

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.)"

A PHILOSOPHY OF IMMORTALITY.*

Mr. Roden Noel originally approached Spiritualism from the side of Philosophy, and in this book attempts a philosophy of Spiritualism from an idealistic standpoint. Like many another, his mental vision has been purged by sorrow, and opened to see the things of spirit. It was "in a very momentous crisis of his life," when occupied with some very important philosophical questions, that he was made practically acquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism. He found that they fitted into the scheme of his thought, and illuminated that general system of belief to which he had been gradually impelled. I am not about to indicate or to criticise Mr. Roden Noel's philosophical opinions. That has been done in this journal by a more competent pen. But there are a number of incidental deliverances on the subject of Spiritualism that impress me with a sense of respect for the candour and fairness of the author's mind, as well as of his power of dealing profoundly with problems that no superficial treatment can solve. I would instance especially his statement and refutation of the ordinary objections to Spiritualism; that it is devilish, that it is silly, that it is forbidden in the Bible, that it is half-a-dozen other incompatible things: objections, the mutually destructive nature of which make the task of the refuter considerably easier than it would be if objectors refrained from giving their reasons.

It was to be anticipated that Mr. Noel would have little sympathy with that curious frame of mind which is content with observing facts without making any attempt at an explanatory philosophy of them. He says with much force, "I am not personally in much sympathy with the frame of mind that is content simply to register the same kinds of phenomena over and over again, without any attempt at explanation. It does not seem very healthy for the mind to be ever swallowing a crude mass of so-called 'facts,' without any wish or endeavour to digest, and bring them into order. There may be too much of mere cataloguing and registering. The minds of many people seem to be mere curiosity-shops." This is a point of view which I have very often taken up. Perhaps Mr. Noel hardly allows sufficient weight to the consideration that the facts of Spiritualism are new and unfamiliar; that they are not "hooked on to" antecedent facts from which they are necessarily evolved; that much of the observation of them has been of the loosest; and that they contradict and fly straight in the face of some of the conclusions which science has arrived at with most assured conviction. In such a case the registering *must* be frequent, and be repeated with a weary monotony, which is only justified by the considerations which I have stated above, and by this additional one, viz., that we have no power to reproduce the phenomena, and to submit them, as the chemist does, for examination at any time. But Mr. Noel is right enough in reprobating that (usually loose) observation of wonderful phenomena, the outward and visible sign of which is too often a gaping mouth.

The objections of religious people, which the author inclines to believe have some foundation, are excellently dealt with. An age of materialistic scepticism receives evidence of a quality that

* "A Philosophy of Immortality." Hon. Roden Noel, London; W. H. Harrison, Museum-street.

fits it, and the religious people ought to be glad of it, instead of turning up their noses in a fine scorn of what they do not themselves want. "Some people, whose faith is strong, do not want Spiritualism, but to others whose faith is weak, and who have been strongly impressed by scientific conclusions and modes of thought, whose department is the sensible understanding, these manifestations to sensible understanding come with peculiar force. . . . While the phenomena are still *sub judice*, and we are patiently investigating to ascertain what they really are, it seems somewhat premature for persons who will not look at them or touch them with a little finger, to exclaim in pious horror that these are and must be communications from the very identical devils, intercourse with whom was forbidden to the Jews many thousands of years ago by their inspired teachers. This may conceivably be so—or it may not. It hardly seems a justifiable, though it may be 'a short and easy method' to throw texts of Holy Writ at people's heads when we happen to differ from them. . . . The Christian revelation is to give life, and the power to judge which life bestows: but the slaves of the letter of texts seem to aim at making it a Procrustes bed, whereon to cramp and distort the spiritual freedom of humanity." Very true: what does it concern us, here and to-day,—that the Jew was prohibited, for obvious reasons quite inapplicable to us, from resorting to the mediums that surrounded him? The argument is so foolish that it does not bear elaborate refutation, but Mr. Noel meets it effectively.

Another common objection of men of the Huxley type of mind is that the *revenants* talk such twaddle. Well; *they do not as a rule*; unless the assembled company invite and appreciate platitudes and little rapid jokes. I have conversed frequently with Spirits who enunciate great truths in a befitting manner: and I have sat in wondering disgust and amazement at the stuff that educated ladies and gentlemen who ought to know better, will address by the hour to some poor Spirit, who at any rate is *in evidence* as proof of a tremendous fact—perpetuated life after physical death. Never mind that such a Spirit talks twaddle. Like consorts with like. At any rate, if he be an unembodied mind of the calibre of the veriest noodle, he is enough for the purpose. "By virtue of that altered condition of life which must one day be mine, any traveller from beyond 'that bourne whence,' our great poet half feared, 'no traveller returns,' would be interesting to me. I would not sniff too closely and curiously in order to ascertain his unimpeachable moral propriety. Footsore and ragged he might be, but still he comes from *yonder*, and visitors thence are rare. Christ ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and went to preach to the Spirits in prison. *It is more healthy to wish well to the souls of others than to think perpetually about saving our own.*" Yes: and the souls that need so much selfish thought are not of the noblest or worthiest type, but rather the puniest and most worthless starvelings now, whatever standard they may eventually reach.

Mr. Roden Noel does not advocate that philosophy which is associated with Eastern Occultism. He is apt to think that things *are* what they seem so far as he can see. "What is suggested by the phenomena is that we are in contact as a rule neither with angels nor devils, but with ordinary men and women, sharing in our own evil dispositions, and our own foibles." "This," he adds, "may contradict the orthodox, though not rational and scriptural, doctrine of the absolute and final shutting up of saints and sinners in two totally distinct, hermetically sealed, cast-iron compartments at death: but this is what the facts suggest. Hence, probably, the wish of orthodoxy to prove that devils only are concerned in these manifestations." He inclines to the opinion that whatever inconsistency there may be in the communications given may be attributable to the fact that spirits brought down to earthly conditions is, as it were, in a dream; mesmerised in our atmosphere; resuming the habits, ways, and

manners of earth but with impaired recollection. This, I have little doubt, is true. From spirit thus conditioned no instruction is to be had. Indeed, I fancy that many who desire to communicate have recourse to the friendly aid of medium Spirits on their side as we must perforce do, most of us, here. The message thus given may well be incoherent and brief. And we forget that "it hath not entered into the heart of man" in the body to conceive of the things of spirit. "It may be," Mr. Noel says, "that these intelligences cannot *translate* into our language the secrets of the *silent land*. We have no faculty wherewith to imagine, wherewith to grasp, so different a condition."

But I must not pursue this subject, nor deal at all with the many striking passages in which the author gives his philosophical views. I see with pleasure that he thinks highly of the teaching of James Hinton, though he dissents, as I venture to do, from some of his ideas. I see too, that he is disposed to prefer the word Spiritism to Spiritualism. It is a pity, in my judgment, to attempt now to change such a word as Spiritualism. If one had had the coining of it, one would never have minted such a monstrosity. But for good or for evil it is in use, and we cannot help it. Spiritism, too, is associated with the Re-Incarnation theory of Kardec, which finds little acceptance in Spiritualism proper. On all grounds, then, the old word seems best, bad as it is. Mr. Roden Noel has done good service in presenting these arguments for "the permanent reality of human personality." He has put them in a form more readily intelligible than writers who deal with metaphysics usually do. And I have quoted enough of his utterances on allied topics to shew that forcible common-sense and vigorous language are not incompatible with the position of the Philosopher and Metaphysician.

M. A. (OXON.)

MISS HOUGHTON'S "EVENINGS AT HOME."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I be admitted to put in a protest against an adjective that has been conjoined with the "faith" attributed to me in both the earlier and later critiques of my "Evenings at Home"? It is that of "unquestioning," which is assuredly much too large in its scope. In my first volume I endeavoured to explain that I had gathered my knowledge little by little, and step by step—but surely no one could imagine that that was done without any question as to each new truth that was presented, so as to assure myself that it was a truth. For the first year and three-quarters, those who gave me the information as to the beyond were simply my own relations and personal friends, with whom I could discuss all subjects with a perfect feeling of equality. But in the notes I took at the time, I never burdened the pages with my own words, for it was not my dulness of comprehension that was of consequence, but the enlightenment it received. Later on, when the higher influences came about me, our conversations were more frequent, with many interrogations on my part (never being written, but in a manner caught at, during the stray moments of a life very full of avocations, when father, mother, and household all looked to me); for I needed a great deal of evidence that such association could really be, and it was gradually given, to my soul's entire conviction. Since then, I may say that I have had thousands of proofs that they who now counsel me are absolutely wise as to all that regards my own life, past, present, or future, for during these many years there has been scarcely a day that has not brought me one or more such tests without one single mistake, as to either large or small, so that I now rest my belief upon a firm substratum of facts; and I am hardly sure whether that which has so solid a basis is worthy to be termed faith. In the second series I have not retrodden the same ground, for the two volumes are but one work, although the "Chronicles of Spirit Photography" came as an interlude (necessarily so, according to date) as belonging in some degree to an outside portion of my life, with the addition of illustrations that might have an interest for a different class of readers.

I still practise the method, in taking notes of séances or communications, of omitting all unnecessary queries, and when they be indispensable to complete the sense I give them in the fewest possible words, so as to mingle as little water as may be with the spirit that flows from higher sources.

I must apologise for trespassing upon so much of your space, but I wish to be transparently sincere.—Believe me, yours very truly,

GEORGIANA HOUGHTON.

20, Delamere-crescent, W.
March 26th, 1882.

THE DEATH-CALL.

(Real Occurrences.)

No. I.

HOW THE AGONISING CRY OF A MOTHER DRAWS BACK THE SPIRIT OF HER DYING CHILD.

"Hold me not back!" the boy he said,
"O! stay me not by sorrow!
The Angels crowding round my bed
Have joys for me to-morrow.
"Your love I see! it tethers me!
It binds me fast to earth;
Those Angels three, *you* cannot see,
Are waiting for my birth.
"Their hands o'erflow with lovely things,
They offer them to me;
They fan me with their crimson wings,
And draw me to their knee.
"O sing for me 'The Happy Land!'
I long, I long to go,
Unclasp, unclasp thy tender hand,
Cast off thy load of woe.
"Thou must not weep, though hence I go;
Heaven lies not far away;
More tender yet my love will grow,
Grow tenderer day by day.
"The walls are fading of the room,
The sunny land appears!
Thy grief enwraps me deep in gloom;
It blinds me in thy tears."
* * * * *
"O mother, mother! Thy low cry
Hath drawn me back to thee.
I had ascended to the sky;
Was from all sorrow free!
"The Angels say that I this day
May stay beside thee still,
Although with them I soar away
O'er river, dale and hill.
"But sing, oh sing 'The Happy Land!'
Detain me not through sorrow.
Mother, to-day I'll hold thy hand,
But I must go to-morrow!"

No. II.

HOW THE SPIRITS OF THREE YOUNG CHILDREN DRAW THEIR MOTHER FROM EARTH.*

A wind from God swept over earth,
Over a household filled with mirth;
Leaving behind it tears and dearth,
It swept three cherubs from one hearth.
Then cried the mother, "My babes three
With yearning cries are calling me,
Their pretty, tiny hands I see,
Husband, I may not stay with thee.
"Yes, darling, I *must* go away,
We'll come for thee some joyful day.
I may not, dare not, longer stay,
Their tiny hands draw me away.
"There, set the light beside my bed;
Now will I rest my weary head;
Now that the heavenly vision's fled,
Thy face I'll gaze on till I'm dead."
With death he strove in mortal strife:
"Without thee what were human life!"
The husband cried, "O loving wife,
Thou shalt not! shalt not lose thy life!"
Yet by each tiny spirit-hand,
Stretched forth to her from heavenly strand,
Unwoven was each earthly band,
Which bound her to the earthly land.
Physicians, sought from far and wide,
Standing the mother's corpse beside,
Said, "Of a broken-heart she died,
Our skill were fruitless—had we tried."

A. M. H. W.

* For interesting account of Spirit manifestations of these three children Spirits, see "Spirit Identity," by "M. A. (Oxon.)"—Page 61.

MIRACLES AND PROPHECY.

Paper read by Mr. Frank Podmore, on Monday, March 20th, before the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

In his poem on Abt Vogler, Mr. Browning makes the musician thus describe the power of musical sound :—

“ But here is the finger of God, a flash of the Will that can,
 Existent behind all laws, that made them, and lo, they are :
 And I know not if, save in this, such power be allowed to man,
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but
 a star.”

And these lines, I apprehend, express with fair accuracy the ordinary common-sense man's view of the Biblical or any other recorded miracles. He regards them as violations of the order of the physical universe. He is not content to think that they merely transcend his experience, or the known laws of nature ; he holds that they transcend all laws of nature—that they are not amenable to natural law at all. They are, he believes, spiritual in their origin, and the spirit worketh as it listeth, and none can tell its coming or its going. And the common-sense man, holding this view of the phenomena called miraculous, believes or disbelieves in them according to the measure of his scientific proclivities. And it was this view of the miraculous which was certainly current amongst theologians in the time of Hume. It was against miracles, as thus defined, that Hume wrote his famous essay ; and it was on this interpretation of the miraculous, as the accepted doctrine of the Church, that the sceptic's argument fell with such overwhelming force. “ A miracle,” said the philosopher, “ is a violation of the laws of nature ;” and he then labours to demonstrate that any such violation is impossible. Of course, out of Hume's premises, it was preposterous to attempt to educe Hume's conclusion. To the man who accepted only the facts of sensation, the expression “ laws of nature ” was meaningless ; for strings of sensation are not “ laws,”—they are only strings of sensation. And the word “ impossible ” has no place in the vocabulary of the empiricist : the multiplication table will never transmute “ has not ” into “ cannot.” But what Hume on his own ground was unable to do, and only seemed to have done because he strayed into alien territory, and turned the weapons of his adversaries against themselves, a greater than Hume, and by a truer method, has accomplished. It remained for Kant to shew, not that miracles, as hitherto understood, were impossible—for Kant declines to commit himself to a statement of their absolute impossibility,—but that they were impossible for us. That something may happen which transcends the laws of nature, may well be, but that we should *know* of such an occurrence can not be. For the laws of nature are but projections of the form of our own understanding : they are the conditions under which alone we have any knowledge at all : and to suppose that we could know of any event which did not conform to those laws, is to suppose that we could see beyond the limits of vision : it is a contradiction in terms. In the world which we know, said the philosopher of Königsberg, there can be nothing uncaused, or self-caused ; nor can there be any material effect of a spiritual cause. The world, which we know, is one world, just because we could not know it if it were not ; and to break the unity of the world of experience by the introduction of a miracle, is not to violate the order of nature ; it is to mar the unity of consciousness itself, of which nature is but the outward expression. Now the absolute and impregnable unity of the conscious self is the one indubitable fact which lies at the foundation of all our knowledge. To suppose the self double, or to imagine any element in experience which cannot form part of the whole of experience, is to annihilate selfhood. And it is this sovereign oneness of the spirit of man, and not any beggarly uniformity of nature, to which your miracle-monger plays the traitor.

The conclusion, it will be seen, is the same as Hume's, though the ground on which it rests is widely different. Kant and Hume are agreed upon this point, at any rate, that a miracle, as commonly understood, is an absurdity.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

What the accepted doctrine of the Church on this point may, at the present time, be, it is hard to say. But there are not wanting indications that amongst thinking members of the Church, at any rate, the old view of miracles is discredited. There is a tendency to insist considerably less on the miraculous evidences of Christianity. The more timid prefer to keep the Biblical miracles, as far as may be, out of sight altogether. The

fewer and bolder have attempted, following the lead of a large school of German critics, to rationalise or explain them away. Most competent theologians are glad to admit that the Mosaic cosmogony is as inadequate an account of the genesis of the world, as the legend of Babel is of the origin of languages ; that the sun did not stand still for Joshua, and that the so-called prophetic books of the Old Testament contain none, or but doubtful, prophecies. And if the miracles of the New Testament cannot be so set aside, there are probably but few Christian thinkers who would not welcome any interpretation of them which should prove them to be the results of obscure laws of nature. And at all events, whatever may be the opinion of orthodox theologians, there can be no room for doubt upon the views of the Spiritualists. That so-called miracles are not violations of natural law, but are merely “ the natural effects of exceptional causes,” is not only the first article of the Spiritualists' creed ; it is the one point on which Spiritualists of every shade find no difference of opinion amongst themselves. It is the implicit basis of all speculation on the phenomena called Spiritualistic. The very effort to explain implies a fixed belief in the possibility of explanation. Indeed, the Spiritualists, could they but see themselves aright, are the true children of Hume—Hume the philosopher, not Home the medium. To think that a thing should be, and should not be explicable, if not by chemistry and physics, then by psychonomy and space of four dimensions, is, in their eyes, the only heresy that damns the heretic.

And there would certainly seem to be grounds for the confidence which, despite the abnormal nature of the facts with which they deal, Spiritualists display in the absolute oneness of the world, material and psychical. It is true that the science which shall explain the phenomena is not yet fully organised, but he would not perhaps be too sanguine who should think that the first elements of it are discernible in the seething maelstrom of psychical literature. The assimilation of the phenomena of thought-reading and transference of impressions from one mind to another, to the known facts of electrical or acoustic induction, and the explanation of abnormal movements on the supposition that the bodies of those present are in some way made use of to supply the force required, are both admirable instances of scientific hypotheses. Heidenhain has endeavoured to account for some of the facts of mesmerism—which he has at length reluctantly admitted—on recognised physiological data ; and some of the simpler manifestations of what is known as clairvoyance may, as the present writer has pointed out,* be explained by legitimate extensions of known laws. And the theory of a psychic body and a psychic force is a stupendous generalisation, which is, no doubt, capable, when fully developed, of bringing together into some kind of unity an immense number of these obscure phenomena—if, indeed, it has not already done so. And though, when all is said, there remain large classes of alleged facts of which no synthesis has yet been even attempted, it must fully be admitted that the Spiritualist is as little likely as any other man to defy Hume by upholding an obstinate breach of natural law, or to disregard the warnings of Kant, and attempt to introduce as an element of knowledge that which cannot be assimilated to all other elements, and thus be fused in the unity of experience.

POWER OF PREDICTING THE FUTURE.

Would it not be well, then, it may be said, to abandon the word miracle, now that we have learned to reject the idea which that word once served to convey ? If miracle means to us merely an unusual occurrence, an infrequent link in the chain of causation, it does not mean to us what it meant for a previous generation. It is surely a miserable parsimony to employ the same word to connote two entirely different conceptions. Such niggardliness is at once needless and misleading. But yet there are solid reasons for retaining the term in our vocabulary, if only to serve as a beacon to warn us from conclusions which we must, if possible, by all means avoid. There is a certain class of facts, ranked amongst miracles in the past, and amongst the phenomena of Spiritualism or Psychism in the present, which one is still tempted to think of as standing outside the order of the phenomenal world. The power of predicting the future, which has been undoubtedly possessed and exercised by certain persons under certain circumstances, would seem to transcend the limits of human faculties, that is, of natural law. For though the future is really (*i.e.*, spiritually, or noumenally, as the philosophers say) contained in the present, yet for *us* it is only inferentially so contained : and though the future world be seen in the present by a real (*i.e.*, a spiritual) Being—say God—

* In the *Spiritualist*, April and May, 1881.

for to such a Being there would be no distinction between present and future—yet for us, to whom the pure white light of Being has been refracted through the prism of time, the future cannot be *seen* in the present, just as the violet cannot be seen in the red rays of the spectrum. If in prophesying, the future is seen, and not merely inferred, it would seem to imply the possession by the seer of spiritual or noumenal faculties; and his possession of such faculties would be, in the strictest sense, miraculous. Yet once admit this, and the whole fabric of our philosophy falls to the ground. The painted bubble, which we have blown, and which we call the universe, is pricked, and it has collapsed. If but in one single instance the *real* be suffered to intrude upon this phenomenal world of ours, then farewell it would seem, to evolution hypotheses, and systems of cosmogony, and all the petty cobwebs that science has spun.

Now that future occurrences are occasionally foretold seems to be a fact as well authenticated as any other in the domain of Psychism or Spiritualism. Predictions are not, probably, as common as the physical phenomena, of which we hear so much. They cannot be produced, to a certain extent, at the will of the experimenter, like the abnormal physiological states, with which mesmerists are acquainted. But their actual occurrence, in such numbers, and under such circumstances, and with such fulness of detail, as to preclude the possibility of attributing them to mere coincidence, is a fact as indisputable as any fact in Spiritualism which is least disputed. Probably most of those present are acquainted, either in their own history or that of some friend, with one or more instances in which the future has been accurately foretold. The predictions are of all kinds, on matters the most trivial or the most momentous, from a slight personal misfortune to a grave national disaster. The event may be foreseen by the individual to be affected, in a dream; or it may be told him from the lips of a medium in a trance; or he may himself see it in a trance, or in his normal state. Very frequently the death of a friend or relative is thus predicted, and its date given, or the course of an illness is accurately foreshewn. Sometimes an intimacy, an important friendship, or even a casual meeting with a stranger is thus foreshadowed. There is a well-known story, told by La Harpe, of a social meeting a few years before the first French Revolution, at which one of the guests foretold the death of each of those present, and the manner of it. A friend of mine described a few weeks ago in this very room, how she had foreseen, in a vision, the French Revolution of 1848. Another lady recently stated in my hearing, that she had seen the face of her future husband when she was only twelve years old. A quarryman has told me that he dreamed three nights in succession that in the place where he worked a huge block of stone fell down, and crushed the man who worked beside him. The dream was verified. Often a room or a locality is seen in a vision, together with the occurrence which is to take place in it. Sometimes the incident predicted is, in itself, quite insignificant, as in a case related by Robert Dale Owen, of a draper's assistant, who dreamed the night before the occurrence, in all its details, of a customer making a somewhat unusual purchase.

WHAT EXPLANATION CAN BE OFFERED?

But it is not necessary to multiply examples of a not unusual phenomenon. The question for us is, What explanation can be offered of these occurrences? That which first presents itself, as before said, is the supposition of a super-sensuous intuition (*i. e.*, perception) of the future. This is the explanation, I apprehend, which most Spiritualists, if called upon to explain the matter at all, would adopt. And it is an explanation which is more or less forced upon us by the undoubted fact, that in a not inconsiderable proportion of the recorded cases, the prediction comes by way of vision; the event is not foretold, but foreseen. Perhaps we cannot venture to say, on philosophical principles, that such an intuition is impossible. Indeed, in one passage of the "Critique," Kant himself expressly lays it down, of the supposition "of a peculiar fundamental power of the mind of intuiting the future by anticipation," that, though it is a "merely arbitrary conjunction of thoughts," and has no claim to objective reality, it yet "contains no internal contradiction." But it is obvious that such an explanation is no real explanation at all. It is not to solve the problem, but to give up all attempts at its solution. For of such an intuition not only can we form no conception in itself; we cannot even, by any known analogy or comparison with other faculties or forces, represent to ourselves its methods of working. If to talk of such a transcendental intuition is not nonsense, it comes at least as near to talking

nonsense as a reasonable man may go, and preserve his reputation for reasonableness. Clearly then we must only fall back upon this method of stringing together our facts when all other methods which we know, or which can be devised, have been tried to the uttermost and been proved inadequate.

Now, if future events are not foreseen by any such super-sensuous anticipation, it remains that they must be foretold by inference from events past and present. And this inference we may suppose to take place in one of three ways. For, first, a man may set himself to predict the likelihood of some future occurrence by conscious and deliberate comparison and observation of analogous sequences of events in the past. If *D E F* have followed *A B C* in all a man's past experience, finding *A B C* in the present it needs no intuition to predict the occurrence, *ceteris paribus*, of *D E F* in the near future. This ratiocinative method is one with which we are all familiar in science, in business, in politics, and in the common affairs of life. But the least reflection is sufficient to shew that this, at all events, is not the method pursued in the predictions of which we have spoken. Not only are the required data not present to the mind of the prophet, but there is no conscious process of inference from any data at all. The prediction comes into his mind, but he cannot tell you how it comes; and he would scout the idea that he obtained it by any process of reasoning whatever. Indeed, it will be obvious, that even were there a conscious process of ratiocination in such cases, the data at hand are ludicrously disproportionate to the inferences which are drawn. Such predictions are clearly not the result of any extended application of the Rule of Three or the syllogism.

UNCONSCIOUS CEREBRATION.

There is another hypothesis, that has been suggested on the analogy of Serjeant Cox's psychic force. If these are not the results of a conscious process of inference from facts actually present in the mind of the prophet, they may be produced by the workings of some unconscious reason, dealing with facts below the level of the ordinary consciousness. And this hypothesis has no little plausibility about it: there is in it, to the popular mind, a certain suggestiveness of scientific elucidation. Every one knows what a large part unconscious cerebration may play, and has played, in the explanation of obscure mental phenomena. It seems as if we had here a scientific theory made ready to our hands. But those who suppose that unconscious cerebration, or any hypothesis like it, is competent to explain the facts, ignore an essential element in the case. The phenomena of unconscious cerebration, or as we may, perhaps, more fittingly term it in this connection, unconscious ratiocination, are strictly analogous to those of automatic or unconscious movement. In both orders of facts it is essential that the processes, which are now performed unconsciously, should have been frequently gone through before by the subject, and that he should be thoroughly conversant with them. A man cannot play automatically a tune which he has never learned; or, at least, if he does, the phenomenon calls for another than the ordinary physiological explanation of reflex action. So a man cannot unconsciously go through a process of reasoning with which he is not familiar, and argue from facts which have never come within the sphere of his waking experience at all. At least, if he can, we must look elsewhere than to unconscious cerebration for an explanation of the result. And it is just this essential difference between the two classes of phenomena to which the upholders of the theory of unconscious or sub-conscious ratiocination shut their eyes. Their theory explains admirably what calls for no explanation; and it explains that only. It shews us how a man may work out algebraical problems, if he is thoroughly practised in algebraical methods, and may write stanzas of poetry, if he is in the habit of poetical composition—and know nothing himself of the processes by which these results are attained. But it won't help us to understand how he can foresee the death of his friend, or the outbreak of a revolution. The upholders of this theory must give some other interpretation to unconscious ratiocination, if they wish it to be a sufficient explanation of the facts. And if they give it this other interpretation, they must consent to forego the plausibility of their hypothesis. It can no longer present that seductive resemblance to the theories of recognised science which, no doubt, in the first instance, won for it the adherence of its followers. If the theory is to continue to be scientific, we shall have to admit that it is impotent; if it is, in any real sense, to be made adequate to the facts, we must frankly recognise that it has no discernible connection with any known laws of

physiology, as that science is understood by any known physiologist.

A POSSIBLE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS.

Now the other conceivable interpretation of unconscious ratiocination forms the third, and, as far as the present writer can see, the only possible explanation that remains. We may assume that there is a certain higher consciousness, or certain higher reasoning faculties, working apart from and above the ordinary consciousness, which may be conversant with things and events with which that ordinary consciousness is not conversant, and which may employ methods and inferences with which the intelligence of our waking hours is unfamiliar. And, perhaps, if such a consciousness or such faculties existed, it or they would be able to account for the phenomena which we are now considering. It would be a reason of wider range, and gifted with ampler powers, set above the dull common-sense that guides us through the common round of life; whose operations and results would be hidden from that blind common-sense, except on rare occasions, and in specially gifted individuals. There is no limit to what the imagination may feign of the range of the facts observed, and the strenuous nature of the logic employed, by this supposed higher reason. From the pinnacle on which we have set it, it may survey in one extensive glance the whole of the past, and may forecast with unerring precision all that is to come. The few samples which we cherish of its power, may be but the first-fruits of its immature efforts. We may feign that it—and not the blind reason, which we know—shapes even now our every effort, and directs the whole course of our lives. In short, it may be omniscient, and it may be omnipotent: but we have no scientific warrant for assuming even the bare existence of such a faculty. There is not the least trace of scientific analogy in its favour: as physicists or physiologists we have no ground whatever on which to base such a hypothesis. If we make it at all, we make it, not because it is in any sense grounded on our previous experience, or can in any way be assimilated with any other portion of our knowledge, but because the facts which we have observed leave us no alternative. We can only defend it on the ground that it is the smallest assumption which will serve to account for the facts. But, tried by the logic of the schools, it is an illegitimate hypothesis, being at present incapable of proof, and having no evidence other than this phenomena which it is invented to explain.

It may seem that there is a very fine distinction between the last hypothesis, and that other already rejected, of a direct perception of the future. But in truth the distinction is a very wide one. The present hypothesis merely assumes the existence of faculties which are magnified counterparts of our known rational faculties; and which excel them, not so much in the manner, as in the vastness of their operations. The other invented a faculty which would be in opposition to all known experience and analogy, and which would annihilate the conditions of time altogether. The second hypothesis merely transcends our experience; the first—the above quoted utterances of Kant notwithstanding—goes very near to contradicting it. Of the first we are tempted to say that it is impossible. Of the other we can at most say that we do not know it to be possible. But we should clearly not be justified in declaring it to be impossible. Whether it also furnishes an explanation adequate to the facts is another question: and one which cannot be so readily solved. For its solution we require a large comparison of well authenticated instances of actual prediction, which may give us if possible some insight into their *modus operandi*. And such a comparison and induction, by minds well-schooled in the scientific methods of the past, would appear never yet to have been attempted. But it is at least obvious that in order to meet the facts, we must go on to suppose that our imaginary higher reason translates its results, in very many cases, into visions, before it presents them for the comprehension of the understanding, which we know. If it does not itself foresee the future, it interprets its forecasts to us in the guise of previsions. And whilst we are thus propping up one baseless assumption by another, in order to preserve the semblance of scientific continuity, we must remember that at best we can offer no satisfactory solution of the problem.

A SUPERSENSUOUS INTUITION.

That this higher reason of ours should speak to the senses rather than to the understanding—or, to state it perhaps more correctly, should appeal to the eye rather than to the ear—may, after all, be only an apparent difficulty. A conception, to be grasped by our intelligence at all, must be represented in terms of sensation. Why should it not be clothed in visual ideas as

well, or better than, in those of hearing? For words, however generalised, are, it must be remembered, only sounds; and it may be easier for the higher reason to speak in more concrete images; to employ pictures in preference to words; and simple words in preference to abstract statements. But it still remains a difficulty on this suggested interpretation, that the general character of the predictions is what we might expect from one who had momentarily been enabled, from some high mountain peak of thought, to overlook the future, and had carried away from that one glance a confused memory of events, alike trivial and momentous. And in few instances are the predictions what we should have looked for as the result of a long and laborious process of scientific reasoning. If it is, indeed, the latter, why all this elaborateness of details in the predictions; and of details, often the most trivial? Why is it not always the most important issues that are foretold, and not, as sometimes, the veriest trifles, significant only because foretold? If by some strong wind the fogs of this lower earth are blown away, and the man catches through the rift a transient glimpse of some great event and the actors in it, it is natural that he should carry away some recollection also of the cut and colour of their clothes, of their gestures and attitudes. But what process of transcendental arithmetic will enable him to attain to these minutiae, or make them worth the labour of attainment? It looks as if, in sheer despair of elsewhere attaining a solution, we should have after all to fall back upon the *Deus ex Machina* of a super-sensuous intuition.

As a last word it may be noted that there is another possible explanation, which is not so much an independent hypothesis, as one subsidiary to that now under consideration. We may, if we choose, assume that there are disembodied Spirits to collect our facts, and do our reasoning for us, afterwards impressing the results on our intelligence. Or we may suppose, that these Spirits are possessed of that transcendental faculty of vision which we have rejected for ourselves. And the character of many predictions—which are not merely predictions, but warnings—makes this last hypothesis not improbable. But it is obvious that we are thus no nearer than before to a scientific theory. The same difficulties have to be faced; the same objections remain unanswered. We cannot, it would seem, escape from assuming some unknown agent, whether Spirit without us, or new faculty within us—perhaps both. And to some it may perhaps appear that the one is hardly a larger or a more unwarrantable assumption than the other.

THE "EVERITT" TESTIMONIAL.—We have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of the following contributions:—

	£	s.	d.
F. W. H. Myers	1	1	0
Earl Bird	1	1	0
W. P. Adshead	1	1	0
E. Dawson Rogers	1	1	0
Morell Theobald	1	1	0
John Lamont	1	1	0
Frederick Griffin	1	1	0
G. R. Tapp	1	1	0
Mr. H.	1	1	0
Mrs. H.	1	1	0
G. Damiani... ..	1	1	0
S. C. Hall	1	0	0
J. P. Turner	0	10	0
Mrs. A.	0	10	0
	£13	11	0

The time present is seldom able to fill desire or imagination with immediate enjoyment; and we are forced to supply its deficiencies by recollection or anticipation.

Mr. J. Freeman desires to acknowledge the following additional subscriptions received for Mr. Haxby:—Mrs. B., 5s.; A Friend, £1; Miss T., 5s.; R. W. S., £1 1s.; Mrs. Macdougall Gregory, £3; Mr. Swinburne, 5s.

My notion is that the more we can assimilate our life here to the existence which our noblest ideas can conceive to be that of Spirits on the other side of the grave, the more we approximate to a Divine happiness, and the more easily we shall glide into the conditions of being hereafter.—LYTTON.

At the discussion meeting of the B.N.A.S., commencing at 7.30 o'clock, on Monday evening next, a paper will be read by Mr. J. J. Morse, entitled, "Our Fancies and our Facts; their Dangers and their Uses." Mr. Morse's paper will, doubtless, from his extensive experience, be full of valuable suggestions; and his numerous Metropolitan friends will do well to attend the meeting and take part in the discussion.

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.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

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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.

Our Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

PREVISION OF TRIFLES.

It may be in the recollection of some of your readers that I have more than once referred to a case in which a lady, a relative of my own, received by impression a distinct anticipation of a certain quite unexpected paragraph, in a newspaper, which duly appeared in that same newspaper about ten days later; the news in no way concerning herself. I have now another instance to relate from the same lady, who is, by the way, not a "medium," in any usual or accepted sense of the word. Some years ago this lady published a novel. I now quote from her letter to me of the 22nd inst. "Last night I asked — to send me up *her* newspaper, the *Queen*, a paper I rarely look at. No sooner had I got it, then I felt and said to myself, 'There's something in it about my book,' and quickly turning to the 'Literary Notes and Queries,' I found an answer to somebody's question, concerning '—' (the name of the book), signed '—.' That story is such an old story that the thought of it seldom occurs to me, and came across my mind quite irrelevantly, my object having been to find a certain milliner's advertisement." She truly adds, "Daily life is as full of these significant trifles as a chalk pit of fossils." The answer to the question in the *Queen* had been sent by another relative of hers and mine, but without any communication between them. The lady answering the question had also seen the number of the *Queen* containing it (the question) by mere accident.

No latent association of ideas (the supposition always first at hand to account for impressions of which we cannot trace the cause) would give the distinct anticipation above described, though it might (were we arbitrarily to assume it) recall the thought of the book. But this case differs from the earlier one, in that there was here an apparent occasion for the impression, the provisional impulse being started, as it were, by the receipt of the paper to the contents of which it related. This seems to take it out of the class of what may be called "rehearsed experiences," and to refer it to that in which some *rapport* has been established. That a material object passing from one to another may, in the case of a sufficiently sensitive recipient, transmit the image or even the thoughts of the first possessor, is, I think, abundantly proved by the facts of psychometry, as well as by many well-known instances not thus termed. But how can an unread newspaper suggest its contents? How can it be the medium of a *rapport*, even supposing there to be potential *rapport* between the writer of a paragraph printed in it and the person it concerns? I remember to have read of a similar instance in the *Medium* some years ago. It is among my voluminous, but unluckily, unindexed notes on these subjects. I cannot now recover it.

There is another phenomenon with which I believe almost everyone is familiar; I have myself had frequent experience of it. It is a sudden and strange sense of familiarity with what is otherwise the perfectly novel experience of the moment. Occasionally this amounts even to momentary anticipation, though the inner sense, or recollection, and the outer, or actual experience, are too nearly coincident in time for the one to be called a presentiment of the other. "Oh, you have said that same thing before, in the very same words, with the same look or gesture!" we are ready to exclaim to the friend who is, however, telling us something which

by no possibility could he ever have told us before. A trifle of the moment probably, yet a quite new trifle. Sir Benjamin Brodie refers to the subject in his "Psychological Enquiries," but his explanation does not cover the facts. This recognition of present experience as past appears to be allied to the fact of seeing our future experience as present. As for "the present" there is really no such thing. "*Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi.*" We can but represent it as the point of junction between past and future, without parts or magnitude.

C. C. M.

GHOSTS OF LIVING PERSONS.

As there have been in "LIGHT," from time to time, stories connected with haunted houses and similar abnormal phenomena, I think the following will be interesting to the readers of your journal. First, because it is, I think, unique: for I do not remember ever hearing or reading one like it. Secondly, because I can guarantee its authenticity; that is, if the word of educated, respectable people is any guarantee of authenticity, and it was told to me by a lady, the wife of the medical man of the place where I then resided, and she herself plays the chief part in the story.

In a conversation, one evening after dinner, the subject turned upon supernatural appearances, as they are called. I expressed what I then felt, a general scepticism about all such stories. I may mention that the village where we resided was, some years ago, made notorious by one of those strange occurrences; and there are doubtless many still living, who, if they read "LIGHT," will be able to call to mind the haunted house at Sampford Peverell, near Tiverton, in Devonshire. I have heard marvellous stories about this celebrated "Ghost," but, as they are all second or third-hand, I do not think them worth narrating.

In the course of the conversation just alluded to, and in reply to some derisive and sceptical remarks of mine, the lady, whom I will call by her initials, Mrs. T., replied, "Well, you should live, as we did, for five years in a veritably haunted house, and I think you would probably change your opinion." She then detailed to me some of the most extravagant stories of the usual type, which, she said, were of common daily occurrence in this house. However, it is not of this house I am going to speak; nor has it anything to do with it; for if I remember rightly the circumstances occurred in another house and *not* in the so-called haunted one. Nor, as far as I can see, has it anything to do with "ghosts," or spiritual apparitions: perhaps the problem may be solved by the higher calculus of Spiritual mathematics; or, at any rate, some theory may be advanced to explain it. I must premise also that the narrator was a refined and well-bred lady, who assured me that the story was *literally* true, as she narrated it. I will now give it in her own words:—

"My husband, Mr. T., was called out one night to attend a patient some miles off. He rode on horseback to the place, as we did not keep any carriage. At the side of the house there was a narrow passage, or bridle-path, leading down to the stable.

"As I was sitting, with my son Arthur, at breakfast, the next morning, a beautiful bright morning in summer, about eight o'clock, the servant waiting at table, and a large dog at our feet, we heard the gate of the passage open, and the footsteps of a man and horse coming down the passage. A voice then cried out 'Arthur, bring the key.' I said to my son, 'Run, Arthur, your father is so impatient.' He opened a side door in the room leading into the passage, and I followed him as far as the door. We then, both of us, saw my husband, Mr. T., leading the horse by the bridle down the passage towards the stable: the dog bounded after his master, and Arthur followed with the key, but before he reached the stable, horse and rider had disappeared. My husband, at that moment, was three or four miles from home, and did not arrive until several hours later."

I remember she added that the dog seemed to be utterly dismayed at the occurrence, for he returned in a frightened and perturbed manner.

Now, the usual sequel to such stories is that the original of the phenomenal vision, or presentation, or whatever it may be called, dies, or suffers from an accident, or something of the kind. But, in this case, nothing of the sort happened; the husband arrived home safe and sound; and was several years afterwards, when I heard his wife tell the story, listening along with me to the narrative of this strange and weird occurrence, of which he declared himself to have been entirely unconscious.

S. W. W.

RE-INCARNATION.

“E.M. (Cantab)” wishes to remind those who denounce this doctrine as “repulsive,” that the first question to be decided is whether it is *true*; and that, if true, it can seem repulsive only through being misunderstood, since, as a part of the Divine order, it must of necessity partake of the perfection of that order. “As understood by me”—he says, “it is both beautiful and true in the highest degree, and necessary to account for the facts both of existence in general and of my own experience in particular. And though Swedenborg failed to attain to the knowledge of it during his earth-life, it is really involved in his favourite doctrine of Correspondence. For it is according to the law of Correspondence that the soul, like the body, should use up many exterior coverings in the course of its pilgrimage, ‘putting off bodies like raiment, and as a vesture folding them up, itself remaining while they perish.’ And it is but reasonable to suppose that it would continue to do so until sufficiently perfected through experiences of the body to be capable of looking beyond the body and appreciating higher conditions of being. That Dr. Wyld should so completely—as his letters prove—have failed to apprehend the doctrine and its bearings, is the more surprising considering that he was, with myself, an attendant at the *Perfect Way* readings, wherein the doctrine was, as M.A. (Oxon.) avers, set forth in its most philosophical and convincing form. But, as every one knows, there is such a thing as being present in the body and absent in the spirit. And as even ‘the good Homer sometimes nods,’ so it may well be that the worthy President of the British Theosophical Society does not invariably maintain the hearing ear and seeing eye indispensable for the apprehension of Divine things.”

Signor Damiani writes:—“I can find no fault with you for wishing to close the controversy on Re-Incarnation for a time. I am also pleased to acknowledge your perfect impartiality during the hot polemic, and agreeably to your desire I shall abstain from infringing your rule. So, no more Re-Incarnation until further orders. But when ‘Trident’ in your last issue would fasten upon me a huge psychological heresy, I must appeal to your courtesy for the insertion of a few lines to rectify the error. Where has ‘Trident’ found written or when and where heard, that Re-Incarnationists ever denied or even doubted the possibility of growth and progression of Spirits in the other world? Let me refer ‘Trident’ to my evidence before the Dialectical Society. There he will find a parallel case to his, which I relate as happening to myself. In that report I said that my angel sister Marietta, who sixty-one years ago, and six hours after birth, left this world, had repeatedly manifested to me, shewing intelligence which undoubtedly implies growth and progression; and I may add, to make the case identical with ‘Trident’s,’ that she is now one of my constant guides. She has also been seen by many clairvoyants in this country and abroad standing by me, and all agree in their description of her as a full-grown Spirit with blonde hair and black eyes. The contention, therefore, is not about the possibility of progression in the spheres, a fact about which all sections of Spiritualists must agree, but as to the ratio of advancement, either after one earthly existence only, or after a full complement of re-embodiments and the consequent acquirement of the varied experiences of human life. We maintain that every re-incarnation is equal to a cycle of progression in Spirit-life.”

Mr. Ernest A. Tietkens says:—“When first I studied the truths of Spiritualism and the laws of spirit, Re-Incarnation formed the subject of my profound attention. At that time I tacitly accepted the view propounded by Allan Kardec and other writers on this subject, although silently protesting against some of the explanations given. In the first phases of my development, visions of great beauty, some of surpassing splendour, scenes in tropical climates, rivers, forests and such like views, or else the exterior or interior of buildings of wondrous Oriental architecture and design, emblazoned with symbolical figures, rich in devices and colour; at a later period of development more homely scenes—fields teeming in rich vegetation, gardens, European houses and rooms furnished either as bed or sitting-rooms, flowers and the surroundings of ordinary life—presented themselves to my inner sight. These scenes faded away after remaining visible for a short variable time. They nearly always conveyed a hidden meaning to my mind, which would flash into my consciousness even at the moment of presentation. Some I interpreted after they had disappeared. I especially wish to point out that at the earlier phase of my development, the Indian and Egyptian scenes pre-

dominated. Curious to learn the reason of such recurrent visions, because I invariably seemed to be intimately connected somehow or other with the scene presented, as if I had lived before in the midst of that scene,—I made inquiries at séances, through public professional mediums, respecting this particular phase. The Indian Spirits controlling the professional mediums, declared they were scenes of my previous existences. I have discovered since that these controlling Indian Spirits are as a rule, kind, affectionate, and genial, though ignorant. At home circles, where purity and chasteness reigned, the theory of Re-Incarnation was decidedly negatived by the controlling Spirit. As time passed on, my clairvoyance and clairaudience became more fully developed, when I was able to discern hidden things, and the fallacy of the Re-Incarnation theory dawned upon me. I will endeavour concisely to explain the reasons that warrant me in making this assertion. Each medium is surrounded with an aura corresponding to his or her spiritual state, and enveloping the whole body. I believe it to be through or on this aura-envelope that these mental pictures—to the medium *objective realities*—such as scenes of moving life, landscapes, &c.—are impressed. The impression being thus given by the controlling Spirit to the entranced medium, the medium believes he is the conscious actor in a past event, whereas it is simply a recollection in the memory of the controlling Indian, Egyptian, Persian, or any other Spirit, as the case may be, of that Spirit’s own past mundane life. The medium retains the recollection of the picture, and afterwards, on regaining his normal condition, his mind, already attuned to the belief of Re-Incarnation, accepts this theory as a truth, and relates his own supposed experiences.”

[We have in type a communication from Mrs. Kingsford, M.D., which will appear in our next issue. With this discussion will be closed for the present. Of other letters which have reached us we shall preserve the most important in the hope of being able to use them on some future occasion.—ED. “LIGHT.”]

THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF THE LATE
HENRY D. JENCKEN.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—Henry D. Jencken, Barrister-at-Law, was called from earth, in November, 1881, leaving a widow and two little boys totally unprovided for, without any means indeed, except that which sufficed to pay debts.

There is no use in concealing the fact; his widow and children are in need.

I assume that you know who Mrs. Jencken is: the “Katie Fox” by whom “Spiritualism” was *introduced* (I can find no more appropriate word) by the “Rochester rappings.”

I affirm without dread of contradiction that all Spiritualists owe to that lady and her children a very large debt: and I cannot doubt that many Spiritualists will desire to pay a part of it.

Her mediumistic power has continued in marvellous strength up to the present time; but she has never exercised it for personal gain, or in unsympathising and indiscriminate society.

In the name of God and humanity, and the sacred cause of Spiritualism, let some means be devised by which to rescue her from her present mournful, painful, and embarrassed position.

My age and comparative isolation, and other drawbacks, forbid much effort on my part to accomplish this object; but it is a bounden duty from which I dare not shrink, and will not shrink, to do as much as I can.

If a committee be formed, I will give to it the utmost aid I can in all ways.

I respectfully but urgently call upon the editors and managers of “LIGHT” to take this matter in hand; and I ask the aid of all to whom Spiritualism has been a boon and a blessing. It will be an eternal disgrace to us who admit our debt to Spiritualism, if we do nought in proof of our gratitude to one to whom Spiritualists owe so much.—Very truly yours,

S. C. HALL.

[We very gladly give insertion to the above, and shall willingly take charge of any contributions with which we may be entrusted. Although comparatively few of our readers may have had the opportunity of personally witnessing the reality and power of Mrs. Jencken’s mediumship, yet the position in which she stands to modern Spiritualism is a unique one, and we hope there will be many who will take the present opportunity of recognising this, by extending a helping hand to her and to her two fatherless boys.—ED. “LIGHT.”]

A SECOND APPEAL FROM AN INQUIRER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—A few weeks ago I sent a letter to "LIGHT," which the editor was good enough to insert, in which I appealed to the courtesy and good nature of its readers to afford me the opportunity, which so many evidently possess, of witnessing some of the phenomena connected with Spiritualism.

I stated my motives in a clear and straightforward way, assuring them that I was not prompted either by idle curiosity, or by an impertinent desire to discover a preconceived fraud; but that I wished to investigate, in the spirit of an honest and earnest inquirer after truth. I stated, further, the difficulty I had found, even in the case of a friend of long standing, of getting admitted to a private or family circle; and, considering this fact, I suppose I ought not to be surprised at meeting with no better success by a public appeal to strangers. But I am both surprised and disappointed; for, gauging others by myself, I thought I should have found numerous helping hands held out to guide one who finds himself, 'as many an earnest thinker does so often find himself—

"Here in the feeble twilight of the world groping."

But no; for, with one remarkable exception, I did not get a single answer to my letter; and this one, by a purely fortuitous coincidence, I received from a quarter I little dreamt of. This gentleman invited me to call upon him. I did so, and he met me, and listened to what I had to say, with an amount of kindness and courtesy as pleasant as it was unexpected. He candidly admitted the difficulties attending my wishes; but promised to do what he could. That promise he was not long in redeeming; for, in a short time, I received an invitation to attend a private séance at his house, given by a celebrated medium friend of his, I believe for my special edification. For this kindness, both he and his friend have my very warmest thanks, as they already know; and I should not have written this merely for the purpose of publicly thanking him; I merely mention it for the benefit of others—to let the reticent readers of "LIGHT" see that there is at least one "*among so many*" who is liberal enough to step out of his way to help another; and who has sufficient confidence in the rectitude of human motives, and in his own judgment—for he did not admit me without a preliminary examination—to risk the admission of a stranger into his family circle, and I hope he feels that his confidence was not misplaced.

Another object I have in writing is to assure those who did not help me, from the results of that séance that their fears were groundless; and that there really was no danger in admitting me. And, lastly, my chief object is to repeat my appeal for more help,—"*Licht, mehr Licht*"—from other quarters. I do not mean to be refused. *I mean to get it; and I will have it*: for I am terribly in earnest; and if the domains of Spiritualism have to "suffer violence," and be taken, like the Kingdom of Heaven, "by force," I will accomplish it.

I have seen enough to make me want to see and know more. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*; and I mean to leave no stone unturned till I have reached the inner shrine, and plucked the leaf from the sacred laurel.

Of the particulars of that séance to which I was so generously invited, there is no need that I should write. Suffice it for me to say that though my host, in the true spirit of a gentleman, made no conditions with me whatever, I *did not go provided with water squirts charged with cochineal, nor with lucifers, dark lanterns, or other such appliances*. Nor, on the other hand, did I come away with a smug conviction of my own cleverness, and the moral delinquency of human nature generally; and that I had been the victim of a piece of vulgar conjuring. No, sir, nothing of the kind. I will not say that I was perfectly convinced, but I was deeply arrested and interested, but the thought of deception or fraud, if it ever crossed my mind, was one that, in the presence of such people, were almost sacrilege even to entertain for a moment. At the same time, I am free to confess, that had I experienced what I did *at a public séance with a paid medium, and therefore interested in the result*, I should have had grave doubts as to its genuineness.

In the mean time, I have been reading several works on the subject, by "M. A. (Oxon.)." These admirably written books have deeply interested me; and I find there that the present attitude of my mind is one that he himself has passed through; and, like him, I will not yield my entire and perfect assent, until every shadow of doubt has disappeared before the full sunshine of irrefragable evidence; got, as he so strongly insists on, *at séances not in the dark, but in the light: for, 'whatsoever doth make manifest is Light.'*" I feel sure it is to be got. Others, by

hundreds, if the records be true, yes, even great sceptics, have obtained the evidence I want. Why should not I?

I am certain that if those who have reached the higher planes of spiritual knowledge, estimate its value and importance half as much as I do—standing, as I do, just within the threshold of the temple, and gazing wonderingly down the dim vista of its aisles into the mysterious darkness beyond—they will come forward, and lend a helping hand; and that too, not only as a pleasure, but as a *duty*; or I read its teachings in vain.

Among scientific people, I have always found great courtesy and willingness to help; and, on many occasions, a public appeal, made by myself, has been freely answered. Surely, Spiritualists are not more selfish, and less urbane, than men of science!

The letter sent in answer to mine, by a lady, signing herself Mrs. Fitzgerald, I think, was doubtless, well-meant, but was of no value to me; since it merely told me what I already knew and what subsequent experience has so confirmed—that I should find great difficulty in getting what I asked for. Certainly, the reasons she assigns are doubtless valid, as far as they go; but they are not insuperable. I freely admit that it is incumbent on any family, or private circle, to use the greatest discretion and caution in inviting a stranger, or they would open a precedent for every gaping fool and impudent knave to invade the sacred shrines of their households; but, I fancy that there is a sort of intuition in discerning people, that enables them in a short interview to detect the genuine earnest inquirer from the vulgar, idle sight-seer; at least, I would risk my own judgment in such a case.

I trust then that, after this second appeal of mine, I shall find that my perfect conversion is not to be left entirely to the kindness of the one gentleman who has already guided me to my novitiate; but, that there will be many ready to say to me "Friend, come up higher." Then I shall not have to say as I have so often done in bitterness and vexation, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" Yours obediently,

3, Stanley-terrace,

S. W. W.

Church End, Finchley.

THE LATE MR. GEORGE CHILDS.

We have been informed of the departure from earthly life, last November, of Mr. George Childs.

Our late brother in belief was drawn into the Spiritualist ranks a quarter of a century ago, after long scrutiny of manifestations through the mediumship of Mrs. Kate Hardinge, of the City-road, London. He became a facile medium for writing, and would also have been for trance-speaking if he had not resisted this mode of mediumship. He yielded, however, very willingly to that of drawing, art being his profession. As a medium he produced several paintings, and many drawings, some more or less in colours, of remarkable beauty. They all seem to require explanation, which is a common characteristic of Spiritual drawings. Now that he is on the other side of the veil, the desired explanation might be furnished by himself through a suitable medium, when found. His drawings received the critical admiration of Dr. Hugh Doherty, who wrote in the *Spiritual Magazine*, we believe, that the most mystical looking one of them illustrated, to his understanding, the prenatal state of the human soul. This was photographed, at the request to Mr. Childs by Spiritualist friends, by Mr. Dixon, 112, Albany-street, N.W., and he may still have the negative. Some of the drawings remain in the artist's portfolio, and are in his widow's possession. Their proper place would be on the walls of some Spiritualist institution.

For many years our friend gave close attention to all mediumistic phenomena, but seven or eight years ago a near relative of his was developed as a medium, and Mr. Childs invited numerous Spiritualist friends and some inquirers, among whom was Mr. William Crookes, to séances at his hospitable little residence in Oford-road. Some of these séances were reported in the *Spiritual Magazine* by Dr. Dixon, under the head of "Musical Séances;" they ceased on the medium—supposed to be tired of a work which he had not really at heart—saying that he was conscious of assisting in the production of the phenomena. This, without shaking Mr. Childs' position in Spiritualism, led to his renouncing the study of passing phenomena; and thus it was that Spiritualists had for a considerable time ceased to meet with him.

It appears that professional work was a good deal wanting to him of late; and, with depression of spirits, disease of the stomach developed itself, under which he gradually succumbed.

He has left one son and two daughters, who are able to earn a moderate maintenance. The present position of Mrs. Childs, who was quite in harmony with her esteemed husband, may be inferred from her advertisement in our present number; if it is responded to she will be able to remain in occupation of the house inhabited by them for so many years.

J. D.

SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.
MORE EXPOSURES.

By E. W. Wallis.

One after another the public mediums for materialisations are "coming to grief." Mrs. Crindle Reynolds, having been thoroughly exposed in Clyde, Ohio, arranged one or two so-called test sésances with some very ardent Spiritualists, good, honest and true people themselves, and inclined to believe everyone else so, and, therefore, not extremely critical or cautious in their methods. The result was a published account of very marvellous manifestations which were supposed to be a thorough vindication of Mrs. Crindle Reynolds' honesty, and a proof of the malignity of her enemies; these same enemies, by the way, being good, sincere Spiritualists of many years' standing, who not only exposed the fraud, but took the masks, six or seven of them; the speaking tube, which, when extended, is full four feet in length, and will stand alone, and could, therefore, be dressed and made to do duty as a lay figure; glass necklet with pendant cross, which writers had gone into raptures over, as the "splendid diamonds of dazzling brilliancy worn by the forms;" dark velvet bodice; and yards of lawn with which the forms were robbed.

Some of the vigorous believers and medium-defenders go so far as to affirm that the *sitters* bring these things into the circle on purpose to make an exposé and ruin the medium. I am at a loss to discover the motive sufficiently strong to induce Spiritualists to be guilty of such cruelty; while, on the other hand, a weekly income of a hundred dollars or more is a considerable temptation to fraud on the part of a dishonest medium. After having been "vindicated," or rather "white-washed," Mrs. Crindle Reynolds commenced again, and in Brooklyn and New York met with many supporters, took halls and held sésances of fifty to 100 sitters, until at length another exposé occurred, when she was discovered holding a mask with drapery depending to represent a second Spirit, herself, clad in white, playing the part of ghost No. 1. Even now there are Spiritualists ready to forget the past, condone all offences, believe she has been wronged, and encourage her to go on again. Many persons declare she is both a medium and a fraud, and for the sake of her genuine mediumship would sit with her again. But the methods of such sésances are so slipshod, and tests are so loosely conducted, as to rob them of all value. In a word, the majority of sésances for materialisations in this country are miscellaneous shows, about on a par with Punch and Judy exhibitions; and people go to be stimulated, to wonder, and to admire the "marvellous" and "beautiful" manifestations which sober and clear-headed sitters discern to be nothing but poor conjuring, or unconscious personation by the entranced medium.

The investigations carried on at the B.N.A.S. and in Newcastle were far more carefully conducted, and the efforts made to understand the nature of the phenomena much more exhaustive and scientifically valuable than are the sésances here. I am more than ever convinced of the soundness of the conclusions of "M. A. Oxon," and of the necessity of discountenancing cabinet manifestations. These cabinet performances are favourable to deception, the conditions such as would delight a conjurer, and there is nothing in this country to deter a designing knave from practising on the ignorance, sympathy, and gullibility of people, beyond being "found out," and even if that *should* happen it is easy enough to pose as a martyr, a victim to "medium-persecutors," or "fraud-hunters," as honest truth-seekers, who want to get at the real facts, are designated. It is a pity there is not public spirit enough to invoke the law and have some half-dozen of these impostors incarcerated for terms of three, or six, or twelve months; it would soon scare the rest and be a wholesome deterrent. Such swindlers have no conscience, and the enormity of the crime they commit does not shock them; but fear of the law and imprisonment would soon clear the ranks.

The same week in which Mrs. Crindle Reynolds was revealed in her true light, saw the unmasking of a fraud in San Francisco, and now another case of gross deception comes from Cleveland, Ohio. A Mrs. Christy and her daughters have been found to have been

systematically duping their visitors. The mother played medium and the daughters impersonated Spirits, until some shrewd observers discovered that instead of being in bed, as asserted by the mother, the daughters were actively awake and in the capacity of supposed Spirit-forms making acquaintance with the sitters. How the girls must have laughed at the credulity of the crowds that came to sit and admire them as "angel visitants"! But what awful sacrilege it is when men and women are so lost to all sense of honour and right that they can be guilty of such practices. Does not the constant repetition of these exposures demonstrate conclusively that the only alternative is for Spiritualists to discountenance all such exhibitions and demand and refuse to support mediums until they obtain such satisfactory conditions as to make it impossible for the medium to participate in the results, so that, in fact, the occurrences shall not turn upon the good faith of the medium? The question of the honesty or dishonesty of the medium ought not to be a factor in the matter at all.

Spiritualism has nothing to fear from its opponents, but more to dread from the extreme credulity, and the crudeness of investigation, of many of its most ardent devotees. The time has come, it seems to me, for a distinct disavowal on our part of these unsatisfactory and inconclusive methods. Spiritualism is being disgraced, and discredited, and degraded, and Spiritualists are fast becoming the laughing stock of the intelligent and thinking onlookers, while the more thoughtful and critical Spiritualists themselves are daily being disheartened and disgusted, when they see the extremes to which so many "psychomaniacs" (as they have been termed) will go. Self-respect, common-sense, our reputation as Spiritualists for ability to see and understand, decency, truth, and justice, all require that we should disclaim these deceivers, who, if they have mediumship, as undoubtedly many have, should learn not to supplement their real powers and genuine phenomena by spurious imitations, and surround the whole with such a glamour of mystery as to deceive the weak-minded and credulous. There is, unfortunately, far too much truth in the charge that Spiritualists are lunatics and dupes, and but for the fact that all over the country, wherever I have visited, I have found a large and an increasing number who deplore the existing state of things, and are equally anxious with myself to witness a change, I should be inclined to despair of any improvement. But the lesson is being slowly learned; these repeated exposures are telling their tale, and will eventually purify and reform our methods of mediumship. As it is at present, all mediums, the honest and true, come under the condemnation and suspicion of truth-seekers, and suffer because of the dishonest ones. If true mediums would protect themselves by never sitting, except under test conditions, and would insist upon their being observed, and thus satisfy their visitors, there would soon be a decided advancement. God speed that day!

The future of Spiritualism as a movement depends upon the course hereafter adopted, and while I do not pretend to know what that course should be, I agree with the suggestions of "M. A. (Oxon.*)" that with regard to materialisations the only way to demonstrate satisfactorily their true nature is to encourage mediums to dispense with the cabinet, and to endeavour to obtain the phenomena with the medium in the circle.

After my Philadelphia engagement I go to Brooklyn, for March 31st, and then to Cleveland, Ohio, returning to New York to start for home on April 15th. This will be my last letter in all probability, unless I should have something more to say after my return.

The members' free sésances at the B.N.A.S. will in future be held at eight o'clock on Friday evenings, instead of on Thursdays as heretofore.

Mr. W. Eglinton is, we hear, on his way from Calcutta, and may be expected in London in about three weeks from the present time.

Mrs. Fletcher was released from prison on Monday last, and was met by several friends, who congratulated her on her restoration to liberty.

A great mind may change its objects, but it cannot relinquish them; it must have something to pursue; variety is its relaxation, and amusement its repose.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—BELPER, April 2; FALMOUTH, April 16 and 17; LONDON, April 23 and 30.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[*Adv.*]

MRS. HARDINGE BRITEN has promised to lecture as follows:—Sundays of April, Manchester.—Apply; The Limes Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.—[*Adv.*]

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Medium and Daybreak."

The editor presents the following remarks under the head of "True and False Spiritual Polity":—"T. H. suggests a Select Circle for London, also that it should take the form of a Society, and be like Dr. Davies' 'Guild of the Holy Spirit.' These three points are not compatible with one another, nor with the obtaining of the higher phenomena, and communion with elevated Spirits. It is also suggested that the sitters should be vegetarians and teetotalers and abstain from tea and coffee.

"The object thus sought for is accomplished daily in London and elsewhere, but not in the manner thus detailed. A medium with the proper qualifications is the one essential thing, and such a medium would avoid as much as possible any such Guild, Circle, or Society. Vegetarians and others possessed of 'notions' would be the very worst class of sitters, because their active brains and wiry temperaments would prove most unfavourable conditions. Isolation, not association, is the mode of getting this higher spiritual result, the very highest form of which is that light which comes within the individual spirit, and which can be best obtained and enjoyed where a man or a woman follows the dictates of conscience, and leads a useful life. No circles, guilds, or societies are needed to secure this priceless treasure, nor does its possession hinge on phenomenal achievements.

"We must remember that all life is a mode of spiritual influx and participation, and that this world of humanity is one vast spirit-circle; each individual being a circlet, which in an extended form appears in man and wife, and wider still in the family group. The true 'Home' is a unified spiritual sphere, in which all who are in sympathy with it, feel comfortable, happy, enlightened, and able to endure the ills and bear the unavoidable burdens of life. Such a home makes every member of it the recipient of elevated spirit-influence, and in many homes that we know of, the spirits move about as beloved members of the family compact.

"The Guild, Society, and big circle business is the outcome of minds that know not as yet the alphabet of Spiritualism. Do we want ecclesiastical humbug, social disorder, and political ascendancy!—then let us form these artificial combinations. But if we desire to follow the voice of God, then let us be guided by the arrangements of nature, and we will have heaven on earth, and the angels in our midst."

"The Herald of Progress."

In the course of a detailed statement of experiences in Spiritualism, recently given in Newcastle by Mr. Thomas Ashton, that gentleman, among other matters, narrates the following particulars:—"One Sunday morning, about eleven o'clock, I lay upon the couch in the sitting room of my own house, reading the *Medium and Daybreak*—a journal devoted to the cause of Spiritualism. I was in a very tranquil state of mind. After reading some time, I laid the paper down to adjust my position, when, to my great astonishment, in the twinkling of an eye, the side or wall of the room in which the fire-place is built, disappeared from my view, and in its place stood another wall or side of a room. It was an ordinary brick wall without plaster. A common narrow fire-grate stood exactly in the same position as that which had so marvellously disappeared—the fire therein burning brightly. A narrow chimney, a little wider than the fire-grate, ran up to the ceiling of the room. At one end of this wall or side of the room, there was an ordinary batten door; it was hung on T joints, and secured by a Norfolk latch. I distinctly saw and heard that latch rise, the door open, and a fine stalwart man entered the room. He was covered from head to feet with what appeared to me, from the smell of it, to be newly ground flour, and he wore a headdress similar to that worn by the coal heavers of London. Now this man's face was very familiar to me. I knew him the moment I saw him, but, for my life, I could not then, neither can I now, call to mind when and where I became acquainted with him. In my astonishment, I exclaimed, *Hollo! where are you working?* Instead of answering my question, he walked direct to the fire-place, laid the index finger of his right hand upon the angle of the chimney, and said—*This is where my head was knocked.* He then walked towards the couch on which I lay, stopped when about two feet from it, and looked very kindly on me. I again asked where he was working, and was in the act of rising from the couch to shake hands with him, when he suddenly turned into a cloud, and disappeared. With him also disappeared the transformation I had witnessed in the wall or side of the room. A very remarkable feature in this most extraordinary phenomena was the strong smell of newly-ground flour which accompanied the man, and impregnated the room for hours afterwards. In the investigation of this marvellous subject, it has been my happy privilege to kiss the sweet lips of a child from the Spirit-world, and to feel its warm breath upon my cheek. It has been my privilege also to receive from the hands of that sweet and bright Spirit 'Minnie,' a lock of her beautiful hair. This is no romance of the imagination, but solid substantial fact, witnessed by several persons, some of whom are now present in this room, and can verify what I have just stated."

"The Banner of Light."

A discussion having recently arisen regarding the genuineness of the psychographic phenomena witnessed in the presence of Mr.

C. E. Watkins, the following particulars are given in our contemporary:—"A statement having appeared in a *Brownsville, Pa.*, paper, denouncing Mr. C. E. Watkins, the well-known slate-writing medium, as a fraud, Mr. G. W. Fear, of that place, produces the sworn statement of himself and four others, demonstrating most unmistakably the charge to be entirely untrue, and that the person who made it was so ignorant of the facts that he was disqualified to judge, much less to publicly express an opinion.

"The affidavit states that six new slates were purchased and washed, the medium never having had his hands upon them. Two were then placed together, with a small piece of pencil inside, ten persons taking hold of the slates with the medium. In a moment a scratching noise was heard, as of one writing, and in a short time the noise ceased, the slates were opened, and on the lower one was written a message in the handwriting of, and signed by, William Campbell, Esq., which was shown the next day to persons familiar with his signature, and they pronounced it genuine.

"At séances subsequently held quite a number of messages to those present from deceased friends were written on the slates and verified.

"At one time, the slates being held firmly by ten persons, three distinct messages were written from three different persons, and in three different handwritings; and nearly every one who attended received messages in answer to questions asked by them of their Spirit-friends, which they said were correct; the medium walking about the room, not touching the slates unless in the presence of all, and then only casually.

"It seems almost uncalled for that we should so frequently publish confirmations of the genuineness of this phase of phenomena, as given in the presence of Mr. Watkins, who long since established it under the close, critical observation of thousands, among them Epes Sargent and Rev. Joseph Cook; but the disinclination of the popular voice and press to make known the facts concerning it, coupled with the aptitude they have to spread abroad the opinions of those who really know nothing about the subject, demands that we allow no opportunity to do so to pass unimproved."

"The Religio-Philosophical Journal."

In the course of a letter from A. B. French, a frequent contributor to our contemporary, the following particulars concerning the assassination of the late President Garfield are given. The letter is headed "A Remarkable Prophecy Fulfilled." Mr. French writes:

No doubt most of the readers of the *JOURNAL* have heard of the man who prophesied the election and death of General Garfield. As I met him in Cleveland recently and had a long conversation with him, I feel it may interest them to write out the details. His name is Phillip Herring. He is about fifty years of age. He was educated for a Catholic priest, but before his education was complete he became so firmly convinced of the corruption of the Church, that he abandoned both Church and priesthood. He is a quiet man and supports his family by his profession. He is a Spiritualist and medium, but he never attends their public meetings, and has little to do with their society. I will now give the reader Mr. Herring's statement as nearly as I can.

"I got up in the morning to go and see Garfield. I took my flag [Mr. Herring has a small silk flag upon which the names of Washington and Lincoln are written, and to which he now has added the name of Garfield], and then I cried and said 'I cannot do it,' but a power told me that I must. Then I went to Mentor. When I got to the depot I felt that I could not go to that house, but I went. Mr. Garfield met me and shook hands with me. He asked me if I had had my dinner. I told him I did not want dinner, but he went in and ordered my dinner himself. He introduced me to Mrs. Garfield, and to Col. Rockwell and Swain. When I came out from dinner Mr. Garfield gave me a cigar and talked German with me. I was glad he could talk German. I walked the porch and smoked my cigar and heard them talk about the election. I felt I could not tell him. General Garfield came and invited me upstairs. I went alone with him to his room. Then I opened my flag and raised it above my head and said: 'Here is Washington and Lincoln; before God I swear to you the truth. I have not come for office.' General Garfield politely bowed his head. I told him: 'You will be president of the United States. Don't you doubt it. You will also be assassinated, and I shall put your name on my flag with Washington and Lincoln. It will happen in Washington and I have seen the man who will shoot you.'" Mr. Garfield asked me many questions, and gave me a letter to Carl Schurz. I was alone with him over an hour and under a powerful influence. He promised to be careful. After Garfield was elected, I wrote to him and warned him again that he would be shot. After he was shot, I went to Washington and saw Dr. Boynton and sent a letter to Mrs. Garfield."

He gave me many other facts in connection with the foregoing, which has fully convinced me that General Garfield was deeply impressed with his warning. Doubtless, when the heroic sufferer lay on his couch in Washington and Elberon, memory often called to mind his strange German visitor at Mentor, who in the silence of his own room, had sworn under his country's flag, by the sacred names of Washington and Lincoln, that he would receive the highest honours of the Republic, and die a tragic death.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

GOSWELL HALL.

After extending over several weeks the debate on the question "Are we creatures of circumstances?" was brought to a close by Mr. Howard, of Luton, contributing a deep and thoughtful paper on the subject, which briefly but comprehensively went over the whole ground and very materially strengthened the position of the affirmative side. In the evening it was again our pleasure to hear, after a long interval, our earnest and sincere friend Dr. T. L. Nichols, who took for his subject, "Evidences of Immortality." Before proceeding to deliver his lecture, he paid a fitting compliment to the committee of this hall who have laboured so earnestly and perseveringly to keep open this central place wherein once a week we can all meet to hear, and exchange thoughts with, each other on this all important subject of Immortality. The doctor then proceeded to say that a continued existence after what we call death is to him an absolute certainty, untinged by the slightest amount of speculation. The statement of his reasons for occupying this position occupied almost an hour, in the course of which he mentioned several unmistakable visits by his dear and only child; and the receipt of several written communications from Mrs. Fletcher during the past twelve months. "More particulars of this he will himself report in a very short time." All who hear Dr. Nichols are struck with his deep earnestness, and thorough conviction of the truth of his statements. It is surprising that the committee do not more often invite him to occupy their platform, as he is an able and willing exponent of our philosophy, and one who commands a patient and attentive hearing. Mr. Greenwell administered a severe but well merited rebuke to an article in a contemporary headed "Methods of Raising the (Spiritual) Wind," which reflects on the honesty of this Society. His remarks were heartily received and endorsed.

RES-FACTA.

QUEBEC HALL.

"The Atonement" was the subject of an admirable lecture by Mr. MacDonnell, on Sunday evening, when there was an improved attendance, remarkable for the presence of so many intelligent young men. As our room is limited, and we are wishful to ensure entire comfort, we shall be glad to have a post-card from all friends intending to be with us at 10.30 on Good Friday morning, before or not later than Tuesday morning, so as to guide us in providing. The help of ladies to arrange flowers, &c., on Thursday evening, between five and nine, will be exceedingly acceptable. No charge will be made for admission on Friday; we shall depend upon voluntary contributions, and the profits, if any, will be appropriated to the foundation of a "Fund for Visiting the Sick and Distressed."—J. M. DALE.

CARDIFF.

The Spiritualists of this town were favoured with another of the periodical visits of Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, on Sunday last, the 26th ult. By the kind permission of his Worship the Mayor, the use of the Town Hall was again obtained for the services, and being favoured by fine weather, large audiences assembled. The subject of the morning address was "Man—to whom does he belong?" and for upwards of an hour the speaker held his auditors in rapt attention, as he urged the plea that man was linked to God, to nature, and his fellows. In the evening every inch of room was occupied, many being compelled to stand during the entire service. The subject of the evening's discourse was "Immortality: on what does it rest?" and again the speaker held his audience in rivetted attention from commencement to close. It is impossible to do justice to such an excellent address in a mere sentence or two; suffice it to say that it was pronounced as the very best amongst the numerous addresses Mr. Morse has delivered here. A large contingent of the Unitarian body in the town were present at each meeting, and the unanimous opinion with them was that the lectures were of the highest merit, as illustrative of liberal sentiments and spiritual truth. Mr. W. Paynter occupied the post of chairman at each meeting, discharging his duties in an eminently satisfactory manner. On the Monday evening a social gathering of the members of the Society was held in their rooms, and the time was pleasantly spent in vocal and instrumental music, interspersed with a few addresses.

MANCHESTER.

On Sunday last, Manchester and district commemorated the advent of Modern Spiritualism, by a conference in the morning and by two addresses, by Mrs. E. H. Britten, in the afternoon and evening. The Propaganda Committee, elected in 1880, were wishful to conclude their labours and were purposing to give up their offices. The result of Sunday morning's meeting, however, was an adjournment for three months, when a larger representation from our country societies and circles is hoped for. Mrs. Britten's orations were quite up to her best efforts. On Sunday next the half-yearly meeting for the election of officers will take place at 10.30 a.m., and meetings will also be held in the afternoon and evening. Mr. J. C. Wright, of Liverpool, exchanges platforms with Mrs. Britten at Manchester. On Good Friday there will be a tea party in the Society's room.—J.T.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. John Hope lectured to the friends at Weir's Court—subject: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." This gentleman, who is orthodox, delivered himself in a thoroughly sober, orthodox fashion. Our Newcastle platform is getting quite into an orthodox Christian advocacy; so likewise is the Newcastle Society's organ, the *Herald*. Mr. John Urwin occupied the chair.

GATESHEAD.—The platform of the G.S.I.S., was occupied on Sunday evening last by Mr. J. G. Grey, who gave an address chosen by the audience, entitled "Proofs of Immortality." Mr. Jos. Stephenson took the chair. On Easter Sunday, the well-known lecturer Mr. J. W. Mahoney, of Birmingham, will deliver orations, both afternoon and evening, in the Lecture Hall of the Society, and on the Easter Monday a soirée will be held in the same place, the proceeds to go to the furnishing fund.

FELLING.—At 6.30 p.m., on Sunday, Mr. W. H. Robertson delivered a fine address upon the "Divine Illumination of Spiritualism," which, from the method in which it was handled, shewed considerable ability, and produced a good effect upon the audience assembled. In the afternoon of the same day he lectured at a cottage meeting in the same locality, upon "Justice, Love, and Harmony."

ASHINGTON.—Last Sunday afternoon the friends of this district were favoured with an address from Mr. Henry Burton, upon "The Present Aspect of Spiritualism," wherein he touched upon the indiscretion of much of its press and platform advocacy, and likewise upon the many unfortunate exposures that from time to time discredit its beautiful philosophy. In the evening he addressed a crowded audience upon "Spiritualism in the Past," reviewing the several phases of Spiritual manifestations which during past ages had impinged upon individual souls and societies of men. The lecture was warmly received. NORTHUMBRIA.

NORTH SHIELDS.

It is with pleasure that I send you the following account of the progress which our cause is making in North Shields. About eighteen months ago a few of us commenced as investigators into the phenomena of Spiritualism. We had not sat very long before we were satisfied that communion with the Spirit world is a glorious fact. Our meetings have been held regularly on the Sunday and Tuesday evenings, and much good has been done by them. At the present time we number twenty-five members, and as we have several more applications to join our circle we thought it advisable to look out for suitable premises that we might form ourselves into a Society. We take this opportunity of appealing to the Spiritualists in North Shields and neighbourhood to come and join us in our mission to propagate this glorious truth. We also have room for a few earnest investigators. A meeting for those who are interested in the cause will be held at the New Rooms, Bolton's-yard, Tyne-street, North Shields, on Sunday evening, April 2nd, at 6.30 prompt, to make the necessary arrangements for the formation of a Society, when we trust to have the presence and sympathy of all true and earnest Spiritualists. We also take this opportunity of publicly thanking Mr. and Mrs. Tosh for their kindness in allowing the circle to meet at their house for the last eighteen months, and we trust that they may be long spared to witness the growth of the seed they have so earnestly and generously assisted to sow. We have four mediums, but they require a little more developing. Messrs. Lambelle, Morse, and Wallis have done much good by their visits to the town. As at present arranged, and until further notice, public meetings will be held every Sunday evening at 6.30. The week nights will be occupied in developing our mediums. We appeal to all who have the cause at heart to come and assist us in the Sunday night meetings. Any friend desiring the success of Spiritualism at the mouth of the Tyne, may forward to the secretary (*pro tem.*) subscriptions for the cleaning and furnishing of the rooms. The smallest sum will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged in the columns of this paper. We shall also feel exceedingly obliged if friends who have books on Spiritualism to spare will kindly forward them for the use of this Society, to the secretary, *pro tem.* They will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged. Signed on behalf of the Circle; S. Scott, 37, Vicarage-street, North Shields; J. G. Wetch, 46, Norfolk-street, North Shields; J. Eskdale, 20, Tyne-street, North Shields; H. Appleby, junior, secretary, *pro tem.*, 31, Church-street, North Shields.

"THE CONFESSIONS OF A MEDIUM."—The *Scotsman* thus concludes a review of this book:—"The man who comes before you and says, 'I was trained to be a conjurer, and I used my power to impose upon people in the name of Spiritualism,' may be, in one sense at least, perfectly honest; but the man who comes before you with the cant of religion on his tongue, and who seeks to persuade you that he fell little by little, until he became as arrant an impostor as those with whom he acted as confederate, does not deserve the slightest belief. If, then, this book is to be treated at all seriously, it is entirely unworthy of credence. The materialisation and other tricks are doubtless done in some such way as the author describes; but no one, we should think, would really understand the tricks of the Spiritualists from what he reads here. It is a wearisome, and, truth to tell, monotonous and rather sickening story; and there is very little of instruction to be got from it."

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a list of eminent persons who, after personal investigation, have satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena generally known as Psychical or Spiritualistic.

N.B.—An asterisk is prefixed to those who have exchanged belief for knowledge.

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S.; *Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; *Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; *Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; *Dr. Ashburner, *Mr. Rutter, *Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hoffmann, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friese, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; *Lord Brougham; *Lord Lytton; *Lord Lyndhurst; *Archbishop Whately; *Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; *W. M. Thackeray; *Nassau Senior; *George Thompson; *W. Howitt; *Serjeant Cox; *Mrs. Browning, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; *W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; *Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; *Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; *Epes Sargent; *Baron du Potet; *Count A. de Gasparin; *Baron L. de Guldenstübbe, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H.I.H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; *H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Clavaire, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperors of *Russia and *France; Presidents *Thiers and *Lincoln, &c., &c.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht. Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, I affirm that the medianimic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true, and belonged to the *Spiritualistic* order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force' in mesmerism and also 'the individuality of the spirit' in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER, AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have *not in the smallest degree* found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place *under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining* by any reference to prestidigitation is *absolutely impossible*. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to *my* view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin. December 6th, 1877.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, to see how to conduct séances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex; the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cool breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over* but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means: if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.