

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.)"

In the course of a review of Epes Sargent's "Scientific Basis of Spiritualism," which I contributed to the May number of the *Psychological Review*, I mentioned a case of double consciousness which Mr. Sargent had carefully observed. Mrs. Mowatt was extremely susceptible to mesmerism, and in her abnormal state had a separate consciousness from that which belonged to her waking state. "In the midst of an animated conversation, it suddenly waked she would look round as if dazed, and then go on with her usual occupations when in the normal state. On again inducing the abnormal state, after whatever interval, before quite regaining the clear state of complete somnambulistic consciousness, she would go on and finish the sentence in the utterance of which she had been interrupted." I instanced other parallel cases, where interrupted consciousness and speech have been resumed at the exact point of interruption on the removal of some fragment of bone which pressed on the brain. I also quoted the case related by Combe of an Edinburgh porter, who, when drunk, left a parcel at the wrong house, and when sober could not remember where; but on getting drunk again he at once went to the house, and got back the package. I have received an interesting letter bearing on these questions, which I append. The writer, Mr. John Malcolm, F.R.C.S., of Haughton, near Darlington, informs me that he is now watching another case of double consciousness, of which I hope, through his kindness, to receive notes hereafter.

"In the notes on page 27 of the *Psychological Review* for this month, you give two interesting cases of interrupted consciousness and speech (arising from injury to the function of the brain) which were renewed when that organ was restored to its normal condition. I have read of a similar case which occurred to a learned professor at one of our Universities, who, driving in a gig with a friend, was quoting some passages from a classical author, when the horse fell, and the professor was pitched on his head. He remained for a few days in an insensible state, when he was trepanned. As soon as the bone pressing on the brain was removed, and he recovered consciousness, he continued the quotation which he was repeating when the accident happened. The third case you relate reminds me of a circumstance which occurred to myself thirty years ago. I called on a friend in London, who was out at the time, but soon expected to return. I was shewn into his sitting-room, where I found a Miss A., whom I had known, and who knew me well several years before. I addressed her, when she said: 'I don't know you, sir!' When I told her that we had known each other perfectly well years ago, she was quite indignant and offended; so I ceased to address her just then. My friend came in, and seeing that Miss A.'s temper was ruffled, he asked for an explanation. I gave it, on which he said: 'I'm sure that my friend would not say he knew you if it were not so.' Miss A. was as much annoyed at my friend as she had been with myself, and was nearly moved to tears. My friend took her hand, and made one or two 'passes' over her face. She at once, with fresh animation, addressed me by name, and was evidently much pleased to see me; said she knew me perfectly well, and was very glad to meet me. My friend then restored her to her natural condition, and said: 'Well, Miss A., you know Mr.—

and are glad to see him?' She most indignantly denied having ever seen me before, and was in such a state of agitation that my friend was obliged to 'mesmerise' her again, when her ruffled feelings were replaced by amiable smiles, and I then took leave of her and of my friend. I must tell you that this young lady had been employed to mesmerise a patient of mine, and I thus became acquainted with her. She continued in attendance on him till his death. She was put into the mesmeric state herself by the wife of the patient and consulted about the condition of the patient continually by order of Dr. G., who had the patient under his care at M. As I did not, at that time, believe in 'mesmerism,' or 'clairvoyance,' and was not a willing witness to Miss A.'s proceedings, she had perhaps conceived some dislike to me. Or, it might be, that as she was generally more or less under the influence of 'mesmerism' when I saw her in presence of my patient, she did not recognise me in her natural condition."

Macmillan's "Little Pilgrim" has called forth two striking papers in the *Spectator*. These deal by way of statement and reply with the idea of the future life; with the broad question whether we can definitely postulate anything with regard to it which, "a future state being granted, must, whether to the reasoning human being or to the Christian, certainly be true." The writer thinks that we can. His first postulate is that "a future life must involve continuity with this life, for otherwise it is not a future life at all, but only another life." Consciousness must be unbroken; there must be some kind of abiding memory, some sort of sympathy with the former self and its surroundings. If there be not this, then to talk of a future life is to misuse terms, as though one should say that the future of a good dog was manhood. From this it results, the writer conceives, that "the great change cannot be infinite, or even very great." Man is not transfigured into an angel—"a kind of subordinate God, or a being all supernatural,"—otherwise there would be no real continuity of existence. It must be remembered that there is no evidence for the intermediate sleep for which Hawthorne sighed, while two considerations make against it. "The soul must recommence its career conscious of the point at which it left off," or there is an inadmissible breach of continuity. And the teaching of Christ points to instantaneousness of change. It is, therefore, not to be admitted that the soul begins anew in a sort of childhood, and progresses as it has done here.

From this central idea of the absolute continuity of the present and the future life, the writer proceeds to deduce the continuance of effort, as against the Buddhist idea of pure contemplation. He contests the common notion that time is a mere attribute of this planet, an idea which he conceives to be a confusion between time and the method of recording its progress. And he contends for the fact that "it is a life, not a mere condition of being, to which we are born again: an embodied, though not a fleshly existence; with duty pressing, and all that this implies; and effort to make and all that that implies; and affections in full force, and all that arises from these also—the idea, for example, of society, with its endless ramifications. That the embodiment may be glorified is true, but only so far as to leave existence continuous: that happiness may be increased is true, but only so far as to leave duty and effort intact. That knowledge may be enlarged is true, but only so far as to leave the mind still a mind and not a new uncomprehended force." There is no proof that in the future state man is to be capable of perfect happiness—that is as impossible for the finite as perfection in love or power. The liberated soul will not, men may be sure, reach angelic bliss for a while ["for a while"! ah me!] if only, as the "Pilgrim" hints, because it has known sorrow and sin; and even in that bliss, the old conditions, finiteness, duty, effort, with all their inevitable consequences, must perforce enter. . . . "Men may rely on it that the Penitent Thief is doing something, and not existing in a state made up of the

Greek idea of the Elysian Fields and the Buddhist idea of Nirvana."

This striking argument is in so many ways consonant with, though in others it falls short of, the teachings of the higher, and so best-informed, Spirits that it is a cause for thankfulness to see it so clearly stated, and not in any diminished degree, because, in its broad statements, it appeals (as the writer says) not only to the Christian, but "to the reasoning human being." The former has his all-sufficing faith, and can sit secure while faithless mortals speculate; to the latter it is all-important that the argument for a future life be rested on a logical basis, and be enforced by reasoning that does not contain a flaw. He must grant a future state, either as a postulate or as something rendered probable by evidence or by analogy. That being done, he has a right to ask that arguments shall be used which comply with the rules of logic, and which are consistent with human experience. Is this argument such as will commend itself to him? The central position is *absolute continuity of existence*; the experiences of the future state taken up precisely where death interrupted here; no childhood; no gradual growth. But my "reasoning human being" may well pause and ask, Why? Is this life the beginning of existence? Are we created specially at our birth here? If this is meant, that crude notion is confronted by problems which it cannot solve, and by analogies which render it practically untenable. If not, is there continuity between this life and that which preceded it? Where, then, is our memory of that past? Here, at least, we all began as little children, ignorant, helpless, dependent, and we all underwent a gradual process of development, in the course of which traits of character infinitely various were disclosed, until we arrived at the measure of the stature of the man, as ignorant of the past life, as unable to account for our differences in spiritual, moral, and mental growth as we are to tell what would happen to us if we were suddenly endued with a sixth sense, or transplanted to a totally different state of being. The analogy, at any rate, is not in favour of the argument for continuity. It favours a period of repose after death, followed by a period of infancy and growth, and succeeded again by a gradual diminution of vigour as the next great change draws nigh.

The writer makes too little, in my opinion, of the impossibility of conceiving, under the limitations of our present physical existence, what change passes over us at death. He says that the change cannot be very great. In one sense that is true. *The man* is unchanged. The character laboriously built up by the acts and habits of a lifetime suffers no alteration from the fact that that lifetime is over. But the state of the man, the condition in which he finds himself, his surroundings,—these are infinitely changed; so much so, indeed, that those who find themselves in communion with Spirits able to instruct and inform them, are fain to confess that but little idea can be gathered of that land from the language of allegory and parable in which its inhabitants convey their thoughts to us. It may be that they, when they come here, are in a changed condition; it may be that we have no power of grasping a state of life which we are unable to imagine. But whatever the cause, few Spiritualists will deny that the change which death makes is one that cannot be translated into the exact language which accurately conveys human thought, though we gain some faint and fanciful idea of it from symbolical and allegorical Spirit-teaching.

No doubt the life is one of energy and effort, at least for long after this state of existence is quitted, and until the Spirit, purged from dross, is fitted for the heaven of contemplation. No doubt, too, that such effort is essential to the happiness of the Spirit, a happiness imperfect and undergoing growth and development. The writer conclusively shews how fallacious and crude is the conception of a heaven of eternal idleness, as well as of perfect and unvarying happiness. The second writer, who replies to him, does, indeed, point out that it is by no means certain that such necessity for effort is perpetual, and therein he is in accord with what Spiritualists would profess as the result of what has been taught them. But all are agreed that the state immediately succeeding this is one of energy. What both writers dwell too little upon is the formative power of man's own spirit, and its absolute accountability for its state as a result of its acts; and the necessity for progress and development before any "beatific vision," any "constant consciousness of God's presence," any introduction to the Holy of Holies and the sanctuary of the Supreme, can be talked of. Surely these final glories are too high for mortal man; he cannot attain unto them.

It is right to notice an important part of the argument of the second writer in which he contests the opinion expressed by the "Little Pilgrim," (and by various Spiritualist writers, I may add) of the final triumph in every individual of good over evil. He thinks the final perfectibility of all is a very questionable doctrine. A man who yields to a temptation that he can resist is making his resisting power definitely less in the failure. Repeatedly yielding breaks down that power altogether, and familiarity with sin, long persisted in, breeds contempt, abhorrence, and detestation of purity and goodness. Every downward step renders the up-hill path more hard to climb, and paralyses the inclination to undergo the necessary toil for an object that has become no longer desirable, it may be even repellent. "I cannot but think," says the writer in a passage of much force, "that the law of continuity points to a time at which, for believers in God, the character which steadily improves will be placed beyond temptation, because within the overpowering influence of God's love; while the character which steadily degrades may reach a point at which the mere thought of God is a thought, not simply of misery, but of infinite repulsion." This seems to me to be true spiritual teaching, and the fact that it finds a place where it does is the highest testimony to the unconscious influence of Spiritualism on modern cultivated thought.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that I have erroneously attributed to a member of the British Theosophical Society the doubt of Madame Blavatsky's occult power which "R.B.A." published. This is an error which I regret. A Fellow of the British Theosophical Society did, indeed, furnish the information, but the suggested doubt is "R.B.A.'s" private property. I am sorry that my words should have imputed to this unknown Fellow of the British Theosophical Society ideas which were not his.

M.A. (OXON.)

"WONDERFUL EXHIBITIONS—SAID TO BE SPIRITUAL."

We, the undersigned, citizens of Augusta, having heard of the wonderful "Spirit manifestations," as they are called, said to be exhibited at North Turner, and of the deception said to be practised, wishing to witness and thoroughly test the same, went to North Turner on Saturday, March 18th. We found that Mr. Wilber B. Fisher, twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, who was born in the place, and is a shoemaker, was the medium, who, at intervals, sometimes sits for the edification and satisfaction of friends, sincere in their professions, though he has never done it for compensation.

We took from home with us a suit of clothes for the medium's use, in place of his own. A bedroom, about eight by eleven feet, opening out of a small front parlor, was cleared of everything but the naked bedstead—save an old rag-carpet on the floor. The room was improvised for a cabinet. We examined critically the walls and the floor; then passed into the cellar, beneath the bedroom, where we sought in vain for any possible means of ingress or egress to the room save the one door. Then, after nailing the windows and fastening the doors of the parlor for further security, we asked Mr. Fisher, the medium, into the bedroom, or cabinet, where he took off his own clothes and put on the suit we had prepared, in our presence; after which he was seated in a chair; the coat, vest, and pants sewed firmly on to him, and together. Then, with needles and thread, and the use of long strips of cloth, he was strongly secured to the chair and the bedstead standing in his rear. Thus firmly fixed we left him, taking his cast-off vestments with us.

Next a piano was wheeled up in front of the bedroom door—not nearer than three feet; a large music-box was placed upon it and set running. Chairs having been arranged in a semi-circle behind the piano, for about a dozen of us in all, some neighbour friends being present, all were seated, our party of four being scattered through the circle; and, all taking hold of hands, the light was extinguished. After a reasonable time for what was called materializing, the piano began to give forth very rich and sweet tones, and soon after a female voice arose as if the singer was near the stool of the man who played the accompaniment, the melody and purity of which it would be difficult in any town or city to match. Presently the player himself commenced singing, and we must confess that a more magnificent bass voice cannot be found. He accompanied himself on the piano as he had the lady; we have the best reasons for knowing this, for he spoke several times while at the piano.

Succeeding this, a very young girl—judging by her tones—commenced singing and continued for a brief time; and there was no such person in the room when the doors were securely fastened. Then another lady and still another sang, making in all not less than five distinct voices heard, each in his or her turn. Then there was a change. From playing and singing difficult operatic music, another player, quite a different style, seemed to take the stool, and for about five minutes she executed a very complicated piece in a rapid manner, and with a power and skill equal to the others who had performed. In beginning the last piece, the piano, which was a large one, was lifted from the floor several times, returning with a concussion that made the old house tremble.

Up to this time, which occupied nearly two hours, the séance had been held entirely in the dark, and in order to explain the reason why a change of conditions was suggested by the spirit-band, it was said that the medium, being quite unwell with a severe cold, had become very much exhausted. In addition to this, we were informed the evening was by no means favorable for physical manifestations, inasmuch as the weather was heavy and stormy. Hence, taking all the unfavorable facts together, if they attempted any further manifestations, especially in the light, they proposed, in lieu of the tying, that the medium's hands should be filled with flour, which test, in view of what might follow, would be equally satisfactory, because if the medium attempted to do anything with his hands, the flour must be scattered on the floor. We accepted the proposition. A light was called for, taking which we entered the cabinet and found the medium with his fastenings precisely as we left them. We cut him clear, or thought we did, then filled both hands with wheat flour and again took our places in the room.

The lamp was now left burning, though turned fully half down. In a few minutes a rather tall, very slim lady, dressed in white from head to foot, with quite a train to her dress, came forth from the bedroom into our presence. After passing back and forth a few times, exhibiting her slender hands, her bracelets, and her long hair falling below her waist, which could plainly be seen by all, she seated herself at the piano, reached over and stepped the music box, then commenced playing an overture. She purported to be a French lady, Marie by name, the same who executed so wonderfully in the dark séance. At length she found her voice, when we were favoured with a very sweet song.

This person left the piano, but soon returned, and sang us a scrap of a song without aid from the instrument. Another lady, dressed in black, with white under-sleeves, also came out, and walked before us. Lastly, what purported to be the leading personage of them all, a man who had sung the bass, came from the cabinet, dressed in a black suit, with white shirt bosom, when no such garments were left either in the room or on the medium, and seating himself at the piano, commenced playing and singing in his own wonderful style. Then bidding us "good night," he retired into the bed-room, and the séance closed. We immediately took the light, and passed into the bed-room, where sat the medium partially unconscious, but seemingly much weaker than when we last left him—both hands being still filled with flour—not a particle having been spilled on the floor; while no other person, or sign of a person, was there.

While upon the subject of *tests*, we would add that in the act of leading the medium out of the bed-room, he was found to be still held by a portion of the fastenings, which, in our hurry, we had overlooked.

In summing up the result of our investigations, we want to say that Mr. Keen, at whose house we witnessed these strange things, is a man nearly sixty years of age, who has partially retired from business, is a man of wealth, of pure morals and of strict integrity, who, while he feels a deep interest in this subject, has never taken a dollar for exhibitions; that we could see no motive or deception on his part, and further, with the most thorough investigation on our part, and careful scrutiny, not the least possible evidence of fraud or deception could be detected by us. We were perfectly convinced of this one thing, viz., that whatever may be the nature of the things we saw, which seemed to us wonderful, or however they may have been produced—and we don't pretend to know how—neither the medium nor any person in that circle produced the music we heard, or were the persons who made their appearance in our midst and seemed to come from that little bed-room and retire into it after they had presented themselves to us in the manner described. Every

member of the circle and the medium could be seen by us during the most remarkable part of the performance.

L. P. HERSEY,
C. O. CONEY,
MARTIN L. REYNOLDS,
B. FRANKLIN YEATON.

Augusta, Me., March 29th, 1882

The foregoing account is quoted from *The Gospel Banner* published in Augusta, and the editor of that journal thus strongly endorses the *bona fides* of the persons whose names are appended to the narrative:—

"On the last page of this paper may be found a writing under the head of 'Wonderful Exhibitions—Purporting to be Spiritual,' signed by certain Augusta gentlemen, describing what they recently saw and heard at the dwelling of Mr. B. Keen, in North Turner. We should have given but little attention to the request of these gentlemen for its publication in the *Banner* if it had come from any irresponsible source or from strangers, or if those engaged in the exhibition were public tricksters, or if Mr. Keen were a man of doubtful, deceptive character. But two of the Augusta gentlemen we have known for years, during which time they have been regular patrons of our paper, while all of them are men whose reputation for honour and veracity is never questioned. In addition, Mr. Keen, the gentleman at whose residence the exhibition was witnessed, is an intelligent, candid, high-minded man, perhaps sixty years of age, whose financial situation relieves him entirely from all desire to engage in the practices described for gain. He never received a dollar for these demonstrations, but he has expended several hundred dollars in the purchase of musical instruments for the one purpose of use on occasions like that described, and assures us he believes most sincerely that the manifestations he has so often witnessed and tested in the last few years in his own house must be of spiritual origin. The other gentlemen whose names are signed to the writing we understand have no positive belief relative to the nature of what they saw, or how the demonstrations were produced. They only give a just and unbiased account of what they witnessed. And this is what we wish to be understood as doing in the publication of their account."

THE LATE PROFESSOR ZÖLLNER.

The following communication has been forwarded on the part of the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists to the family of the late Professor Zöllner:—

"I am directed by the Council of this Association to express to you the deep sorrow with which the members have heard of your bereavement. Although for the most part they cannot regard even a premature passage into a higher condition of existence as in itself a calamity, the loss sustained by those who were and are dear to Professor Zöllner—a loss which in a different degree is shared by all who have at heart the enlargement of the boundaries of human knowledge—could not fail to move their regretful sympathy. In the view of no small section of English and English-speaking men and women, Spiritualists and psychologists, the names of Zöllner and Crookes will ever stand apart as those of the strongest and foremost champions of a great Truth at a time when it was most misrecognised and contemned. The honour which surrounded Professor Zöllner's reputation is no vain breath of worldly applause, but is that due to labour and self-sacrifice. In this and in continued commune with a lofty intelligence it is our trust that you may find consolation. Begging you to pardon what may possibly be intrusive upon your great grief,—I have the honour to be your most obedient servant,

(Signed) THOMAS BLYTON.
Sec., B.N.A.S.

THE Dalston Association will hold another of its pleasant soirées on June 7th. (See advertisement.)

PRAYER FOR LIGHT.—A correspondent writes:—"If among the readers of 'LIGHT' there are any such as I—without wisdom of speech, without knowledge and without name, then let us unite in one thing: Let us use the God-given privilege and power of prayer, as men who are in earnest. Wherever we meet friends or strangers, be it in the omnibus, in the railway carriage, in a house, or even in an office or a shop, then let us, if but for one moment, with the utmost intensity of our life-energy, send up a prayer for *light* on the souls before us. As the purity of our prayer and its intensity, so will the influence be that shall approach the souls so breathed upon. Loving words or wise arguments might fail to reach them, but they cannot resist the approach of the angelic messengers, moving towards them in those prayer-rays, for they know not whence the wind bloweth."

"THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE."

What is our life? This is THE question asked over and over again, in different forms, in all nations, and in all ages. The answer has always been that it MUST BE something more than is realised in the existing life of the questioner. The life that is now lived, never satisfies. Even where it seems most to do so, in natures wholly absorbed in gratifying merely animal wants, a latent discontent will at times break out, and a void be felt.

"The yearning for the beautiful denied them
Shall strain their powers"—

is a poetical expression of one of the most beneficent and universal laws of humanity.

We have lately been reading a book entitled "Progress and Poverty."* It is not our purpose to enter into the main subject of the volume, which deals with some of the most important social questions in an exceedingly interesting, and, as it seems to us, in a masterly style. Coming to its conclusion, we were much struck with the final chapter bearing the title we have quoted above. As the work itself is, we fear, not likely to be very widely read, a summary of this last chapter may be interesting from the way in which it treats the question of future life. We shall supply this best by giving considerable quotations in the writer's own words.

In the first paragraph he quotes this sentence from Guizot :—
"When the history of civilisation is completed, when there is nothing more to say as to our present existence, man inevitably asks himself whether all is exhausted, whether he has reached the end of all things?"

The writer proceeds :—

"For the man who, seeing the want and misery, the ignorance and brutishness, caused by unjust social institutions, sets himself in so far as he has strength, to right them, there is disappointment and bitterness. So it has been of old time, so is it even now. But the bitterest thought—and it sometimes comes to the best and bravest—is that of the hopelessness of the effort, the futility of the sacrifice. To how few of those who sow the seed, is it given to see it grow, or even with certainty to know that it will grow."

* * * * *

"But for those who see Truth and would follow her; for those who recognise Justice and would stand for her, success is not the only thing. Success! Why, Falsehood has often that to give; and Injustice has often that to give. Must not Truth and Justice have that to give that is their own by proper right—theirs in essence, and not by accident?"

"That they have, and that here and now, everyone who has felt their exaltation knows. But sometimes the clouds sweep down. It is sad, sad reading, the lives of the men who would have done something for their fellows. To Socrates they gave the hemlock; Gracchus they killed with sticks and stones; and One, greatest and purest of all, they crucified. These seem but types. To-day Russian prisons are full; and in long processions, men and women, who, but for high-minded patriotism, might have lived in ease and luxury, move in chains towards the death-life of Siberia. And in penury and want, in neglect and contempt, destitute even of the sympathy that would have been so sweet, how many in every country have closed their eyes? This we see.

"BUT DO WE SEE IT ALL?"

* * * * *

"I have in this inquiry followed the course of my own thought. When, in mind, I set out on it I had no theory to support, no conclusions to prove. . . . But out of this inquiry has come to me something I did not think to find, and a faith that was dead revives.

"The yearning for a further life is natural and deep. It grows with intellectual growth, and perhaps none really feel it more than those who have begun to see how great is the universe, and how infinite are the vistas which every advance in knowledge opens before us—vistas which would require nothing short of eternity to explore. But in the mental atmosphere of our times, to the great majority of men on whom mere creeds have lost their hold, it seems impossible to look on this yearning save as a vain and childish hope, arising from man's egotism, and for which there is not the slightest ground or warrant, but which, on the contrary, seems inconsistent with positive knowledge.

"Now, when we come to analyse and trace up the ideas that thus destroy the hope of a future life, we shall find them, I think, to have their source, not in any revelations of physical science, but in certain teachings of political and social science which have deeply permeated thought in all directions. They have their root in the doctrines that there is a tendency to the production of more human beings than can be provided for; that vice and misery are the result of natural laws, and the means by which advance goes on; and that human progress is by a slow race development. These doctrines, which have been

generally accepted as approved truth, do what (except as scientific interpretations have been coloured by them) the extensions of physical science do not do—they reduce the individual to insignificance, they destroy the idea that there can be, in the ordering of the universe, any regard for his existence, or any recognition of what we call moral qualities."

* * * * *

"The idea that man mentally and physically is the result of slow modifications perpetuated by heredity, irresistibly suggests the idea that it is the race life, not the individual life, which is the object of human existence. Thus has vanished with many of us, and is still vanishing with more of us, that belief which in the battles and ills of life affords the strongest support and deepest consolation.

"Now, in the inquiry through which we have passed, we have met these doctrines and seen their fallacy. . . . Thus the nightmare which is banishing from the modern world the belief in a future life is destroyed. . . . And, thus, hope springs up. But this is not all."

After speaking of the universality of law, and shewing how apparent exceptions are treated in the physical kingdom, the writer proceeds :—

"Now, if we trace out the laws which govern human life in society, we find that in the largest as in the smallest community they are the same. We find that what seem at first sight like divergences and exceptions are but manifestations of the same principles. And we find that everywhere we can trace it, the social law runs into and conforms with the moral law; that in the life of a community justice infallibly brings its reward and injustice its punishment. But this we cannot see in individual life. If we look merely at individual life we cannot see that the laws of the universe have the slightest relation to good or bad, to right or wrong, to just or unjust. Shall we then say that the law which is manifest in social life is not true of individual life? It is not scientific to say so. We would not say so in reference to anything else. Shall we not rather say this simply proves that we do not see the whole of individual life?"

Again :—

"In life as we are cognisant of it, mental development can go but a little way. The mind hardly begins to be awake ere the bodily powers decline; it but becomes dimly conscious of the vast fields before it, but begins to learn and use its strength, to recognise relations, and extend its sympathies, when with the death of the body it passes away. Unless there is something more, there seems here a break, a failure. Whether it be a Humboldt or a Herschel, a Moses who looks from Pisgah, a Joshua who leads the host, or one of those sweet and patient souls who in narrow circles live radiant lives, there seems, if mind and character can go no further, a purposelessness inconsistent with what we can see of the linked sequence of the universe."

This brings us to an idea of which we have heard much lately. Perfected Humanity, the grand man, is presented to us as the Ideal. We are told that the aspirations after immortality in the individual must be satisfied by the result of his life on the race. It seems to us that this idea is born of the unquenchable desire after a future beyond the present life, that it is a last refuge, as it were, of the unconquerable longings of the human heart.

In the following passage it is, we think, well shewn that this idea is but a mockery, and is untenable even from a philosophical point of view, and that any satisfaction to be derived from it is illogical on the premises of that school of thought which brings it forward.

"By a fundamental law of our minds—the law, in fact, upon which political economy relies in all her deductions—we cannot conceive of a means without an end; a contrivance without an object. Now, to all nature, so far as we come in contact with it in this world, the support and employment of the intelligence that is in man furnishes such an end and object. But unless man himself may rise to or bring forth something higher, his existence is unintelligible. So strong is this metaphysical necessity that those who deny to the individual anything more than this life are compelled to transfer the idea of perfectibility to the race. . . . And further than this, if human life does not continue beyond what we see of it here, then we are confronted with regard to the race with the same difficulty as with the individual! For it is as certain that the race must die as that the individual must die. We know that there have been geologic conditions under which human life was impossible on this earth. We know they must return again . . . and bury the seats of present civilisation under ocean wastes, as it may be they now bury what was once as high a civilisation as our own. And beyond these periods science discerns a dead earth, an exhausted sun,—a time when, clashing together, the solar system shall resolve itself into a gaseous form, again to begin immeasurable mutations."

It is, we think, in Procter's "Poetry of Astronomy" that it is shewn for how small and transitory a period in the mid-history of a body like the earth is it adapted for the home of humanity.

In conclusion our author says :—

"What then is the meaning of life—of life absolutely and

* "Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions, and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy." By Henry George. London: C. Kegan Paul and Co. 1881.

inevitably bounded by death? To me it only seems intelligible as the avenue and vestibule to another life. And its facts seem only explicable upon a theory which cannot be expressed but in myth and symbol, and which, everywhere and at all times, the myths and symbols in which men have tried to portray their deepest perceptions do in some form express."

* * * * *

"The hope that rises is the heart of all religions! The poets have sung it, the seers have told it, and in its deepest pulses the heart of man throbs responsive to its truth." E. T. B.

UNCERTAINTIES OF SPIRIT IDENTITY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. McKinney does not seem to have given his attention to "The Uncertainties of Spirit Identity," now under discussion in "LIGHT." From my acquaintance with the phenomena of mesmerism,—such as clairvoyance, thought-transfer, and the like—I was appointed with others on the committee of the Dialectical Society to investigate the pretensions of Spiritualists. The late Mr. Serjeant Cox and Mr. Wallace were with me. I have paid the closest attention to all that has occurred since. Our published report Mr. McKinney does not seem to have ever heard of, or he would hardly attribute my opinions on the question to ignorance. The difficulties in respect to Spirit identity are very various; as, for instance, in the double, or Spirit-issues from the living person; from clairvoyance and thought-transfer, or knowledge or memory transference; and from the absence of any clear account of the conditions and location, &c., &c., of that after life.

The question was long since put by the poet Blair, in his "Poem of the Grave," but has it been answered? The lines are these:—

"Tell us, ye dead, if ye in pity can,
Beyond this sphere what is the future plan?
Some courteous ghost, if any such there be,
Tell us, in after life, what things ye see.
For some of you, we know, in days of old,
The fatal story to mankind have told,
Forewarning them of death—oh, then, comply,
And tell, in charity, what 'tis to die;—
But you're withheld! no matter, death must call,
The curtain drop, and time will clear up all."

The lines are from an old book on ghosts and ghost stories, called "Visits from the World of Spirits; or, Interesting Anecdotes of the Dead," &c., &c., with a most sensible and enlightened introduction, published in London in 1791.* The collection of stories seems very complete, with some remarkable instances of the double, as given in "Waverley," and the opinions of the highest authorities given.

Hotel de la Gare, HENRY G. ATKINSON.
Boulogne-sur-Mer.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I marvel that such a skilful critic as "M.A. (Oxon.*)" should be capable of so entirely misapprehending my meaning as to write, "Nor can it be fairly conceived that good Spirits would take such a method of conveying a lesson of trust in the Holy Ghost, as 'Trident' suggests."

I submit that I suggested nothing of the kind. What I desire to inculcate is that when we have satisfied ourselves of the reality of Spiritual communion we should abandon all external manifestations, whether they be good, bad, or indifferent, on the ground that it was not intended that humanity should be regularly guided in such an irregular and abnormal fashion. As I have said already, we should by prayer, faith, and right conduct seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, and then as a consequence we should attain the co-operation of His retinue of angels; the heavenly hosts would be our appointed champions and body-guard. Spiritualism impressively points with radiant finger in this happy direction. When a man has once entered upon this luminous path he becomes spontaneously endowed with knowledge, with a charm of manner, a cheerfulness of disposition, a gladness of voice, a power of enduring affliction, and a faculty of doing the righteous work of the world to a degree marvellous to contemplate and still more marvellous to experience. But who has entered on this bright career? Ah! who indeed!

I may here incidentally remark that before we accuse the Spirits of lying we should be quite sure that we know the sense in which they use our language. For instance, when a Spirit

tells me that such a person "died" at such a time, and I afterwards discover that the person named is alive and well, do I accuse the Spirit of deceiving me? Certainly not! because I know that the word "death" is used by the Spirits to express the commencement of a new course of thought and action, and the casting off of old ideas and customs.

Again, when a Spirit tells me that on a certain day he will bring me a "heap of feathers," and nothing of the kind happens, am I disgusted with the folly of the message? No; because I have learnt that "feathers" are sometimes mentioned as symbols of influence. That language which is ridiculous, taken literally, is full of meaning when understood symbolically.

Before we condemn the Spirits for uttering falsehoods let us ascertain that we have interpreted them correctly.

The author of "Pith" (Trübner and Co.) has recorded in his book a message which he received from the Spirits in these terms: "Do not pray to us; pray to God who will give us instructions concerning you." It appears to me that this passage contains the whole marrow of Spiritualism. Prayer is the mightiest weapon ever given by God to man, and yet it can be wielded with the most potent effect by a little child.—I am, &c.

London, May 20th, 1882. TRIDENT.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Some acknowledgment is due from me of the notices in your last issues of my recent article on this subject.

The thoughtful comments of "M.A. (Oxon.*)" are always welcome, and though they do not pretend to explain the difficulties of the case, I value their utterances. Mr. Podmore's narratives, in a similar range of painful experiences, have this difference from mine, that the communications became irreverent and vile in tone, and seemed to come from individual Spirits, whereas ours were never otherwise than pure, and, indeed, abounded with affectionate expressions and religious exhortation, and were the outpourings of several Spirits professedly linked together by bonds of mutual love and esteem, and yet all were sharers in the deceit ultimately unveiled.

My article only faintly conveyed the overwhelming tests that apparently proved beyond doubt the reality of the characters assumed, as much in characteristic phraseology as in reference to events familiar only to them and ourselves, to say nothing of the remarkable imitations of handwriting.

The advice of "Fritz," that such communications should be sought in a "prayerful spirit," is just, and was the feeling with which our sittings were conducted; moreover, none besides our own family were present, so that no indiscriminate influences were admitted. The suggestion of "Trident," as to the possible presence of the Spirit of my living son, is inadmissible, and for various reasons, which need not be detailed, could not be accepted as any explanation.

I shall hope to find the subject pursued further in your columns, and meantime am—Yours faithfully, J. P. T.

A CURIOUS THOUGHT.—"What do you mean, by figures that live in sound?" "It seems to me that the explanation of the power of music upon the mind is, that many things are elements which are not reckoned so, and that sound is one of them. As the air and fire are said to be peopled by fairy inhabitants, as the spiritual man lives in the element of faith, so I believe there are creatures which live in sound. Every lovely fancy, every moment of delight, every thought and thrill of pleasure which music calls forth, or which, already existing, is beautified and hallowed by music, does not die. Such as these become fairy existences, spiritual creatures, shadowy but real, and of an inexpressibly delicate grace and beauty, which live in melody, and float and throng before the sense whenever the harmony that gave and maintains their life exists again in sound. They are children of the earth and yet above it; they recall the human needs and hopes from which they sprang. They have shadowy sex and rank, and diversity of bearing, as of the different actors' parts that fill the stage of life. Poverty and want are there, but as in an allegory or morality, purified and released from suffering. The pleasures and delights of past ages thus live again in sound, the sorrows and disappointments of other days and of other men mingle with our own, and soften and subdue our hearts. Apollo and Orpheus tamed the savage beasts; music will soften our rugged nature, and kindle in us a love of our kind, and a tolerance of the petty failings and the shortcomings of men."—From "John Inglesant—A Romance."

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: May 28th; GLASGOW: June 4th; GATESHEAD: June 5th; BIRMINGHAM: June 11th; NOTTINGHAM: June 18th; KEIGHLEY: July 10th; STAMFORD: July 23rd. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[Advt.]

* Name of author not given. London: Printed for the proprietor, and sold by L. Wayland, No. 2, Middle-row, Holborn; and all the booksellers in town and country. 1791.

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

ALTERATION OF PRICE.

Contrary to our anticipations, and much to our regret, we find that the recent enlargement of "LIGHT" has made it necessary that we should increase the price. Henceforth, therefore, the charge for each number will be 3d. The Annual Subscription, 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, will be 15s. 2d., forwarded to our office in advance. This increase of price will not apply to present subscribers until the expiration of the term for which their orders have been received.

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

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

If I remember rightly, you some time ago expressed a wish to receive the record of any duly authenticated personal experiences. Perhaps the following account may be of interest to some of your readers:—

When I was in England in 1879, and residing at Penge, I noticed in the *Spiritualist* a paragraph referring to the mediumship of Mrs. Louie M. Lowe, an American medium, temporarily resident in London. A few days after this I had to go to the City on business matters, and having got through my work rather sooner than I expected, I found myself with a spare hour or so, and I suddenly thought I should like to go and make the acquaintance of Mrs. Lowe. So little intention had I before this of going to see her that I had not even noticed her address, and I had to call at the office of the *Spiritualist* to find out where she lived. I obtained her address (she was staying at 23, Upper Baker-street), and called on her just at two o'clock on a fine bright afternoon. I gave no name, simply asked to see Mrs. Lowe, and at once entered into conversation with her; told her I was investigating; had heard of her mediumship; had done myself the pleasure of calling upon her, &c., &c. She received me very pleasantly, did not appear to be at all curious as to who I was, asked no questions, but simply said she should be happy to give me any assistance she could, adding, "I see two Spirits who entered the room with you,—one on either side of you—one a lady, the other a gentleman. I don't think they knew each other in earth-life but they are both related to you and interested in your life." On hearing this my thoughts at once reverted to my mother, who died when I was little more than five years old, and my brother-in-law, who had passed away some nine years before. I purposely mention this as these two Spirits had been described as present with me at other sésances. I then asked Mrs. Lowe to describe the Spirits, which she did, taking the lady first and saying, "The lady is much younger than yourself, has only been about five years in the Spirit world, passed away quite young, under thirty." I was at a loss to understand to whom she referred and said so. She continued, "She is fair, with fair hair and grey eyes, puts her hand to her mouth as though to indicate some test. Now I hear a name 'Lizzie,' and she comes to you through your wife." I certainly had no thought whatever in my mind of my wife's sister Lizzie, who, however, had passed away just as Mrs. Lowe described. I must add that my wife's sister had had a sun-stroke when quite a little child, which had distorted her features. As she grew up, however, all signs of the distortion disappeared with the exception of a peculiarity about the mouth, which always appeared slightly crooked, especially when she laughed, and she had a habit of covering her lips with her hand when laughing. I told Mrs. Lowe that her description was perfectly accurate, and then begged her to describe the gentleman, feeling perfectly certain that she would give an account of my brother-in-law. She proceeded, "This gentleman passed away very suddenly fully twenty-five years ago, in the prime of life. He is tall, and of commanding appearance, very dark complexion, as though from exposure to the sun; wears a beard only about the lower part of the face; is nearly related to you." Thinking of my brother-in-law I could not make out the description, so I begged her to try and find out the name. She replied, "He gives the name

of Englebert." "Ask," I said, "whether he was generally known by that name on earth." "No," she replied, "he says he was called Hubert." Now my father's brother Hubert, who was my god-father, had died very suddenly in New Orleans some twenty-five years before, in the prime of life, of an attack of apoplexy. Mrs. Lowe's description tallied exactly with him as he was when I had seen him last, but the extraordinary part of the test is in the name, for my uncle was always known as Hubert, and it was only after his father's death (which happened but a few years before his own), on looking through his father's papers, he discovered that although he had always been called Hubert, that was not really his name, he having been baptised "Englebert." I acknowledged the correctness of all this to Mrs. Lowe, who then quietly said,—“Don't you spell your name *Meugens*,” spelling each letter out, and adding, “I see that name in letters of light over your uncle's head.” Our name is rather a peculiar one, and very few spell it correctly unless they are intimate friends, and as I had not given any name to Mrs. Lowe, I was not a little surprised at her giving it thus correctly.

After describing these two Spirits, Mrs. Lowe asked me if I would care to have a sésance, and on my agreeing, begged me to write the names of any friends I wished to hear from who were in the other world, and she would see whether any of them would write through her hand. I accordingly took a sheet of paper, and cut off slips on which I wrote the names of my mother, two brothers, my uncle, my wife's sister and her husband, and a friend who had quite lately passed away.

Mrs. Lowe begged me to write the names at a side table where she could not possibly see what I did, or else let her leave the room while I wrote the names. I elected to go to the small table, and while engaged in writing the names Mrs. Lowe asked me whether I had ever lost a little girl. I replied, "No," which seemed to surprise her, for she continued, "I see a little girl near you—I might say, in your arms—so close to you that I feel sure she belongs to you. She passed away when quite young, about a year old." I replied that I did not recognise any such, when Mrs. Lowe added, "Now, I see all about it. The little child is named 'Aimée,' and belongs to your wife's sister, the lady whose Spirit entered the room with you, and I am impressed that Aimée passed away in your house and in your wife's arms." This was absolutely correct, the little one in question having died just after completing its first year, in my house in Calcutta, and, as Mrs. Lowe said, she had breathed her last in my wife's arms.

After this little episode, Mrs. Lowe took up a pencil, and with it pointed to one after another of the little slips of paper which I had rolled up into pellets. As she pointed to one, suddenly three raps were heard on the table, and she then turned her face towards me with her eyes closed, and away from the paper she was going to write upon, and with extreme rapidity, wrote something on the paper, which she then handed over to me. I found on the paper, "We are ALL here; delighted to have the opportunity of proving to you *once more* that we are not dead, but that we live, and living, love you.—Elizabeth" (my mother's first name). Mrs. Lowe then said to me, "If you will ask or think any further questions you will get further replies." I at once framed a mental request that if it were my mother's Spirit she would give me some message regarding family matters and give her other name. Immediately Mrs. Lowe's hand was controlled to write, and she wrote a long letter, covering three sheets of paper, commencing, "My very dear son, Julius," giving me full particulars respecting one of my sisters, who was then dangerously ill, calling her by name, speaking of the doctor who was attending her, telling me what to do to help her recovery, and then, after alluding to several other family matters, signed herself, "Your faithful, loving mother, Elizabeth Caroline," the name, I need hardly add, being quite correct.

Not to make my account too long, I will only add that Mrs. Lowe's hand was controlled to give me messages, all of them pertinent and to the point, from each one of the friends whose names I had written, and moreover as each fresh influence came to her, she accurately described the manner of their passing away. Finally Mrs. Lowe was controlled by a Spirit who gave the name of "Daisy Lowe," and claimed to have been a little child of Mrs. Lowe's who had passed away some years before. This little Spirit spoke to me most familiarly about my children, giving me the names and particulars of them all and especially desiring me to give my daughter Ethel a big kiss for her, she being her favourite and a medium (this latter being a point upon which I have as yet had no evidence). Thus in less than a couple of hours I received from a perfect stranger whom I then

met for the first time in my life, the most startling tests and communications from some eight or nine dear friends and relations. And yet in the face of facts like these, people sneer at, and pooh-poo Spiritualism, and wonder how sensible men can devote their time to such humbug!

My experiences during the past few years would fill a volume, and if any of your readers are interested I shall be happy, if occasion offers, to put a few more facts before them.

J. G. MEUGENS.

[Mr. Meugens' "Experiences" are so interesting that we are confident our readers would be pleased to have some more of them.—ED. "LIGHT."]

A "BETTER WAY" IN DIET.

In a communication which you favoured me by inserting a few weeks ago, under this heading, I described the way of diet at the Ham Common Concordium, and I said that W. Galpin, the leading brother there, told me that he thought the community had to work up to a higher standard. I refrained from expressing his views as to such higher standard, thinking they would not be appreciated. Correspondents, however, having expressed a desire to know them, I return, with your leave, to the subject. "Man," said he, as we walked together in the garden, "should learn how to do without everything that is not requisite for furnishing him with the elements demanded by his physical structure, and for the due clothing and sheltering of his body. He ought not for these purposes to destroy animals; grain, seeds, and fruits, in their natural state, would suffice to supply him with food, and woven vegetable fibres with clothing." "What about the sheltering?" I asked. He paused in his walk and gazed with upturned abstracted look into the branches overhead. "Shelter," he said, "what more natural shelter than these birds have?" I asked no more; that was enough. His ideal clearly was one which could be realised only in a land of palm, plantain, banana, and banyan trees.

The Concordium was mainly supported by funds from without; these failing, from some cause unknown to me, the brethren dispersed. The Pater, subsiding into simple William Oldham, took up his abode near Kingston-on-Thames, and died at a ripe age. Brother W. G. joined the White Quakers' Community near Dublin, where he took part in cultivating the land, with a diet, clothing, and shelter in harmony only with the latitude of Southern India. One or two years after he joined them there was an epidemic of cholera, and he, with others of the community, fell an easy victim.

I have known other experimenters in diet; I call one especially to mind. He will be remembered by those who remain of the frequenters of the Owenite Institution in Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square, London, in the summer of 1842. Jasper W. was an intellectual and handsome young man, who always entered the Institution with an edible root or some fruit in one hand and a volume of Shelley in the other. He argued with all comers that in order to lower the animal and raise the spiritual, the distinctively human in us, we should subsist on vegetable substances, neither slaying nor being passive parties to slaying animals for food, nor even for clothing. He lived on fruit and roots. He dressed in linen and cotton, with a girdle of cotton cord round about the waist; his shoes were varnished cotton socks, with felt soles; his hat was of soft felt. Proselytes he did not gather from among the Owenite Rationalists. He visited Dr. Lamb, of Kentish Town, whose "better way" was substituting dairy produce for flesh meat. But Dr. Lamb and Jasper did not convert one another. During the warmth of summer our friend went on cheerily. We were asking ourselves how far cooler weather might modify his views, when his visiting the Institution suddenly ceased. On inquiring at his lodging we learned that he had gone with some gentlemen, not to return.

It was not until seven years after that the mystery of his departure was explained. Calling then upon an old friend of the Institution, living in Southwark, I there met our other old friend, Jasper W. There he sat, clad, and eating and drinking, as other men. Having rejoiced at our meeting I learned that it was his father, who kept a large Friends' boarding-school on the south coast, who so summarily removed him. He had somehow received information of Jasper's eccentricities, captured, and taken him to the Friends' Retreat in a northern county. There, retired from the world, and profiting by the representations of the manager of the Retreat, who saw that he was only an imaginative enthusiast, he presently

came to the conclusion that, although Shelley's poetry might be the best to his mind, it was not his best present guide. He communicated his change of mind to his father; but he thought Jasper's enthusiasm should have a thorough cooling, and so did not consent to his going home until he had been under the discipline of reflection for a year; then, instead of receiving him again to assist in his school, he helped him to establish one of his own. Jasper smiled as he went on to say that he had given security against relapse by becoming a family man. His school, as he described it, shewed him still enthusiastic and progressive, for he had taken Fellenberg's as his model, in which ordinary schooling is blended with practical instruction in the exercise of all the faculties. He had then come to town on business connected with his school, and had accidentally found his friend; hence our meeting. I have not had the pleasure of seeing him since, but for years afterwards the advertisement of his school used to meet my eye in the *Athenæum*. I ought to say that a great change had taken place in his appearance; formerly thin and pallid, now he was robust and well-coloured. Was this change due to altered diet? The same pallor and want of robustness were visible in the brethren of the Concordium.

Is not the question of diet a relative one? About the time I have been speaking of I knew Mr. Green, master of the City of London School at Edmonton. He was about forty, tall, robust, and well looking. His managing ability obtained for him a similar post in the Government schools at Surat. He there maintained perfect health through observing the diet of the natives. After some years he was removed to a higher post in one of the Presidencies, where he had to receive many officials and keep a table; this gradually led to the abandoning of his rule of living like the native Hindoos, and as gradually his fine health got impaired. Some epidemic attacked him, and, like W. G., he sank under it.

In studying the general question of diet, collateral ones of altitude, &c., ought not to be forgotten.

Q. P. F.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting of this Association was held on Tuesday evening last, at 38, Great Russell-street, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, vice-president, in the chair. The principal business of the meeting was to receive the annual report of the Council and statement of accounts, and to consider a recommendation involving a change in the name and constitution of the Association. As will be seen, the report was, upon the whole, a very satisfactory one, and was unanimously adopted, as was also a proposition in favour of the adoption of the name "The Central Association of Spiritualists," by which designation, therefore, the Association will henceforth be known. The change, we think, is a wise one; but after eight years' familiarity with the title of the "B.N.A.S.," we give it up with some regret.

Report of the Council.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting the Eighth Annual Report of the Association, the Council has the pleasure of congratulating the Members in regard to several important facts in the history of the past year. The number of new Members elected has been more than three times as great as the number of resignations.

In referring to the finances of the Association, the Council, while thankful for some accession of subscriptions, has still to regret that their work is somewhat crippled from the want of adequate support. The subscriptions increased from £162 in 1880 to £248 in 1881, but when the rent of comfortable rooms, which the Council still thinks a wise expenditure, is deducted, it will be seen that there is little left to assist in maintaining research or in supporting the Reading Room and Lending Library as could be wished, to say nothing of affording aid which is so often sought from provincial Societies, and which has so often to be withheld with regret. The accounts appended to this Report will shew, however, that after writing off a fair sum for depreciation of furniture, &c., the capital has increased by the sum of £55 and stands now at £232 19s. 1d.

These matters, which will be referred to more in detail further on, are alone sufficient to encourage the Members to renewed energy and increased interest in promoting the welfare of the Association and its work for Spiritualism.

A year ago the Council reported that it was not then prepared to recommend any further changes in its own constitution or in that of the Association itself. Since that time the possible advantages which might arise from certain changes have much engaged the thought of some of its members, and the question has been formally before several recent meetings of the Council.

The result is that the Council unanimously passed the following resolution for the consideration of the Annual Meeting :—

“That this Council, in order to meet the wishes of many friends, recommend to the members assembled in General Meeting in May, that the B.N.A.S. be re-constructed upon a revised constitution, under the name of the Central Association of Spiritualists, and that the new Association shall, in consideration of receiving the present members of the B.N.A.S. for the current year without further subscription, and of accepting its liabilities, become possessed of the library and other property of the B.N.A.S.”

The following is a concise summary of the history of the Association since the last Annual Meeting :—

Changes in the Membership.

Number of new Members elected	52
Number of Resignations	16
Deaths during the Year:—	
M. Léon Favre, } Hon. Members	2
Prof. Friedrich Zöllner }	
Rev. Sir Wm. Dunbar	} Subscribing } 5
H. D. Jencken, M.R.I.	
Alex. Thorn	
Mrs. Hook	
A. E. Hunter, B.A. (Cantab) }	7
Present number of Hon. and Subscribing Members	294

Allied Societies.

The Gateshead Society for the Investigation of Spiritualism, the South African Spiritual Evidence Society, and the Paris Psychological Society have allied themselves to the Association during the year, making a total number of sixteen in friendly union. The following representatives of allied Societies have been appointed as *ex officio* Members of Council:—Mr. E. Larrad, of the Leicester Association; Mr. Jas. Dunn, Durham District; Mr. J. N. Greenwell, Dalston.

Work of the Association.

A series of Discussion and Social Meetings has been kept up through the season. Many of these have been highly interesting and successful. The programme is appended :—

Programme.

- 1881.
- Nov. 7.—Opening Conversazione.
 - „ 21.—“The Religious Bearings of Spiritualism,” by Miss Emily Ford.
 - Dec. 5.—“Theosophy,” by Mr. A. F. Tindall.
 - „ 19.—“The Religious Aspect of Spiritualism; or, Is it from the Devil?” by Mr. Morell Theobald, F.C.A.
- 1882.
- Jan. 9.—“Facts in my Personal Experience,” by Mr. Thomas Everitt.
 - „ 23.—“Violationism; or, Sorcery in Science,” by Dr. Anna Kingsford.
 - Feb. 6.—“The Religion of Humanity: Is it Positivism or Spiritualism?” by Miss Arundale.
 - „ 20.—Conversazione.
 - March 6.—“Christian Faith *versus* Spiritual Reason,” by Mr. R. Wortley.
 - „ 20.—“Miracles and Prophecy,” by Mr. Frank Podmore, B.A. (Oxon.)
 - April 3.—“Our Fancies and our Facts; Their Dangers and their Uses,” by Mr. J. J. Morse.
 - „ 17.—“Notes on the Relation of the Christian Churches to Spiritualism,” by T. G. P.
 - May 8.—“Mesmeric Séance,” by Mr. D. Younger.
 - „ 22.—“The Systematisation and Application of Psychic Truth,” by Dr. Anna Kingsford.

Members' Weekly Free Séances.

With the view of affording opportunities for experimental séances without the presence of any known developed mediumship, weekly séances have been instituted to which Members have free access, and are now held on Friday evenings, at eight o'clock. It is thought that the regular attendance of those who may feel an interest in observing the gradual development of mediumship, may conduce to some interesting experiences.

Evenings with Mr. J. J. Morse.

A series of eight “Evenings with Mr. Morse” has been held during the winter and spring, affording great interest to those who have attended them, and of most of which copious reports were published in “LIGHT.” The most numerously attended of the series was on the occasion of a discussion between Mr. Morse’s “Control,” “The Chinese Philosopher,” and Miss Arundale, on the subject of Re-Incarnation. Many of those present also took part in the proceedings of the evening, and for several weeks the columns of “LIGHT” contained an animated discussion on the question.

Soirées and Conversaciones.

Several soirées and conversaciones have been held during the year, one on May 20th, 1881, being on the occasion of the departure of the Rev. Maurice Davies for South Africa.

The Council has again to express deep obligation to those ladies and gentlemen who assisted at these meetings, and to those who contributed personally in the necessary preparations and arrangements. It is also right that the Association should be reminded how much it is indebted to the persevering energy and zeal of its secretary. Many books and objects of interest have been presented to the Association during the year, for which our best thanks are due to the donors.

Miscellaneous.

Reference may here be made to a few other matters with which the Association has been to some extent connected. Mr. T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., was appointed as a representative of the Association at the discussion on Spiritualism at the Church Congress held in October of last year. This discussion, and the extent to which the report of it was circulated, has done much to raise the position which the whole subject of Spiritualism occupies in the public mind.

On the 5th and 6th of January last, conferences of an exceedingly interesting character were held in the Rooms of the Association, on the invitation of Professor Barrett, of Dublin. These conferences have resulted in the formation of a “Society for Psychological Research,” which, while working to some extent on similar lines to those of the B.N.A.S., does not commit itself to a belief in Spiritualism, but aims at approaching the inquiry solely from a scientific standpoint. The Council feels that there is abundant room for such a Society without in any way affecting the necessity for a Central Association avowedly for the investigation and propagation of Spiritualism.

Statement of Accounts for the Year 1881.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.		January 1st to December 31st, 1881.	
Dr.	£ s. d.	Cr.	£ s. d.
To Rent, Rates, including also Salaries and Wages	154 13 1	By Subscriptions	248 16 6
„ Printing and Stationery	10 15 5	„ Donations—	
„ Postages	19 17 8	Ordinary	30 5 0
„ Advertising	43 19 9	Special	39 13 0
„ Charges	7 6 2	„ Profit of Soirées	69 18 0
„ Library Expenses	10 0 7		
„ Depreciation of Furniture	27 10 6		
	265 3 2		
„ Capital for Balance (gain)	55 0 3		
	£320 3 5		£320 3 5

BALANCE SHEET.

December 31st, 1881.			
LIABILITIES.	ASSETS.		
To Petty Cash Keeper	1 6 4	By Furniture and Fixtures ...	217 14 2
„ Outstanding Accounts due	12 16 0	„ Cash at Bank	56 15 3
„ A. Calder, Esq.	55 18 0		
„ Coleman Fund	1 6 0		
„ Séance Committee	0 4 0		
„ Capital	232 19 1		
	£304 9 5		£304 9 5

Audited and found correct, January 25th, 1882.

MORELL THEOBALD, F.C.A.

G. H. POTTS, }
JOHN WM. GRAY, C.E., } Members' Auditors.

(Countersigned) THOMAS BLYTON, Resident Secretary.

On the motion of Mr. Jas. Dawbarn, seconded by Mrs. FitzGerald, and supported by Mr. Morell Theobald, the report was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Morell Theobald then moved the following resolution :—

“That in accordance with the recommendation of the Council, that the B. N. A. S. be re-constructed upon a revised constitution, under the name of the Central Association of Spiritualists, and that the new Association shall, in consideration of receiving the present members of the B. N. A. S. for the current year without further subscription, and of accepting its liabilities, become possessed of the library and other property of the B. N. A. S.; and that this meeting shall stand adjourned until 5.30 p.m. of Tuesday, June 13th, for the consideration and adoption of the revised Rules and Constitution now in the hands of the Secretary.”

The motion, having been seconded by Mrs. FitzGerald, and supported by Mr. Desmond G. FitzGerald and Mr. J. J. Morse, was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Theobald then moved a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Blyton, resident secretary, for his great and zealous services during the year. Several other members also spoke in high commendation of Mr. Blyton, and the motion was carried with acclamation.

The meeting was then adjourned to June 13th.

MONDAY next being Bank Holiday, our offices will be closed.

WE LEARN that Mr. E. W. Wallis had excellent meetings in Glasgow on Sunday last, and that he met with a warm welcome from the friends.

THE DEMAND for the last issue of “LIGHT” was so great that the entire edition—although we printed a larger number than usual—was disposed of the day after going to press.

SOME RECENT FACTS OF SPIRITUALISM.

Dr. Nichols at Goswell Hall.

You were so kind as to ask me to give you a little condensation of my lecture on Sunday night, at Goswell Hall, on "Some Recent Facts of Spiritualism." It is awkward to report one's self, and difficult to condense a statement of facts—and I am, as you know, the Gradgrind of the movement—more intent upon its facts than upon what they may signify.

The facts of my lecture mostly related to the medium whose pathetic "farewell" to England appeared in your last number, and who, as I am writing, is on mid-ocean, suffering from *mal de mer*, aggravated by the exhaustion of a long imprisonment and much nervous excitement. The fact that she is always seasick from shore to shore enhances the heroism of her last mid-winter voyage to England to meet the martyrdom she has so bravely suffered. (These are not introductory remarks; I never make any—or I cut them as short as I can. I give you the beginning of my lecture.)

Mr. Eglinton tried to give a séance last night, while I was at Goswell Hall, but did not get much. "Dewdrop" came and said her medium, Mrs. Fletcher, was very ill, and that "Ernest" and "Joey" were so busy with her that they could not come, but hoped to be with us Wednesday evening. (This is an interpolation.)

A contents bill of "LIGHT" was hanging most conspicuously from the front of the platform table at which I was speaking (scenery and decorations), and I naturally referred to the facts published in your columns of letters being carried by Spirits from London to India, and to America. It could not then be stated, as it now may, with safety, that these letters were taken from and brought to Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher, while she was supposed to be cut off from all the world in her stone cell in Tothill Fields Prison.

I am a witness to the fact that such letters were brought from her cell to my house two miles away—brought in at night through locked doors. I believe I gave you an account of one being placed in the firmly-closed hands of Peter S. Sweeney, Esq., an American lawyer residing in Paris, then on a visit to me. I shewed this letter last night to my friends in Goswell Hall.

Your correspondents, a little staggered at the astounding fact of instantaneous material communication between London and Calcutta, naturally wished to know something of the operator—battery, perhaps—at this end of the line. For obvious reasons I could not tell them then. I assured them that all the circumstances should be forthcoming. I gave, therefore, as well as I could in an hour, Mrs. Fletcher's account of what she knew of the *modus operandi* of such Spirit manifestations. It was surmised by some one that it might not be necessary for the material letters to be carried three or six thousand miles—that it would be much easier for the Spirit of a medium, freed from its body, to go to America or India, and write the letter there.

As a matter of fact, both methods were used. Mrs. Fletcher says that while her body was lying apparently lifeless in her prison cell, she was, her true self, in Boston, where she wrote a message to her husband, in his presence, with the finger of Powell, the well-known slate-writing medium; and that on another occasion she wrote a long letter in India to a friend—Mr. Meugens—who is now in England. Mr. Meugens has two or three letters in Mrs. Fletcher's handwriting, and containing matter which she only could write, while she was in her London prison.

I am personally witness of the fact of Mrs. Fletcher, during her imprisonment, appearing in a materialised form to a circle of her friends at my house. One of the gentlemen present had seen her in prison. When he next visited her she said, "So you have been to see Dr. Nichols." "How did you know that?" "I saw you there." "Yes," he said, "I know you did; but I advise you next time to leave your prison cap at home." She had worn her prison cap for better recognition, perhaps, or as a "testimony." At another time the Spirit "Ernest" brought this gentleman a lock of Mrs. Fletcher's hair. He afterwards compared it with that upon her head. I have Mrs. Fletcher's account of "Ernest's" coming to her and cutting the lock off.

Having a patient audience, apparently intensely interested in facts which corresponded with and confirmed their own observations, I gave a somewhat detailed account of these experiences of a medium, which will soon, I trust, be given to all the world, with a perfect vindication of this much-wronged woman and admirable medium.

How admirable we never so much felt as at the farewell séance given to her and a few friends just before her departure for America. Mr. Eglinton was the medium for some very wonderful manifestations. He was carried up so high in the air that the two ladies holding his hands were obliged to stand on their chairs to keep their hold, while his feet touched the heads of two persons on the opposite side of the table. A message written in letters of light was carried round for perusal. A cross of purest light—white like starlight, about eighteen inches long, and having the word "FAITH" across its shorter arm—was carried all round outside the circle. "Violet," controlling Mrs. Fletcher, gave an address of thanks to the friends of her medium, of the purity and eloquence of which I can give no idea but the expression of my perfect admiration. Even more wonderful were the addresses of the two Spirits speaking with their own voices—"Ernest" and "Joey"—thanking us who had done so much less than we would gladly have done, and taking a tender and most affectionate leave of their friends and persecuted medium, kissing her as two brothers might have done.

I closed my lecture with a vindication of another medium who has not been imprisoned, but has suffered scarcely less severe punishment from the modern pillory of the public press.

Less than a century ago, Lord Campbell says, "the Court of King's Bench pronounced the infamous sentence of pillory on a most respectable proprietor of a newspaper for a libel on the Russian ambassador, copied out of another paper, while the defendant was on his sick-bed in the country, delirious in a fever." Men in the pillory were sometimes pelted to death by the mob, but English legislators were loth to abolish it.

My vindication was to give Florence Marryat's account of her own experience with Florence Cook and the materialised "Katie King." "Katie" sat in her lap, while Miss Cook was lying in a trance beside her. "Katie," appearing as a dark brunette, closely resembling her medium, changed in a moment to a brilliant and beautiful blonde with a profusion of golden-red hair. "Katie" took a pair of scissors and cut her white drapery full of holes as a cullender, and then with a wave of her hand perfectly restored it. "Katie," in her golden hair, made her friend take the scissors and cut off lock after lock, which was restored as fast as she could cut it away. I hope Mrs. Lean, *née* Florence Marryat, will tell the world all this beautiful story in vindication of a much abused medium.

Well, that was about the substance of my lecture, but I said one word more which I beg you will find room for. For many years I have contended that every person accused of crime should have the right, whether he has counsel or not, to tell *his own story* to the jury. I have seen a man condemned to death because not permitted to do so until after the verdict. I am as sure as one can be of such a thing that no jury, listening to her own story, would have pronounced Mrs. Fletcher guilty. I have seen plenty of evidence to the contrary. She was practically undefended, and not allowed to speak for herself. Since the expiration of her sentence the judges of England have decided, at the instance of the very judge who tried her, to allow in future every accused person to give his own version of his case to the jury. It has always been lawful, but English judges have despotically forbidden an always existing, and at last recognised, right. Into the facts and merits of "the Fletcher case" I do not enter, as I know you will not permit the question to be raised in your columns.

May 22nd, 1882.

T. L. NICHOLS.

MRS. A. KINGSFORD, M.D., gave an admirable paper on Monday evening last, at 38, Great Russell-street, on "The Systematisation and Application of Psychic Truth." It will appear in our next week's issue.

MISS LOTTIE FOWLER.—At one of the members' weekly séances held recently at 38, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, Miss Lottie Fowler, the well-known clairvoyant, correctly described the circumstances and conditions surrounding Mrs. V., a lady member present, who had not previously met Miss Fowler. Appropriate advice was also given, and gratefully acknowledged. Reference was further made to a variety of matters appertaining to the condition of the Spiritualist movement, evincing some knowledge of impending changes. Miss Lottie Fowler's numerous friends in Liverpool will be glad to learn that she contemplates an early visit to that city.—THOMAS BLYTON, Sec. B. N. A. S.

MR. E. W. WALLIS'S APPOINTMENTS.—BELPER: June 4th and 5th; YORKSHIRE DISTRICT: June 11th to 18. Address, 13, Lako-street, Nottingham.—[Advt.]

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Medium and Daybreak."

The last issue of our contemporary contains two more "Controls," one headed "Thomas Carlyle: his Views on Ireland," through "A. T. T. P.'s" sensitive; and the other, entitled "Assassination," given through Mr. J. C. Wright. Both communications purport to come from "Thomas Carlyle," and concerning them the editor makes some valuable and useful comments, a few of which we quote:—

"Both of the Controls this week purport to come from 'Thomas Carlyle.' We understand A. T. T. P. was in Liverpool last week, and had a sitting with Mr. Wright on the Wednesday evening. 'Thomas Carlyle' had previously manifested through both mediums repeatedly. That the Controls purport to come from the same spirit was unknown to the respective Recorders, till we apprised them of the fact. There is, therefore, no collusion in the matter. The publication of two such papers simultaneously is an ordeal from which falsifiers would shrink; and all will at once, then, admit the genuineness of the Controls and the sincerity of Mediums and Recorders. Now comes to Spiritualists a far more interesting study than that of superficial scepticism. Assume that the communications emanate from the spirit indicated, then all differences of style observable in the articles, and between them and the author's works in earth-life, will have to be accounted for. But carefully discriminate between style and subject-matter. The points of agreement in that respect are many; being varied by the point of view occupied by the mentality addressed. Thus, in one case a legal consideration was introduced, because the person addressed was an old lawyer. Mr. Gladstone is also defended, possibly from some latent feeling of criticism in the mind addressed. In both Controls the symbol of the Nettle is introduced. This brings us to the point we have long ago spoken of in respect to the composition of Controls. They are necessarily made up, to a great extent, of mind-qualities present in the thought-spheres through which they pass in reaching earth. The spirit's thoughts have to become materialised, so to speak, in earthly elements. It will be observed that Mr. Wright's style abounds in short sentences. This is also true when that gentleman writes a letter in his normal state. A. T. T. P.'s medium we have not heard speak on the platform, but we think the structure of the communications partakes more of the intellectual pabulum of the Recorder. The sentences are altogether of a different form, and such phrases as 'I allude to the "Times,"' occur in messages from various spirits. Plainly, then, as may be seen from our columns this week, the same spirit, through two mediums, varies in form of expression. If so, why not in other matters: matters of sentiment, matters of moral tone, logical clearness, and spirituality, and yet be the same spirit? The mind through which a message passes from the spirit world, is a mass of previously acquired impressions. The intensity of these impressions during control, or the uncontrolled action of any brain organ, due to the presence of such impressions, must vitiate the communication at the time being given. We have seen a medium in a towering passion; in a state of exultation; in grief, or under other feelings, and the effects have been palpable in the conduct of the spirit. In these cases the mind sphere controls the spirit, not the spirit the medium. Do not let us, then, be too credulous or too critical. What Spiritualists greatly stand in need of is more knowledge. There are few minds on earth so pure and diaphanous that the thoughts of the spirit-world can pass through uncontaminate and shapely, and in our large cities it would be impossible for a pure mind to keep itself clear of smuts long. We tremble when our 'guides' (that is the orthodox phrase) make us take pen in hand and write 'at large' upon the Movement. We know not whose head may be broken aibins our own. This has been the case this week. The moral is, that the external agencies in Spiritualism have their place, and it is an important place; but, when used too exclusively these means lead to mischief and defeat. 'Hummur Stafford's' guide, in the concluding paragraph, puts the matter clearly. All agencies are good, if worked with a good motive; but to talk loftily of religion and doing good, while all the rest of the day the preacher is working selfish intrigue and other forms of evil is the condemnation of any cause."

"The Herald of Progress."

The most useful article in the last issue of our Newcastle contemporary is the commencement of a reprint of a paper by Mr. T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., "Upon Recent Investigations in Psychology," which that gentleman contributed to an early number of the *Psychological Review*. It becomes increasingly difficult to discover items of interest to Spiritualists in our northern contemporary, so much of its contents being suitable to those readers only who desire to see orthodoxy advocated and defended both in season and out of season.

"The Banner of Light."

OBSESSION.

At a recent "Friday evening" lecture of the Brooklyn Spiritual Fraternity the subject of "Obsession" was discussed

and we extract the following interesting items from the report of the meeting:—

"Mr. Wm. R. Tice said that a reporter on the *Daily Eagle*, a few days ago, had related to him a singular fact in his own experience, showing the power of an embodied spirit to make its presence known and felt at a distance. The reporter said that he was spending his summer vacation in the country, and had remained there longer than he had at first intended. One night as he lay awake, he saw the presence of his mother, who when he left Brooklyn was alive and well. She stood by his bedside, spoke to him, and urged and requested him to return home at once. He said that he was wide awake, and he heard the voice distinctly, and saw his mother clearly. It made such an impression upon him that he started for home the next day. On arrival, his mother, on meeting him, expressed much joy at his return, and said the night before she dreamed she went to the locality where he was, and described the house, grounds, the room where he slept, accurately, places that she had never seen, and said she asked him to come home immediately; all of which was in accordance with his own experiences. 'Now,' said Mr. Tice, 'has the spirit embodied, consciously or unconsciously, the power to travel, and visit, and communicate with persons it may be closely *en rapport* with?'

"Rev. Mr. Gage, formerly a Universalist minister in Maine, was stopping one winter some years ago at Key West, Fla. One day he was writing home, and he found his hand was controlled by a Spaniard, and he wrote in the Spanish language. This spirit soon had complete possession of him, and said that he would never leave him until he got drunk. The annoyance was so great that this refined, cultured and strictly temperate man, who had never used liquors in his life and who abhorred them, shut himself up in a room and became intoxicated, and when he returned to his reason and right mind this evil influence left him for ever.

"D. M. Cole said: 'This idea of evil spirits possessing men has been believed in all ages, and we find that the healing by Jesus and the apostles consisted largely of the so-called casting out of devils. In those earlier days the influence of evil was the devil; when persons were controlled by good influences they were considered to be inspired, and were treated as prophets. I do not know but what Spiritualists have this power of casting out, as in the instance related by the Chairman, not only from the sane, but of the insane, who fill our insane asylums. When I was in the Church my pastor said, "You do not believe in the devil?" I replied, "Yes I do, in millions of them." We do not know the reason why we do certain things; we know we are influenced by our surroundings, by climate, and we cannot always tell what these influences are, and what their effect will be upon us. Criminals sometimes tell us when they have committed great crimes that it was the devil that prompted them. At a circle held in this city Dr. Baker was speaking, and Mrs. Cate (a medium) said she saw my spirit influencing him. Dr. B. seemed to consider this explanation as satisfactory, as he said he had heard me express the same sentiment that was being given through him. This was without any conscious volition on my part, as I was several miles away, and did not know that I was in this way controlling the thoughts of another. Our evil thoughts may go out and influence others; we should therefore cultivate the higher and better attributes of our natures. When I see forms or faces, I must be passive; when I concentrate my will-power and my thoughts, I see them no more. I have the good fortune to live in a house that is haunted by the spirit of a woman who was murdered there. My daughter sees the spirit, and when I give up to the feeling of fear, I have also seen it. If I increase the power of my will, I do not see it—they tell us we must be pure and passive. I do not believe that purity has much to do with this power of possession or obsession.'

"J. A. Wilson said: 'I know but little of this obsession. A few days ago I was stopping in Paterson, N. J., with a nephew who is a Methodist local preacher and a good Christian man. Our conversation drifted to Spiritualism. He said that twenty years ago his little boy "Johnnie" died; that at the time he suffered great anguish of mind from the thought that his boy was "roasting in hell," and prayed earnestly that he might know the condition of his child in the spirit-world. One morning the spirit of his little boy lay in his lap, and he said: "Papa, I have come to tell you that I am happy; do not grieve any more. I live in a beautiful home, and am so happy." My friend had never related this fact to anyone before. From that time he had no fears as to his child being in hell. Still this good Christian man preaches hell in his pulpit.'

"Dr. S. S. Guy said: 'I have been an investigator of these phenomena for thirty-two years, and have never felt these adverse influences, never been troubled by evil spirits. I think we must have our lives pure, and our aspirations should always be to know and receive the truth, to live up to our highest conceptions of what this life should be. We shall then have no cause to worry about obsession by evil influences.'

"D. H. Hamilton, of Lewiston, Me., said, 'I have had no particular experience in obsession. I know that when I exercise my best thoughts, and am *en rapport* with the noblest lives and thoughts of the ages, my own best thoughts flow from the end of my pen. I am a Phrenologist, and have given much study to the various faculties of the brain. Reason, intuition, self-

esteem, destructiveness and ideality, all when exercised show their effects upon the individual life. I would have the moral, the intellectual and spiritual faculties unfolded to their highest capacities. I take the truth as it comes to my soul. I do not believe there is any need of any of us being controlled by bad spirits."

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES

GOSWELL HALL.

Last Sunday morning, Mr. Wilson, the "Comprehensionist," again attended, to teach and explain this system. I suppose there is a grand principle underlying the tremendous number of hard words and new phrases introduced by Mr. Wilson, but I am afraid it will be very many generations hence ere it is acknowledged or adopted. As in the case of many others, I am afraid our friend the Comprehensionist has made his appearance on this planet too early to meet with appreciation from its inhabitants. Maybe, ages yet unborn will rise up and call him blessed. In the evening, Dr. T. L. Nichols occupied the platform, the subject of his lecture being "An Account of Some Recent Manifestations of Spirit Power." Next Sunday evening Mr. J. J. Morse will again take the platform, when we hope the hall will be filled, as the subject is of an interesting nature. (See advertisement.)—RES-FACTA.

QUEBEC HALL.

On Sunday evening a rather startling lecture was given by Mr. MacDonnell on "The State of Europe, and England in particular, in 1900." He attributed the regicidal murders of the day to the natural law of compensation, which results from the long continued neglect of, and injustice to, the peoples of Europe, especially in the practice of war; and he gave rather a gloomy look-out for the great ones of the nations, now that secret societies and enthusiastic assassins are at large. Rapid changes towards republican ideas were promised, and a bright future for the world is in store. The debate which followed brought in the co-operative system as an important means of self-elevation with the people.—COR.

KEIGHLEY.

I have, on behalf of the Keighley Spiritualist Society, great pleasure in congratulating the guides of Mr. J. J. Morse on the two very able and enlightening addresses given in the Temperance Hall, Keighley, on Sunday evening, the 21st inst. The subject of the afternoon's discourse was "Salvation versus Progression." The evening's subject was "The Spirit-Man, Present and Future." Both were very ably treated. I have now pleasure in giving you a brief outline of the progress of Spiritualism in Keighley. You will, no doubt, know that the town of Keighley was the place where "Spiritualism" was first publicly promulgated in this country, having been introduced by Mr. David Richmond, of Darlington, to Mr. David Weatherhead, a series of three addresses being delivered on the subject by Mr. D. Richmond in the latter part of May or the commencement of June, 1853. The result of these addresses was that a society was formed in Keighley by Mr. Weatherhead, the first in this country; and he (Mr. Weatherhead) spared neither time nor money, from that time till his death, in spreading the truth of the demonstrated immortality of the soul by every possible means. Amongst the means which he employed was the printing press, which he was the first to use in printing literature on this all important subject, and which press was established in the building where now stands our Lyceum. From all parts of the world a large mass of information was gained through various sources (mediums, &c.) and was printed in the shape of leaflets, tracts, and periodicals. The Society is now in a prosperous condition, having upwards of 150 members and some half-a-dozen mediums contributing their services, besides several others under development. We have also a Sunday-school conducted, as far as we are able, on the Lyceum principle, viz., singing, prayer, readings for about fifteen or twenty minutes on various subjects; then a series of questions to which the scholars give answer; and recitations or readings by the scholars of matter committed to memory generally during the previous week. (Marching is dispensed with on account of want of room.) Then we read again, closing with singing and prayer, so that we have a continual change, that the minds of the scholars may not get bored with one monotonous routine. We have a good attendance every session. We have had during the present year a teachers' and scholars' tea, after which we had an entertainment consisting of songs, duets, glees, recitations, &c., to which the parents and friends of the scholars were invited. We are proposing during the present summer to have several picnics for the scholars and teachers, the committee being determined that nothing on their part shall be left undone to make the Lyceum a success. Further, in view of this great truth, and as a slight mark of respect to the pioneer and two of the old and noble workers in this cause, we are proposing during the month of July next presenting Mr. Weatherhead's family, Mr. John Wright, and Mr. Abraham Shackleton, with their respective portraits in oil, life-size, on which occasion we hope to have a Spiritualist Jubilee, and also wish to see as many friends as can make it convenient to attend. I

may say that the cost of the portraits, which will be, so far as we can calculate, over £30, is to be raised by subscription, &c., previous to the presentation: and should any friends wish to contribute, I shall be pleased to receive any sum they may be willing to remit and place the same against their name in a book held by myself for that purpose.—JOSEPH SMITH, Secretary.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—At Weirs Court, on Sunday evening, Mr. W. Grieves, of Ashington, lectured from the text, "I have found the peace I had lost." The lecturer stated that, having found Spiritualism a fact too strong for him, he soon discovered that he was looked on by his Methodist friends with suspicion and distrust, which ended in his receiving notice to leave his chapel or recant; this he could not do, and so he sailed onward with his new faith, and now he had given up creeds and dogmas, a personal devil, and eternal punishment as untenable. He considered modern Spiritualism to be identical with primitive Christianity. It brought facts to those who doubted, and comfort to those who mourned. It was in fact the peace which was lost and was found again. Mr. J. Hare, in proposing a vote of thanks to the lecturer, who unfortunately was compelled to leave immediately after the close of his address, said that the discourse was marked with a tendency he was glad to see growing among Spiritualists, the embodiment of the personification of God in the Man-Christ. M. Jno. Mould occupied the chair. The Newcastle and Gateshead friends are at present being favoured with a visit from Tiverden by Mrs. Esperance, the well-known New Bridge-street medium, accompanied by Mrs. Fidler. We believe that the celebrated physical (test) medium, Miss C. E. Wood, of Newcastle, has left to fulfil some engagements in London.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. H. Burton, the President of the Gateshead Society, lectured to the friends of the G.S.I.S., upon the "Sublime in Man." The discourse, which the chairman, Mr. Stephenson, characterised as an able and eloquent address, was warmly received and much appreciated by the audience. Mr. Rowe, of North Shields, will lecture at this place on Sunday next, and on Monday, June 5th, Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, will address the friends upon "Political Spiritualism."

WEST PELTON.—Mr. J. G. Grey lectured to the Spiritualists of the above place very acceptably on Sunday last.

NORTHUMBRIA.

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

- Sunday, May 21.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Mr. Wilson, "Comprehensionism." 7 p.m., Mr. J. J. Morse: Trance Address, "Christ: the Creed, the Man, the Principle."
- " " West London Society. 11 a.m., 7 p.m., Meetings.
- " " Christian Spiritualists' Mission. 7 p.m. Séance for Spiritualists only.
- Sunday, May 28.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Mr. MacDonnell: "Christianity of the Next Century."
- Tuesday, May 30.—Quebec Hall. 8.30, Mr. Wilson: "Social Questions."
- Friday, June 2.—B.N.A.S. Members' Free Séance, 8 p.m.

PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c., &c. See our list of Societies on p. 2.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. W.—The British National Association will henceforth be known by its new title, "The Central Association of Spiritualists." There will also be some modifications in the Constitution, but we apprehend that they will only affect the management and not the work, of the Association. You will see by the "Report," published in this day's issue, that the Association is in a fairly prosperous condition. It has been doing much useful work during the past season, and deserves all the aid you can give it. With more funds at its command, it could render even better service to the Cause. Help it.

MR. J. C. WRIGHT'S APPOINTMENTS FOR MAY.—LIVERPOOL: 28th and 29th. Mr. Wright cannot undertake any more meetings than those already bespoken.—11, Towerlands-street, Liverpool.—[Advt.]

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; *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 Hoffman, 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 Akakof, 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 medianic 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 sésances, 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 sésance.

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.