considerable number which have been addressed to us on the subject. So far as we can at present judge the balance of opinion amongst our readers is strongly against any departure from the course which we have adopted hitherto.—ED. "LIGHT."]

A CORRECTION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—There is a sentence in my last week's article which I particularly wished to be intelligible, but which the mysterious introduction of a single syllable in the press—I thought I had struck it out in the proof—has rendered absolutely nonsensical. I am made to speak of "objective unconsciousness"! Will you allow me to reproduce the sentence correctly? "What took place in Devachan was the gradual *in-drawing* of the past-life experience till it ceased to be objective consciousness, and became the subjective basis of another external life or personality."

The conversion of experience into character is a principle of the utmost importance; and I wished to show that as soon as the old experience had been completely used up, or worked up, for this purpose, the subjective basis of the new personality would be laid. We can easily conceive that it would then demand an objective activity and expression, this demand being the "Tanha," "Trishna," and Upadana (thirst, desire, grasping), which, according to Buddhism, is the cause of re-birth. This, too, avoids the really absurd and impossible account ascribed by Mr. Rhys Davids* to the early Buddhists—that it is the craving for life of the dying person which causes the birth of an altogether distinct individual with the same Karma.

C.C.M.

* Hibbert Lecture, 1881, p. 95. Mr. Rhys Davids gives no authority at this place; I cannot at this moment say if he does elsewhere.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return Postage.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may be obtained direct from our Office, and also of E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

1883.

WITH the new year the price of "LIGHT" will be reduced to twopence, or post-free 10s. 10d. per annum, paid in advance; while the size and number of pages will remain the same as at present. This reduction has been determined upon in consequence of very strong representations which have reached us that the change will add very materially to our circulation, and thereby greatly extend the sphere of our usefulness. We hope that the friends to whose suggestions we have thus deferred will do their best to ensure the fulfilment of their own prognostications.

Those of our readers who have already forwarded subscriptions at the present rate, will either have their term of supply proportionately extended, or will for a time receive an additional copy of the Journal. In the absence of instructions to the contrary, the latter course will be adopted, in the hope that the second copy will be forwarded to persons who may thereby be induced to become subscribers for themselves.

Many of our friends can well afford to aid in the extension of our circulation. Let them begin with the new year to take two or more copies instead of one, and so introduce "LIGHT" amongst their friends and neighbours. They will thus be doing a good work, and at the same time make our success secure.

"MAGNETIC DREAMS."

An interesting article under the above heading appeared in the *St. James's Gazette* of November 29th. It is chiefly concerned with speculations of Schopenhauer in relation to the phenomena of clairvoyance and similar facts. The forthcoming translation of Schopenhauer's best known work is likely to draw greater attention to theories which are remarkably like some now being discussed by transcendental Spiritualists. Had Schopenhauer lived to see the recent developments of these phenomena, one can fancy with what vigour and effect he would have repelled the incredulity of the commonplace "scientific mind," which is as mere a creature of the Zeit-Geist as was the crudest superstition of the Middle Ages. That even in Germany his philosophy has not yet reached the climax of its influence is the more probable from a fact which Schopenhauer himself anticipated. His system of thought was in great measure the result of studies comparatively little cultivated in Europe when he wrote, but which are now fast becoming an acknowledged power in our intellectual development.

In the preface to "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," he writes: "I anticipate that the influence of Sanskrit literature will not be less profound than the revival of Greek in the fourteenth century."* Scholars pave the way for philosophers, and studies which at first seem to possess only a critical and historical interest are soon found to have a living and working influence on contemporary thought. So it was at the Renaissance, and so it may be when the sources of a still more ancient wisdom have become fully accessible.

* He adds: "I cannot resist a certain suspicion that our Sanskrit scholars do not understand their texts much better than the higher class of school boys their Greek. Of course, as they are not school boys, but men of knowledge and understanding, they put together, out of what they do understand, something like what the general meaning may have been, but much probably creeps in *ex ingenio*."

"One of the fundamental doctrines of Schopenhauer's philosophy," says the *St. James's*, "is that the world, as we know it, has not an independent existence. Like Berkeley, he held that it is merely an 'appearance.' The only real existence, he maintained, was 'the thing in itself,' and 'the thing in itself' he identified with the will." So far, of course, this is pure idealism, since "the will," if we may regard it as a spiritual energy, is just that "subject" whose activity results in the whole objective world of phenomena. How Schopenhauer himself regarded "the will" is not, however, sufficiently indicated in the article, which continues, "In ordinary circumstances we know the will only as it manifests itself under the forms of space, time, and causality; but he contended that there are states of the brain in which we penetrate behind these forms, and come into contact with the will as it is in its own nature. Even members of the Society for Psychical Research will not take up higher ground than this; and they will certainly not surpass Schopenhauer in the confidence with which he drew conclusions from his ultimate principles." The account of the "magnetic sleep" which follows is too familiar to need reproduction here. Schopenhauer was a strict Determinist, and although, as Zöllner has pointed out, he had a belief in a transcendent, or teleological fatalism, the "Providence that shapes our ends," in the world "everything happens in accordance with a fixed and necessary order." And in the fact of what we now call prophetic dreams, or anticipations of experience, he found a confirmation of this. The present writer has often called attention to the significance of the frequently trivial character of these anticipations, and it seems that Schopenhauer took just the same view. "He gives an example of one which he himself had an opportunity of studying. This instance seemed to him all the more remarkable because it related to a matter of little importance. One day he was writing a letter in great haste, and when he had finished the third page he intended to strew writing sand over what he had written. In his hurry he seized the inkstand instead of the vessel containing sand, and dashed the contents over his letter. As the ink poured from his desk, he rang for the maid to wipe it from the floor. When she was engaged in doing so, she said, 'Last night I dreamt that I should be wiping ink spots from the floor here.' 'That is not true,' answered Schopenhauer. 'It is true,' she replied, 'and when I awoke I mentioned it to the other maid who sleeps with me.' Just then the other maid happened to enter the room in order to call away her fellow-servant. Schopenhauer, advancing to meet her, at once said, 'What did this girl dream last night?' 'I don't know.' 'Yes, you do, she told you when she awoke.' 'Oh, to be sure!' the maid then said, 'she dreamt that she would be wiping ink spots from the floor here.'" (As to the value of this evidence, it must be remarked that a sharp girl, seeing how her fellow-servant was employed, might easily connect that with the fact that the latter had been telling her master about a dream, and wishing to screen her from blame for lying, might make a good shot in confirmation.)

Schopenhauer notices different classes of visions. There is, for instance, the case given by Goethe in his "Dichtung und Wahrheit aus meinem Leben." "Goethe had said farewell to Friederike, and was riding in a sorrowful mood towards Drusenheim, when suddenly, he says, he saw himself, 'not with the eyes of the body, but with those of the mind,' riding in the opposite direction, on the same road, in a dress such as he had never worn—'pike-grey, with a little gold.' 'When I aroused myself from this dream,' Goethe adds, 'the figure immediately vanished.' Eight years afterwards, he asserts, he found himself on horseback on this very road, on the way to meet Friederike again, wearing the dress he had seen in his vision, although he had put it on accidentally. Schopenhauer, who is not averse from teleological explanations after a fashion of his own, argues that this waking dream must have been granted to Goethe for the purpose of consoling him. The final cause of waking dreams may be, however, Schopenhauer holds, to prepare us for defeat and sorrow, as in the case of the famous vision of Brutus before the battle of Philippi. The ultimate will behind phenomena may even strive to warn men who, through some defect of constitution, are unable to apprehend its intimations. At such times, although seeing nothing, they may hear mysterious sounds, especially sounds of knocking, and Schopenhauer's investigations convinced him that these sounds are most frequently heard in the interval between night and morning. Another set of 'facts' to which he attributes great importance are those connected with the influence which may be exerted by persons in

a waking dream over other persons, whether near or at a distance. This influence, he tells us, is often exercised by persons who are dying. A dying man who happens to be in a magnetic state thinks of some friend; and instantly a vision of him, as distinct as surrounding objects, rises in his friend's consciousness. Schopenhauer cites many authorities for this belief, but also mentions a case known to himself. 'A short time ago,' he says, 'at the Jewish Hospital, here in Frankfort, a sick woman died during the night. Early next morning, her sister and her niece, one of whom lives in Frankfort, the other about four English miles away, called at the hospital to inquire for her; during the night she had appeared to both of them. The director of the hospital, who reported this incident, declared that such cases often occur.' Whether the dead ever exercise the same power, Schopenhauer does not undertake to say. The intellect, being a function of the brain, is extinguished, he assumes, by death; the will, of which the brain is only a manifestation, survives, and he sees no reason to doubt that it may have the capacity of appearing to the living, or (without itself appearing) of communicating some message from the unseen universe. On this point, however, he admits that the evidence accessible to us is vague and contradictory. But it is certain that in waking dreams men have often seen the dead as they existed at some particular moment of their lives. Visions of this kind correspond exactly to a past reality; and they may be called forth by the presence of a trifling relic, such as a coat, or a drop of blood that has long ago sunk into the floor. It is not the dead themselves who appear, but the vision is evoked by an influence which they have left behind them; and among other proofs Schopenhauer recalls the experience of the botanist Gleditsch, who saw Manpertius in the hall of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, of which Manpertius had for many years been president.

"The magical qualities of human nature (the word 'magical' is used with approval by Schopenhauer himself) are usually supposed by enthusiastic believers in them to be revealed only in rare moments of exaltation. Schopenhauer, however, was persuaded that without being aware of it we are constantly crossing the line between nature and the supernatural.* Hence he warns persons who have an important secret that in conversation they ought not to refer to any subject having the most distant relation to it. The faintest indication may suffice, he suggests, to disclose to another mind everything that we are most anxious to conceal. A lady once asked him 'in the course of very animated talk at the supper table' what were the three numbers she had chosen for the lottery. To her astonishment he gave the first two numbers correctly. The third was wrong; but that was because she had disturbed him by her exclamations, awakening him from the state in which (if we may accept his account of the matter) he was able to read her thoughts with the directness and the certainty of intuition."

The bearing of this last case, and of Schopenhauer's theory, on the investigations now being carried on by the Committee of the Psychological Research Society on "Thought-reading," cannot fail to strike us. It appears quite certain that a state of reverie, or what may be described as a *congelation of consciousness*—of the superficial consciousness which consists in receptivity to external impressions—is the favourable condition for intuitive perceptions. It often happens to most of us, and may be fancifully figured by the skimming over of water by the thin coating of ice which protects it from the rippling breeze. It can hardly be called a dream state, for the slightest importunity from without will put an end to it. But it is just sufficient often to induce the peculiar susceptibility to more internal impressions which introverts us into seemingly mystic conditions. When Dr. Carpenter suddenly interposed "a large music-book" between Foster's eyes and the top of a pointer (of which the lower part was already concealed by the alphabet card), he arrested the communication.† Here was a great discovery! a conclusive proof that the pretended sensitive was really an accomplished adept at interpreting physical movements! What really was demonstrated was the learned doctor's incompetence to deal with a subtle psychological problem. By an act of stupidity, he had disturbed conditions of extreme delicacy. And that is science! Fortunately, the inquiry is now in the hands of men more instructed than to contrive their tests of psychological phenomena on the assumption that there are no psychological conditions.

C. C. M.

* I have not the text of Schopenhauer before me, but I much doubt if he used this absurd word. -C.C.M.

† It was in this case given by raps, but the power evidently depended on the mental state of the medium.

MIND-READING OR CLAIRVOYANCE—WHICH?

In the *Nineteenth Century* for last June an article appeared on Thought-reading, wherein mention is made of a curious faculty possessed by a "young girl" with "delicate skin and quick intelligence," that "young girl" being myself.

The conclusion which the writers (Messrs. F. W. H. Myers and Mr. Edmund Gurney) draw respecting this power of thought-writing, with my mother's fingers resting lightly on my wrist, is totally at variance with our opinion, and had not my mother been in a very bad state of health at that time she would have made some comments thereon.

Now, in order to prove that clairvoyance, or automatic-writing is something more than mind-reading I could cite many facts which have occurred in our home circle, without any professional medium, my mother and self being the only sitters, and both (although at the commencement one was but a very "young girl") earnest investigators of the truth. But having a strong disinclination to court notoriety I will give one instance which we chanced to receive through the rare and extraordinary mediumship of Miss Lottie Fowler.

Six or seven years ago Miss Fowler gave an engagement-séance to some of the members of the old Dalston Association, and a slight misunderstanding having arisen between that lady and one of the circle, our secretary referred her to my mother, who was then vice-president of the society.

Consequently Miss Fowler, almost an entire stranger, made her appearance one evening at our house when all were out, excepting papa, mamma, and the domestics.

After mamma had listened to her little grievance, and given common-sense and motherly advice, Miss Fowler, being considerably cooled, turned to papa and said:—

"Just take my hand, Mr. Corner, and see what Annie" (her Spirit-guide) "has to say."

She then speedily passed into the trance-state, and commenced speaking of different members of the family, none of whom, saving my sister Nina and myself, once had she seen. Everything she said was perfectly correct. All this might have been thought-reading, however. But she went on to speak of my brother, who had passed away some twelve years previously, giving an account of his last illness and death, of his temperament and disposition, his passionate love of study, &c., adding that he was then present in spirit, dictating, and told her that there was something in the room which had belonged to him which he had great affection for in earth-life, and wished now that the medium should handle it.

To this my parents dissented. They were assured there was nothing of his (except a photograph, which he said was not what was meant) in that room, only the things in constant everyday use being permitted there. Nevertheless Miss Fowler insisted, and merely out of courtesy they let her have her way.

If papa would be nigh to steady her should she need it, she said, the Spirit would himself guide her to it. She then arose and with eyes partially closed, and the wavering, uneven gait of a somnambule, passed round the room until she came to a what-not in the far corner. Here she halted and made a request that papa should take off each article and place one after another in her hand. This papa did, persisting meanwhile that it was a mistake, but in no wise daunting the clairvoyante. One by one each article was handled and rejected even unto the last, as papa thought, but on closer search, in obedience to commands, he drew forth, from beneath, a dusty book, which, coming into contact with the medium's fingers, immediately called forth the exclamation "This is it, he says—open it—you will see!" Upon opening the book, the first thing to catch papa's eye was my brother's name in his own handwriting. It was one of his favourite books, "Cassell's Astronography," from which mamma taught him when quite a child, and which after remaining many years with the rest of his school-books in a cupboard in the library, had been brought out two or three months previously for mamma to give my youngest sister a few lessons on the globe, and never been put away again.

This was certainly not in the minds of those mortals present. Whence, then, did the knowledge come? Perhaps the *Nineteenth Century* can answer this?

CAROLINE CORNER.

"THE PERFECT WAY."—May I ask if the writers of "The Perfect Way" will kindly inform me where in the works of Swedenborg the quotation on p. 266, alleged to be his own words, may be found?—A STUDENT OF SWEDENBORG.

MEDIUMS, SPIRIT FORMS, AND DARK SEANCES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In Mr. Shorter's address, or rather in the subsequent discussion "on mediums" in your last issue, he reveals his "key-note," after much fencing, and says: "Spiritualism had now reached such a state of development that professional mediumship was no longer desirable," &c.; and this is confirmed by the editor of "LIGHT," or its committee. (See page 546.)

So Miss Wood and all other good professional mediums must now be deprived of their bread, according to the dictum of the C. A. S. A time was—when Mr. Crookes, Mr. Varley, myself, Mr. Luxmore, and others, were investigating along with Mr. Harrison—that mediums were invaluable, and *they are so still* if properly treated, and not considered inferior beings to ourselves. The fault lies in the public and the C. A. S. not taking right methods to stop the action of Spirits in playing tricks with us during séances, and saddling every personation or other thing on the "poor medium," who may be half or wholly in trance during a séance, and, therefore, entirely ignorant. Those mediums who impose soon stop, when found out. As the seizure of forms has brought forth all this discussion, allow me to suggest that had the man who seized "Pocha" quietly *got consent*, first of Miss Wood and then the form, to allow the latter to be gently held *to see the effect*, the result would have been a gradual dissolving or vanishing of "Pocha," and Miss Wood would be still in her cabinet; but the violent rushing and seizing the form had an opposite effect, and was a disgraceful method of solving the question, and might have been attended by awful consequences. Is it possible that the C.A.S. have learnt everything that mediums know, so as to do without them? Or have they some "private one" coming forth who is to benefit the Society and be more honourable than professional mediums? If so, I should very much like to see one. At a "dark séance" at my house a fortnight ago, darkness was *enforced*, and Mr. E. was held by two ladies from Putney, one on each side, when shortly a brilliant crucifix formed itself behind his back against a book-case, and he turned his head to see it, for it was 2ft. long and 3in. broad, the cross-bar having in large letters the word, "Faith." After some minutes its luminosity gradually died out, and then Mr. E. was floated to the ceiling whilst held by the ladies. Still you cry, "No dark séances." Now if a match had been struck he would have fallen down headlong; nor would the crucifix have been seen at all: nor would "Joey" or "Irresistible," the Spirits who do these things, have talked with us had any gas been lit.

Your want of a permanent good medium, "well paid," and taking what comes under the direction of the Spirits, and studying it afterwards, and asking questions at the next sitting, is *your failing*.

You have too much theosophy and too little practical testing and weighing to satisfy the requirements of the public. But I won't open up any controversy, as I have given up the subject for others to follow it up who are younger.—Yours truly,

CHARLES BLACKBURN.

[We are quite sure that Mr. Blackburn will excuse us if we say that he has entirely misunderstood the position both of "LIGHT" and of the C.A.S. Alluding to Mr. Shorter's remark that "Spiritualism had now reached such a state of development that professional mediumship was no longer desirable," Mr. Blackburn adds—"And this is confirmed by the editor of 'LIGHT' or its committee. See page 546." As a matter of fact the editor of "LIGHT" has never confirmed such a sentiment; nor has it been confirmed by any committee of "LIGHT," for "LIGHT" has no such committee! We were puzzled at first to understand to what Mr. Blackburn could allude, when he thus spoke of the "committee" of "LIGHT;" but our readers will see on reference to the page which he indicates (p. 546) that he had in mind the circular recently issued by a committee of the C.A.S. But here again Mr. Blackburn is in error, for that circular (which we reprint in our present number) nowhere contends, nor even suggests, that "professional mediumship is no longer desirable."

Mr. Blackburn proceeds:—"So Miss Wood and all other good professional mediums must now be deprived of their bread, according to the dictum of the C. A. S." We assure Mr. Blackburn that he misapprehends the intention of the C. A. S., and that the C. A. S. has never given utterance to such a dictum. In proof we need only point to the fact that at this very time Miss Wood is engaged by the C. A. S. for a series of séances, as a professional medium, and that she will be paid for her services.

Mr. Blackburn narrates his experience at a dark séance held at his residence, and adds:—"Still you cry, 'No dark séances.'" We have never cried, "No dark séances." We have simply

maintained that, in the interests of the medium and to save Spiritualism from discredit, the medium should, in *all public or promiscuous circles* for physical phenomena, be placed in the light. We quite agree with Mr. Blackburn that some of the most interesting manifestations can be obtained only in darkness; and we have no desire whatever to discourage dark séances held under such circumstances as he describes. "Family circles" are, in fact, expressly excepted from the suggested conditions in the C. A. S. circular to which he has alluded.

If Mr. Blackburn will read carefully what we have from time to time said on the subject of circles and mediumship, he will find, we have no doubt, that there is very little difference between us after all, and that what little there is has been the result of misapprehension. Mr. Blackburn has been so generous a supporter of Spiritualism, and has had so large an experience of its phenomena, that his opinions must always claim a fair consideration, and it will be matter for much regret if, as he intimates, he should retire from the subject in favour of those who are younger than himself.—ED. "LIGHT."]

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN.

"A Memoir of Augustus de Morgan" has just been published by his wife, Mrs. Sophia Elizabeth de Morgan. The *Morning Post* in noticing the work remarks:—Mr. de Morgan's interest in India was kept up by a number of his relations who are in its civil and military services. One of them, Dr. Briggs, was the hero of the singular ghost story related by Mrs. de Morgan, to whom it was given for publication more than 40 years ago:—

Dr. Briggs, being stationed up country, was in the habit of going out hunting with some friends. One day, when the rendezvous was at his own house, he awoke at dawn, and saw a figure standing beside his bed. He rubbed his eyes, to make sure that he was awake, got up, crossed the room, and washed his face well with cold water. He then turned, and seeing the same figure, approached it, and recognized his sister, whom he had left in England. He uttered some exclamation and fell down in a swoon, in which state he was found by the servant, who came to call him for the hunt. He was, of course, unable to join his friends, who when at breakfast on their return rallied him on the cause of his absence. While they were talking he suddenly looked up, aghast, and said, trembling, "Is it possible that none of you see the woman who stands there?" They all declared there was no one. "I tell you there is," he said, "she is my sister: I beg you all to make a note of this, for we shall hear of her death." All present, sixteen in number, of whom Sir John Malcolm was one, made an entry of the occurrence and the date in their note-books, and by the first mail which could bring the news from England the sister's death at the time was announced. She had before leaving this world expressed a wish that she could see her brother and leave her two young sons to his care."

Many persons connected with the Madras Presidency must remember having heard this strange story from the lips of contemporaries of Briggs; it was undoubtedly very generally believed. Mr. de Morgan himself, in spite of his devotion to the exact sciences, was clearly impressionable with reference to things connected with the "unseen world." Traces of this are to be found in many pages of his memoir, especially in a letter written by him in 1849 to the Rev. William Heald. In it he relates at length a séance at his own house (he being absent), during which a little girl of twelve, mesmerised by Mrs. de Morgan for epileptic fits, followed him into the house at which he was dining, then unknown even to his wife, and told accurately the number, age, and sex of the persons he was with, described different peculiarities in the furniture of the rooms, and, above all, being pressed by Mrs. de Morgan to say what there was on the table after dinner, answered, "Wine, water, and biscuits." Mrs. de Morgan, in relating this to her husband, was persuaded that as to this last detail the child had made a mistake; it was, however, correct. Mr. de Morgan adds, "All this is no secret. You may tell who you like, and give my name. What do you make of it? Will the never-failing doctrine of coincidence explain it?"

WANTED!

We are anxious to learn the names and addresses of the writers of the following communications. We know at the time, but have forgotten. Will they kindly give us the required information?

An article headed, "A Curious Coincidence" and signed G., which appeared in the supplement to "Spiritual Notes" for February, 1880.

"A Fact in Personal Experience," relating to a dream by an old lady living at Sheringham, in Norfolk. This communication, which appeared in "LIGHT" for May 21st, 1881, has the signature E.R.P.

PRACTICAL TEACHING OF MATERIALISATION.

By Mrs. Heckford.

Read before the Central Association of Spiritualists, on Monday Evening, December 4th.

Spiritualism is a word which ought to command a respectful hearing for any speaker who takes it as a theme, to whatever shade of opinion his audience may belong; yet Spiritualism is a word which not only does not command such respect, but which, more frequently than not, excites derision. What is the reason? To me it appears to be this:—

Spiritualism may be divided into two parts; the Phenomenal and the Real. The Phenomenal consists of various more or less material manifestations of the existence of individual and disembodied forces; the Real consists in the realisation of the Being of such forces. The former belongs to the domain called science; the latter to that called religion. The former, to command respect, must be studied patiently and analytically, like any other science; the latter must be openly confessed, and the actions of those who so confess must be as fearlessly in accordance with their confession as has been the case with all those who, in this world's history, have triumphed in the name of religion.

Has such, up to the present moment, been the position given to Spiritualism by Spiritualists? It is impossible to say that it has.

If we are to compel respect, and to take the position we ought before the world—the honourable post of stemming the onward march of Materialism, until the disordered bands of those who yet fight under the standard of religious dogma have time to rally and to join our ranks; if Spiritualism, like the fabled Phoenix, is to rise from the ashes of Christianity the same, but endowed with fresh beauty and vigour—then Spiritualists must no longer be content to gather together for the sake of seeking personal consolation or instruction, must no longer hide the light which has been given to them; but must gather together to spread consolation and instruction to others, and hold their light aloft so that all may see it.

To use a metaphor, Spiritualists must seek for and find a firm and wide basis whereon to raise a lighthouse which shall illumine with a steady light the darkness of Materialism and dogma, and warn wayfarers away from the rock of selfishness until the breaking of the dawn.

I purpose in this paper to lay before you certain considerations as to where in the vast ocean of Spiritualistic thought a basis wide and firm enough to support such a superstructure may be found.

There are certain central points to which all the different phases of Spiritualistic thought converge; so much so that I think that there is no one of us who does not accept the following ideas:—Individual immortality; spiritual communion, affinity, attraction, repulsion, and control; the continuity of spiritual development, and the power of spirit over matter.

Assuming the correctness of these propositions, we find that we are standing on a different and much firmer basis than that afforded by any system of religion as taught hitherto, each of which has sought to stimulate the human mind to an effort towards God by appealing to its selfishness. "Do good," we have been told, "and you will go to eternal happiness; do evil, and you will go to prolonged or eternal torment. Death is a gulf separating this terrestrial life from the life hereafter, a life in which there is no progress, unless (according to the Roman Catholic faith) from Purgatory to Heaven."

Selfishness, then, is the basis of all dogmatic religious teaching.

Let us consider what selfishness is according to the teaching of Spiritual philosophy.

The commonly-accepted meaning of the word is contentment with one's own well-being, irrespective of the effect produced thereby on others. Dogmatic religious teaching, after building upon it as a basis, insists upon its being wrong. The teaching of Spiritualism shews us that selfishness, according to this definition, is not wrong, because the nature of Spiritual development precludes the possible occurrence of such a state as is assumed by it, and a thing which cannot be, cannot be either right or wrong. A Spiritualist assumes that he occupies metaphorically the position of an Alpine climber, attached midway in a chain of other climbers. If he or any in that chain waver or fall, the misfortune of the individual becomes in greater or less degree the misfortune of all, endangering some, hindering or arresting others; or if he or any other attain a firm footing then the safety of the individual becomes a strength to all; lessening the labours of those above, and assisting the progress of those below him. In such circumstances the most self-concentrated man perforce becomes interested in the welfare of all his companions, because he is forced to realise that there can be no well-being for him unless there be well-being for all; and this is what Spiritual philosophy enables us to realise. Surrounded as we are by Spirits superior, equal, and inferior to ourselves, Spirits embodied and disembodied, we cannot, whether far from human habitation and companionship, or living in the turmoil of a great city, avoid ministering to and being ministered to by those around us, either for good or for evil. We live in a cloud of

witnesses, the thoughts of each reacting on all; and, accepting this truth, we know that the word selfishness is not the name of any sin, but the name of a peculiar misconception of facts epidemic in terrestrial animals, for selfishness is a monomania not confined to man.

It cannot, however, be denied that in thus recognising selfishness as a widespread form of madness, a great strain is put upon the mind, a strain so great that most of us are obliged to look anxiously for some holdfast to which we may cling until we get accustomed to look without reeling on the wide prospect revealed to us from the height we have attained. And here, as must ever be the case, the Truth we have aspired to itself gives us the needful aid. Just as an unpractised mountaineer, who, having gained an elevation beyond any he has before reached, feels that he must steady his reeling brain by fixing his eyes on some object close to him, instead of letting them rove over the landscape spread out as a map beneath him, or raising them to the heights yet towering above him, so we feel the necessity of concentrating our attention upon some limited motive for action, if we are not to collapse under the effort to realise the immensity of the scheme of existence; and the spiritual communion subsisting between us and those we love, whether the Spirits be embodied or disembodied, supplies our need. Is the loved one our superior in development? Then we must try to make it happy by leaving ourselves open to its beneficent influence, by cultivating such thoughts and habits as will render us fit to be used by it as a medium of good to others, thus increasing its felicity and lessening the burden of its responsibility to those around it. Is it our equal? Then we must be so keenly conscious that any weakness in us is liable to react upon and endanger it, that we must fortify ourselves for its sake. Is it, alas! our inferior? Then we, indeed, have the strongest inducement to purify ourselves, and to court the influx of superior influences, for who can be so fit a medium for such aid as it requires as we can be, we who are already influencing and being influenced by it?

Love is thus our incentive and our safeguard, and the more our spiritual sympathy is extended, the bolder and safer shall we be as we climb the spiritual mountain; true Spiritualism, in this as in all else, embracing true Christianity; for did not Christ command us to "Love one another," and did not He tell us that "God is Love"?

In taking firm hold on all ideas such as these, and in persistently endeavouring to actuate them, the phenomena of materialisation appear to me to be of the utmost value, the more so as a divergence of opinion as to the origin of these phenomena, such as exists amongst Spiritualists, does not materially affect the consideration: for, whatever differences may arise in explaining *what* force is brought into play in the production of these phenomena, all admit that a materialised form is the result of an invisible force, rendering its operations sensible, by so dealing with matter as to develop new and transient forms, thereby appealing from our intellectual or invisible part, to our material senses, in evidence of that which it wishes to teach us, thus placing in our hands the clue to unravel the mystery of our existence. These phenomenal forms cannot be produced except under certain physical conditions, and when produced a slight disturbance of the physical conditions necessary for their maintenance, destroys them. Is not this a lesson how to interpret what we call life and death on this earth? Again, all Spirit teaching tells us that the amount of force expended in producing a form becomes, so to say, latent in the form, and that hence the utterances of a force or intelligence maintaining a materialised form are not of so high a character as those of the same intelligence when not so employed. We are thus forced to conclude that we may justly formulate the intellectual effects of materialisation thus:—

Let the intellectual force necessarily expended in materialisation be represented by $5a$. Then, if the power of the disembodied Spirit be equal to $7a$, when it is employed in maintaining a form, its free power will be $7a$, minus $5a$, equal to $2a$; and further, if the power of the disembodied Spirit be but $5a$, then when it is engaged in maintaining a form it will have no free power at all, that is to say its perceptions will be limited by its physical senses, and whatever teaching it receives must come to it through them.

Applying these conclusions to the earthly life around us, I find them receive corroboration from observation of daily occurrences. I find a large number of men and women to whom it is impossible to grasp, or even so much as to apprehend, any abstract idea, whilst I doubt that it would be possible to find even one to whom the maintenance of abstract thought as a basis for practical work is not so great an effort as to entail occasional, if not continual, shortcomings. This is what, if the teachings of Spiritualism be true, we ought to expect; for, recurring to the previous formula, I observe that the Spirit whose power was $5a$ could have no abstract ideas whilst engaged in materialisation, whilst the Spirit whose power was $7a$ would, under similar conditions, have only the power of $2a$ at its disposal, and hence (should it attempt to actuate any of its ideas) would be somewhat in the position of a Spirit whose power was only equal to $2a$, and which yet endeavoured to materialise, for, in whatever manner thought actuates itself on this earth, it has always to compel matter in some shape or form to its will.

This thought, appalling for those outside the pale of Spiritualism, is not so for those within, for Spiritualism itself affords the light to guide, and the staff to support, those who have passed within its gates. A Spiritualist conscious of his intellectual force being insufficient to efficiently accomplish the tasks which arise out of his daily existence, knows, by this very consciousness, that there is some, if, maybe, only a very small portion of his power yet free, and that if he persistently courts communion with high intelligences, this free portion of his being will be strengthened and will progress, until from being represented by $2a$ it may increase to $5a$, when the entire power of his intellect would be correctly represented by $10a$ instead of by $7a$, and would thus be capable of maintaining two forms instead of one.

Applied to every-day-life, the practical effect of these ideas is remarkable, because it amounts to putting into effect the teachings of Jesus, and there can be no greater corroboration of the truth of one set of ideas than to find that by following the path they indicate, the same goal is reached as by the path indicated by an apparently different set of ideas very largely received as true. If we grant that the mere maintenance of a form absorbs a portion of our intellectual energy, then it becomes manifest that the more the maintenance of that form be complicated, the more energy will be absorbed, and this points out the intellectual error committed by those who add unnecessary trappings to their materialism. How few do not! Who amongst us can throw the first stone? Who can say that he is not wasting some of that free, intellectual power which ought to be so precious to him, in toying with the material within his reach, instead of employing it in the formulation of distinct ideas and in shaping each act, however small, of his daily life so that it shall express and thus test the truth of such ideas; for is it not puerile to wish to test the truth of ideas common to Spiritualists at a so-called "séance," whilst neglecting to test their truth in the great spiritual circle of our daily life, the occurrences of which are no less phenomenal, although more customary, than when a wavering column of white mist develops into a figure we can touch and speak with, and which fades before our eyes! One who recognises that his human form is but a materialisation of a more stable character than what are amongst us called materialisations, that it is but an effort of his spirit to express itself, ought to avoid as a perilous and yet frivolous temptation any suggestion to make this material expression of his real self more material than it must needs be; for he ought to know that any concession to Materialism beyond the point where matter is used as a vehicle to convey a pure thought from one materialisation to another, or, within certain bounds, as a means towards sustaining the physical conditions necessary for the maintenance of a form, is an application of a portion of his free power to folly instead of to wisdom, and is as though a man were to devote his energies to playing a child's game, not for the sake of educating or otherwise beneficially influencing some tiny playmate, but because he found amusement in it himself.

In this very metaphor the true line of conduct for a Spiritualist seems to me to manifest itself. Surrounded as he must be by numbers whose entire intellectual force is latent in their materialisation, he ought to treat them as, metaphorically speaking, a man ought to treat children depending on him, for Spiritualism, as I said before, allows of no declaration of independence one from another. He ought to appeal to their intellect through their senses, to endeavour to cultivate their love of things beyond mere sordid materialistic enjoyment, by giving them, according to his means, opportunities of seeing beautiful things, of hearing beautiful sounds, of gazing on nature unadulterated by man's work. He ought to strive to afford them (1) the means to acquire such habits as render the claims of materialisation less obnoxious as time proceeds; habits of cleanliness, temperance, activity, order. (2) He ought to subordinate his own *likings* to their *needs*; for, to one conscious of the human form being but a materialisation, *liking*, however strong and however justifiable, is a trifle. He ought to devote his time or means to their intellectual development, for he ought never to forget that, only in as far as his materialisation is an expression of good tidings, and an assistance to others, is it not a frivolous and degrading waste of his power. Herein lies the difference between Spiritualists and other men. The Spiritualist has the key whereby he can unlock the hidden casket of his humanity, and can touch the springs of the action he performs. Other men may be unconscious of their humanity being but an ingenious and wonderfully made automaton, for their intellectual consciousness may be entirely latent in it, absorbed by the arduous task of keeping its mechanism in working order, but from the time that the Spiritualist has accepted the phenomena of materialisation as true, he *knows* that which other men may only be able to speculate upon, in the same way, if in no other, as an ignorant man who has been shown the mechanism of a locomotive knows that his first belief that it was a living creature was erroneous.

Until along some path a man arrives at a point from whence he sees that his humanity is but a form of expression of ideas, and that in as far as the ideas it expresses are not pure from the taint of Materialism and fruitful of good to those around him, in so far as he is *weak* and *foolish*. He is yet living under the shadow of Materialism, although he may not call himself a

materialist, although he may even be painfully groping towards the light and may loathe the darkness he cannot escape from. When once a man does arrive at this point then he is living in the light of Spiritualism, although he may not call himself a Spiritualist, although in his weakness he may even be struggling back towards the darkness, and may shrink painfully from the radiance that dazzles him. There are numbers around us in our daily lives who are of those I speak of; men and women the power of whose spirit is only sufficient to maintain their materialisation; whose intellect is latent, and who can only rise in the intellectual scale by tender training given by those of greater power than they. Others there are whose power is in excess of what is required for materialisation, but who through adverse circumstance or intellectual indolence allow their free power to sleep, or to awake, but to play at some frivolous game called Comfort, Applause, Fame, and sometimes even Duty, unless startled to a more or less enduring consciousness of the reality of life by those more earnest in their endeavours than they. Others, again, there are who strain their eyes through the darkness for some faint glimmer to guide them to the light they dimly apprehend, and others still, who having struggled to that light, are unable to bear its brilliancy, and vacillate, too often fatally, on the threshold of a better life. Are not we, who arrogate to ourselves the title of Spiritualists, to minister to such as these? Wherein lies the proof of the superiority we claim by this appellation as appertaining to us, if not in that we tend the weak and rouse the slothful gently, firmly, and patiently; that we stretch forth our hands to guide the wanderers to the light, and accustom ourselves to let our consciousness be flooded by it, so as to be the better able to sustain them in it, until their eyes can endure its lustre.

We know that the fleeting materialisations we witness are either concessions made by higher intelligences to our weak craving for sensuous evidence of immortality, or are pitiable attempts made by frivolous intelligences to utilise that craving in order to resume for a short space the material game they were absorbed in enacting, when rudely interrupted by death.

What use is this knowledge to us if not to teach us that materialisation can only be worthily used by rendering it the means of assistance and instruction to others less advanced in intellectual development than ourselves; that our wealth, our material surroundings, our every action must be consecrated to this service, unless we are willing to incur a just condemnation from those whose assistance we ourselves invoke?

The teachings of materialisation ought to arouse in us a resolve before which scepticism would be prostrated. The band of earnest Spiritualists might seem but a handful compared to the vast hordes of Materialists, but to each one of the former all material Nature is an ally, for what is visible Nature but the expression of an idea? And whether its teachings convey warning or encouragement, whether the shape through which the appeal to his intelligence is made, be that of an erring human being, a suffering animal, a tree stunted by the sickly air of a great city, and yet returning good for evil even whilst stretching forth its arms to the light; whether it take the evanescent form of an eastern sunset, transmuting the barren rocks and sandy plain of a desert into a glorified vision, fit abode for genii, or of one he has loved, and who for a fleeting moment gathers together the material particles belonging to the earth in order to gladden his eyes with its visible presence,—to the Spiritualist all are his friends, for each in its own language asks for or offers help.

When animated by these transcendent thoughts Spiritualists teach those who now scoff at Spiritualism, that if a man combining Spartan fortitude with tender solicitude for others be needed it were best to seek him amongst their ranks. When the visible life of the entire body of Spiritualists gives evidence to the presence amongst them of some higher motive than any of those influencing humanity at large; when it is recognised as a principle amongst us that we must devote ourselves to the assistance of others even as we believe ourselves to be so assisted; then let the band which first raises the standard of defiance be so small as to be a cause for laughter to our enemies, yet it will gather strength as a mountain rivulet fed by the melting snow, until its waters will sweep away the barriers of miscalled scientific Materialism, even as the waters of Christianity swept away those of Heathenism, and inundating the barren valleys of mere human knowledge, will fertilise them to the comprehension of the truth that to be wise is to be good, and that science and religion are but two names for one aspiration.

"LIGHT" FUND.

Amount already acknowledged	£194 14 6
W. C. Coperthwaite	1 0 0

The *Psychological Review* for December, is one of the best numbers that has yet been issued. The articles are specially good. "M. A. (Oxon.)," begins a series of papers entitled "Researches in Spiritualism," in the first of which he deals with phases of materialisation. The value of the evidence which he thus puts before the public cannot be over-estimated.

ADVICE TO INVESTIGATORS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly spare a small space in your paper, my object being to offer a little advice to investigators of Spiritualism? I am acquainted with many who have spent years in investigating the phenomena, and are now as far off as at the commencement. The secret of this non-success lies in a nut-shell. Investigators invariably commence by imposing their own conditions, thereby sealing their fate. To the inquirer I say: Save time, trouble, and expense by not attending séances for materialisation. To the early student they are of little use, but fill the mind with unnecessary doubt. My advice is to seek a test medium, and I am confident no better is to be found than Miss Fowler, who gave me a most convincing séance last Friday. That lady's Spirit guide, "Annie," related incidents in my life for the last twenty-five years most truthfully—indeed very many matters of which the Spirit spoke I am confident could be known only to myself. The séance was concluded by the Spirit giving the number and name of street in which I am engaged in business. There are doubtless many other good mediums of the same class, but from a long experience I am satisfied that Miss Fowler's gifts are remarkably rare.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

S. P.
11, Alpine-road, Rotherhithe, S. E.
November 21st, 1882.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Some of your readers may possibly be aware that a society entitled, the "Society for Psychical Research," has lately been established for the purpose of inquiring into a mass of obscure phenomena which lie at present on the outskirts of our organised knowledge.

It is an object of this Society to obtain as much first-hand evidence as possible bearing upon such real or supposed phenomena as thought-reading, clairvoyance, presentiments and dreams, noted at the time of occurrence and afterwards confirmed; unexplained disturbances in places supposed to be haunted; apparitions at the time of death, or otherwise, and other abnormal events, hard to classify at present, but which may seem to fall under somewhat the same categories as these.

We have been desired, as secretaries of the Literary Committee of the above-mentioned Society, to invite information of this kind from any trustworthy source.

Should any of your readers, now or in the future, be able and inclined to send us an account, or to put us on the track, of any phenomena of the kind which may have come under the cognizance of themselves or their friends, they would greatly oblige us, and would also (as we think we may fairly say) be rendering a real aid to the progress of knowledge in a direction in which such aid is much needed. Nothing will, in any case, be printed or published (either with or without names) except with the full consent of the persons concerned.

Should you, sir, see fit to give this letter a place in your valuable journal you would greatly oblige,

Your obedient servants,

EDMUND GURNEY, 26, Montpelier-square, S. W.
F. W. H. MYERS, Leckhampton, Cambridge.

December th, 1882.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

GLASGOW.

A correspondent writes:—Our Society is in better form than it has been for years. We seemed at one time to have reached the bottom, and had a debt of £19. We have not only paid this, but have something like £20 in the bank, which we are devoting to a new place of meeting. Altogether, there are signs of vitality and interest not manifested for years previously. We had a soirée on 24th November, which yielded a nett profit of over £10.

BIRMINGHAM.

Sunday evening meetings to teach Spiritualism are held at the Oozell-street Board Schools, and are conducted principally by Mr. and Mrs. Groom, who, as it is well known, have worked for years in this cause, almost single handed, and without remuneration. But for their exertions public Spiritualistic services would not have been held in this large town. Mrs. Groom gives trance addresses, not only in the room at Oozell-street, but in the neighbouring towns. These addresses, with the clairvoyant tests given by her at the close, have induced numbers to feel an interest in and to study this subject. Spiritualism is not so well supported here as we could wish, but we hope a brighter day will follow the dawn; and that many persons will be led to know the truth in this matter, and knowing it to be true, will not be afraid of publicly owning it, by giving their support to these meetings. All praise is due to Mr. and Mrs. Groom, who, against obstacles which would have utterly quenched the ardour of less enthusiastic workers, have, thanks to their strong faith in Spirit intercourse, kept the flame of Spiritual truth alive in our midst.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—Mr. Wright, of Liverpool, the popular trance orator, occupied the platform of the N.S.E.S. on Sunday and Monday last. On the Sunday evening he gave an able and well considered discourse upon "Jesus," which his audience much admired, and on the Monday evening he lectured upon "Spiritual Education," to an appreciative audience.—It is expected that Mr. Wright will soon take up a permanent residence in Newcastle.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Morse, of London, lectured to the friends at the above place on "Why are we immortal?" and in the evening on "The Spirit Man." This address was one of the most remarkable and philosophical we have listened to from this able and finished orator. The close reasoning, and the clear and well defined propositions, systematically and logically enforced, were so well sustained that I believe the large audience could have sat any length of time with appreciation and enjoyment. Mr. Kersey read a few short passages from the works of Jung Stilling, and Mr. Rowe, of South Shields, said a few words at the end of the meeting. On the Monday evening Mr. Morse again lectured, the subject being "The Disembodiment of the Devil." For satire and critical acumen, this was one of the most telling addresses we have listened to from Mr. Morse. At the conclusion of the discourse, Mr. Dawson proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was seconded by Mr. Kersey, supported by Mr. Robertson, of the Glasgow Society, and put to the audience by the president, Mr. Burton, in a few appropriate remarks, and carried with acclamation. Mr. Morse is not expected in the North for upwards of three months, being engaged in London for that time, after which he will again take the platform at Gateshead. A concert for the benefit of the Society will be held on the evening of January 2nd, 1883.

WEST PELTON.—On Sunday last, Mr. J. G. Grey, of Gateshead, lectured at the Corporation Hall, upon the present unsatisfactory state of the movement in the North. The meeting was a good one, and appreciated the discourse very much.

HETTON-LE-HOLE.—At the Miners' Hall, on Sunday evening last, Mr. Stevenson, of Gateshead, discoursed to a crowded audience upon "The Relationship of the Salvation Army to the Spiritual Movement." The somewhat novel subject met with the marked appreciation of those present. Mr. Clemance occupied the chair.

NORTHUMBRIA.

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

Tuesday, December 12.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 6 p.m., Finance Committee Meeting. 6.30 p.m., Council Meeting. 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.

Wednesday, December 13.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 7.30 p.m., Special Committee's Séance with Miss C. E. Wood.

Wednesday, December 13.—Dalston Association. 6 p.m., Tea and Soirée. Admission, One Shilling.

Thursday, December 14.—Dalston Association. Weekly Séance.

Friday, December 15.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 7.30 p.m., Experimental Research Committee's Meeting.

PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c. &c. See our list of Societies on advertisement page.

Societies advertising in "LIGHT" will have attention called to their advertisements, as above, without extra charge.

The Dalston Association will hold a tea and concert on Wednesday, December 13th, at their rooms, 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, E.

"MORGENRÖTHE."—This book being out of print, a lady asks us to say that she shall be pleased if she can obtain a second-hand copy. Can any of our readers oblige her?

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: Goswell Hall, December 10th. CARDIFF: December 17th and 31st.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN'S LECTURE APPOINTMENTS.—BELPER: December 10th and 31st. HALIFAX: December 17th.—Address, The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

AN APPARITION.—M. Adolphe Didier writes:—"Perhaps the following will interest the readers of 'LIGHT': I have just been, as a mesmerist, attending a lady who told me that a little time ago she had a man-cook who fell very ill, and although he had the greatest attention he died after long suffering. Some time afterwards a visitor slept in the room, who, to her great astonishment, in the morning told her that he could not sleep, having been prevented from doing so, by a man coughing constantly. He said that he saw the man in the room, and he gave a description of the person, agreeing in every respect with the description of the deceased cook. The gentleman did not know that a death had happened in the house."

THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC PHYSICAL SEANCES.

Circular issued by the Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

Few Spiritualists can have failed to note, with regret, the deterioration which has of late years taken place in the conditions under which physical phenomena have been sought in public séances.

These conditions—so favourable to fraud on the part of dishonest mediums, and so calculated to excite suspicion in the minds of observers—have led to the most disastrous results. We are not speaking without full warrant when we say that there is hardly a public medium for physical manifestations in this country against whom, at one time or other, charges of imposture have not been brought. We fear that in some cases no reasonable doubt can be entertained that fraud of the grossest kind was really perpetrated; while in other cases there is reason to believe that—whatever may have been the appearance to inexperienced spectators—there was no conscious deception on the part of the medium.

But in either case the name of Spiritualism has been brought into discredit, and we are forcibly driven to the conclusion that our methods of procedure must be amended. We must demonstrate our abhorrence of imposture by disavowing and discouraging all conditions which do not plainly shut out even the suspicion of its possibility.

Obviously these remarks can have little reference to family circles, which are naturally held sacred by those who regard them as affording opportunities for veritable “communion with the dead.” But it is open to grave question whether—even in the case of family circles—*inquirers* should ever be permitted to make their first acquaintance with Spiritual phenomena by introduction to séances held for physical manifestations in the dark, or where a cabinet is used for the seclusion of the medium.

We are chiefly concerned, however, with what are known as public or promiscuous séances for physical manifestations. These have been of late years generally marked by the following characteristics:—(1) The séance has been conducted in imperfect light, or in total darkness. (2) The medium has been isolated from the circle, by being placed either in a cabinet or behind a curtain. (3) The sitters have been, either wholly or in part, unacquainted with the subject and with each other. (4) There has not infrequently been a manifest want of harmony, consequent upon differences of opinion as to the nature and value of the tests employed.

These conditions, usually found in combination, effectually preclude careful and dispassionate investigation; open wide an avenue to fraud; suggest suspicion of its presence even where it does not exist; and in many cases, we fear, expose the medium to very injurious influences.

Such conditions should be allowed to prevail no longer. “Mixed” circles should be as little mixed as possible—mere wonder-seekers, and men whose moral atmosphere is known to be impure, being carefully excluded. Above all, darkness should give way to light. In the early days of Spiritualism public dark circles were the exception, and there is no need for them now. There is abundant evidence that, with mediums of the present day, satisfactory phenomena, including even “form” manifestations, can be obtained without isolation—the medium, where a cabinet is used, being placed near, but *outside of it*, and in full view of the sitters. But even if this were not so, it is neither wise nor honourable to expose mediums to the risks which have been shewn to attend séances held under the conditions that have of late been prevalent; and it were far better that we should have no public manifestations of physical phenomena than that they should be sought under circumstances which, to say the least, inevitably conduce to suspicion.

In view of all these considerations, believing that fraud is not of the essence of this confessedly obscure subject, but rather an accident dependent on faulty conditions of research; feeling that Spiritualists have the remedy for the evil in their own hands, and that without its conscientious application they cannot hope to maintain a fair reputation before the world; we earnestly recommend—*That in all public circles held for physical phenomena, the medium be so placed, and in such light, as to be continuously under observation by each member of the circle.*

Edwin Adams, Cardiff
W. P. Adshhead, Derby
Alexander Aksakof, St. Petersburg
G. P. Allan, London
W. R. Armstrong, Newcastle-on-Tyne
R. Baikie, M.D., late H.E.L.C.S., Edinburgh
*T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., Newcastle-on-Tyne
Frederick A. Binney, Manchester
*Anna Blackwell, Paris
John L. Bland, President of Hull Psychological Society
Hannah Blundell, Manchester
John James Bodmer, London
Hugh Booth, Sowerby Bridge
Eliza Boucher, Minehead
Colonel Joshua Brayn, Jersey
Emma Hardinge-Britten, Manchester
William Brown, Burnley
Henry Burton, Newcastle-on-Tyne

Alexander Calder, London
Robert Redgrave Cann, Harleston, Norfolk
Robert Scammell Clarke, Hon. Sec. Plymouth Free Spiritual Society
John Colley, Hon. Sec. Birmingham Christian Spiritualist Society
John Cowie, Dumbarton
John Crane, Houghton-le-Spring
William Day, Ipswich
James Dawbarn, London
Thomas Dawson, Hon. Sec. Gateshead Spiritualist Society
David Duguid, Glasgow
T. H. Edmonds, Sunbury-on-Thames
§W. Eglinton, London
J. Crossley Eno, Dulwich
Thomas Everitt, London
John S. Farmer, London
Lewis Firth, Hon. Sec. Rochdale Spiritualist Society
Richard Fitton, Manchester
Charlotte FitzGerald, London
D. G. FitzGerald, M.S.Tel.E., London
Elizabeth FitzGerald, London
*Hannah Ford, Leeds
George Forster, Hon. Sec. Seghill Spiritualist Association
H. E. Frances, Hon. Sec. Brixton Psychological Society
William Gill, Brighton
Henry Goodchild, Hon. Sec. Middlesborough Assoc. Spiritualists
Thomas Grant, Maidstone
G. F. Green, London
Joseph N. Greenwell, Hon. Sec. Dalston Association
S. C. Hall, F.S.A., London
*Mrs. F. V. Hallock, Chiswick, London
William Hardy, Hon. Sec. Sheffield Psychological Association
Samuel Hayes, Hon. Sec. Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
Georgiana Houghton, London
Hugh Hutchinson, President Islington Home Circle
John Enmore Jones, London
H. A. Kersey, Newcastle-on-Tyne
W. F. Kirby, London
Edward Larrad, President Leicester Spiritualist Society
John Lamont, Liverpool
P. G. Leymarie, President Soc. Sci. d'Etudes Psychologiques, Paris
J. E. Lightbown, Hon. Sec. Manchester and Salford Soc. Spiritualists
R. W. Lishman, Hon. Cor. Sec. Central London Spir. Evidence Soc.
“M.A. (Oxon.),” London
Iver MacDonnell, London
John McE. Munro, Hon. Sec. Glasgow Association of Spiritualists
Thomas McKinney, Peterborough
*C. C. Massey, London
William Miall, London
William Morris, London
J. J. Morse, London
Hay Nisbet, Glasgow
Roden Noel, London
W. G. Pickersgill, London
Thomas Pinkey, Durham
Richard Pearce, London
Cornelius Pearson, London
*Edward R. Pease, London
*Frank Podmore, London
*Thomas Pole, Clifton
Charles Poole, Hon. Sec. Yorkshire District Com. of Spiritualists
John Pringle, Hon. Sec. Hutton Spiritual Society
S. R. Redman, London
George Ridley, Hon. Sec. North Durham Spiritualist Society
A. J. Riko, The Hague
W. C. Robson, Newcastle-on-Tyne
James Robertson, Glasgow
E. Dawson Rogers, London
George Rogers, President Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
John Rouse, Croydon
Adam Rushton, Minister, Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
*Thos Shorter, London
J. Bowring Sloman, Plympton
S. T. Speer, M.D. (Edin.), London
M. A. Stack, London
Lucia C. Stone, Bridport
Edith L. Stone, Bridport
Morell Theobald, London
Ellen Miall Theobald, London
E. A. Tietkens, London
I. Thompson, Manchester
*E. Louisa Thompson Nosworthy, Liverpool
Charles Tomlinson, London
George Tommy, Bristol
Jno. P. Turner, Leamington
Mary Wainwright, London
†Alfred Russel Wallace, F.R.G.S., Godalming
E. W. Wallis, Nottingham
*Rev. W. Whitear, London
W. Winlow, Hon. Sec. Ashington Spiritual Society, Northumberland
Oswald Wirth, Paris
George Wyld, M.D., London
J. F. Young, Llanelly

[Persons wishing to have their names added to the above list are invited to intimate their desire to the Resident Secretary, Mr. Thomas Blyton, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.]

† Is of opinion that public miscellaneous séances for physical manifestations should be altogether discontinued.

‡ Would prefer that the word “conscious” should be omitted from the last sentence of the second paragraph.

§ Is of opinion that public miscellaneous séances and professional mediumship for physical manifestations should be altogether discouraged.

§ Is opposed to all public séances, whether in the light or the dark, unless the conditions are favourable to a complete investigation