

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.)"

There is nothing to be added to what I have so frequently said about the conditions under which promiscuous séances for materialisation are held. The last exposure has but emphasised anew the necessity for a stern and searching reform. Possibly the steady frequency with which these miserable frauds recur may suggest the expediency of discountenancing altogether the holding of such experimental circles at all, except in private, and in the presence of experienced investigators. If they be held, it is imperative that they should be purged absolutely of the conditions which so readily lend themselves to fraud. But there are grave reasons for thinking that they are undesirable as *public exhibitions*. "A.P.S." set forth some of these in his last letter, and the experience of instructed Spiritualists will supply others. It has, most unfortunately, become a received idea that a medium will be defended by some crazy enthusiasts, no matter how mean the fraud committed, nor how palpable it be. It is this, quite as much as the frauds themselves, that has brought such flagrant discredit on public Spiritualism. The outside investigators, who gather their opinions from the journals, have come to believe that fraud is rife, for they see little else than newspaper comments on exposures and prosecutions. And, what is worse, they have come to believe that there is a large class of men, whose names are prominent among Spiritualists, who are always ready to bolster up imposture, to cloak deceit, and to find an excuse for the most mean and miserable fraud. So, in their eyes, Spiritualists are *participes criminis*, accessories after the fact, if not before, not ashamed of what to them should be sheer sacrilege. And such men ask, "How can these people believe what they profess? They and their phenomena are one vast sham!" It is this that, even more than repeated fraud, of which the *raison d'être* is not far to seek, discredits Spiritualism. And it is this that must be resolutely dealt with.

We do not know enough of mediumship to be rash in apportioning blame. We do not know how far responsibility attaches to those whom we recklessly and cruelly submit to conditions that apparently *invite* fraud. We do not know enough of the conditions under which materialisation is possible to venture dogmatically to prescribe them. But we can at least so place the medium that he will be exonerated from complicity. We can do our best to eliminate those dubious conditions which have been proven over and over again to lead to fraud and deceit. If this fraud be a mere cheat of a pretender to mediumship, we can prevent that sham. If it be a piece of deception perpetrated by low and deceiving Spirits, we can rescue the medium from such obsession by declining to provide the conditions which make it easy. Whatever source the fraud may have, we can and we must deal directly with it, by cutting directly at the conditions which foster it. And this we may do not only with a true regard for "delicately organised and highly sensitive" persons of whom we have lately heard so much; but in doing it we may righteously claim to be acting in the direct interest of honesty, truth, and the cause which is being stifled by repeated fraud. More than this. We shall directly raise for solution a question the moral import of which is vast. What right have we to expose our sensitives to these hideous risks, if the fraud have a Spirit-source? Who are the Spirits who so act? What is the

responsibility of those who encourage and provide means for their antics?

Owing to prolonged absence from the sources of knowledge, I have only just read in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, an excellent paper by W. Emmette Coleman, on "Spiritualism and its Scientific Analysis." Everything that he writes is worth attention, and there are, in this essay, some very striking criticisms and expressions of belief. Starting with the admission that there is very much in the current phases of Spiritualism to repel average scientists, and that, therefore, they are not to be blamed for declining to meddle with the unsavoury mess, he puts as a *per contra* the fact that "no instance is known of a person of scientific or philosophical attainments" who investigated Spiritualism without attaining conviction of the objective reality, if not of the spiritual origin of the phenomena. Mr. Coleman has apparently not heard of Mr. Moncure Conway, who once wrote to the *Spectator* to place himself in that category, which, as far as I know, he occupies in lonely isolation. Mr. Conway always excepted, the case is as Mr. Coleman puts it.

When he comes to classify psychical and spiritual phenomena he makes three divisions. (1) Those due to fraud (though it is hard to see how such are either spiritual or psychical, being due either to muscular contortion, sleight of hand, or elaborated imposture by aid of confederates). (2) Those properly called *psychical*, and due to the action of powers and forces resident in the human body. (3) Those properly called *spiritual*, and due to the action of disembodied or unembodied intelligence. The phenomena of the second class occur, he thinks, in the presence of a sensitive or *psychic*; those of the third class only in the presence of a fully developed *medium*. The distinction is plain. The psychic is but partially developed, and is subject to the influence of minds with which he comes into contact, or gives off what is in his own mind. The *medium* is so developed as to be amenable to the direct influence of Spirit, which keeps all mental influence in abeyance. Psychics abound, and through them come the distorted images, the half-truths, the confusion that has fallen on Spiritualism. The true medium is extremely rare, and through him, when found, comes the clear spiritual truth which carries its own proof of genuineness with it.

This view, just the antithesis of the Theosophical teaching, squares considerably with what I have observed. I am disposed to think that there is much to be said for it. At the time, now long past, when I was obtaining a great deal of instruction from what purported to be a spiritual source, and which I have no doubt was what it claimed to be, one of the constantly reiterated instructions was to maintain complete mental passivity. "It is in your mind to argue," would be written, and then the communications would cease. If I took a book and fixed my mind on it, the automatic writing would be resumed. For it was a peculiarity of the communications I received that I could never elicit them at will, or by the most urgent request, *unless what were deemed requisite conditions were to be had*. Of these, passivity, isolation, and physical health were most insisted on. When these were not to be had the writing would at once cease. It was a governing principle with the communicating intelligence not to give any message which would be tainted by admixture from any other source. The most distinctive messages were written when I was in a state of complete absorption, and I have no doubt whatever that they are untinged by any conscious thought of mine. I never had the faintest doubt as to the individuality of Imperator as separate from my own. And from the care and pains he took to keep the channel of communication pure, as well as from the experience I have since had of what Mr. Coleman calls psychical phenomena proper, I think that the distinction drawn is sound.

Mr. Coleman is severe on the "unscientific, unphilosophic, emotional" natures of the mass of Spiritualists, whence comes

most of the stuff that is talked in the name of Spiritualism. He says with great force and truth :—

“Spiritualism has always been crucified in the house of its friends ; it has been almost overwhelmed in the circling flood of credulity, superstition, folly, and fanaticism ; and at present, in addition to all these, it is nearly engulfed in the whirling maelstrom of fraud and knavery. No matter how much Spiritualists of a certain class may try to cover up these glaring defects and deny their actualities, bolster up fraud and folly by impugning the veracity and honesty of those anxious to purge Spiritualism of its present load of villainy and absurdity, the fact of their existence remains a self-evident truth, patent to every impartial, candid, unprejudiced mind.

“The conclusions and the line of conduct of this class of believers do not, however, constitute the entirety of Spiritualism ; if it did, the sooner the whole movement was overthrown, root and branch, the better for mankind. Besides these, there are some, let us be thankful, who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of unreason and stultiloquy,—‘it may be a remnant, weak and small,’—who endeavour to exercise careful discrimination in judging of all purported ‘spiritual manifestations,’ and who desire to apply the ‘scientific method’ in this as in all other departments of human inquiry and research. Applying this test, we find much in Spiritualism that will not bear the searching light of critical investigation, and so must be cast aside as undemonstrative of the basic fact of Spirit communion. What in Spiritualism will not endure the test of the most rigid scrutiny and analytical examination must fall ; and the sooner it falls, the better. But, after eliminating all explainable on other grounds, there still remains ‘a winnowed residuum’ of facts, giving, in my judgment, conclusive evidence of the impact of the spiritual world upon the material.”

I need not follow the evidence which in Mr. Coleman’s opinion establishes this great truth. Each mind will find it for itself. Each properly constituted and evenly balanced mind will have its seasons of inquisition, of searching of heart, when facts must be reviewed, theories resifted, and a new hearing given to what has before been put aside. It is well that it should be so. And from such a searching I believe there are few who have had sufficient experience, and who keep a level head, neither swayed by emotional enthusiasm nor shaken by discouraging evidences of fraud, who will not come out in agreement with Mr. Coleman, that there is pure gold among their pile of dross. There has been enough assault to shatter anything not founded on the rock of truth. There will be more ; but in the near future it is to be feared that Spiritualism’s chiefest foes will be found in its own household. It is these that have the greatest chance of dealing it a heavy blow by causing its very name to be associated in the minds of men with credulity, intemperate enthusiasm, and a suspicious readiness to cloak and defend fraud. They who commit themselves to such a course will, manifestly, denounce all attempts at cleansing the Augean stable. It is to be hoped that sufficient clear sense of right and wrong exists unperturbed among Spiritualists to prevent their success. But, even at the worst, Spiritualism does not consist of any essential element that they can touch ; and if they succeed in making what the world knows by that name a “scorn and a hissing,” they will not touch the fundamental facts on which the faith of thousands is grounded. Perhaps it is necessary that Spiritualism should pass through such a fiery trial. Perhaps the Spirit foes are in power. Who knows ? Yet Truth remains.

“M. A. (Oxon).”

STORY OF MRS. REVINGTON.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—The story of the two Mrs. Revingtons at Plymouth hearing a cry of “Mother! mother!” from the son in Egypt, and hearing next day that he had been shot in the streets of Alexandria, excited so much interest, that the denouement should be made known to students of psychical phenomena as widely as possible. Mrs. Revington writes me word that there was no truth in the story whatever. She never heard any such cry of “Mother!” as was represented, and her husband never met with any accident. One can only suppose that it was an elaborate hoax on the newspaper.—Yours, &c.,

H. WEDGWOOD.

The Dalston Association intend holding their first winter soirée on Tuesday evening, October 24th. Tickets one shilling each.

MR. J. J. MORSE’S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: Sunday, October 8th and 22nd, Goswell Hall. CARDIFF: Sunday, October 18th. KEIGHLEY: Sunday, October 29th.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[Advt.]

DARK AND CABINET SEANCES.

The circular letter, bearing the signatures of the editors of “LIGHT” and of the *Psychological Review*, which was sent out on the 16th inst., and a copy of which appeared in our last issue, has brought a large number of replies. Of these we give the most important in full :—

Mr. C. C. Massey.

“I assent generally to the suggestions contained in the circular issued by yourself and Mr. Farmer. But I think also that to any recommendations addressed to the public there should be added strong representations of the usually fallacious and nugatory character of ‘tests.’ I mean such as are imposed by the investigators or suggested by or through the medium. But for these I imagine the most credulous would not be imposed upon by ‘manifestations’ which did not carry with them intrinsic evidence of their genuine character. It is the belief that adequate precautions have been taken against simulation when this is not really the case that makes inexperienced or enthusiastic persons the victims of deception, and offers opportunities to the fraudulent medium. And I am inclined to think that this system may offer an obstacle to the evolution of true phenomena. I would also suggest the election of a representative Council of Spiritualists to decide upon and conduct the prosecution of persons pretending to be mediums in cases of undoubted fraud. I think if such proceedings were undertaken by Spiritualists it would have a very salutary effect both within and without the movement.”

Mr. F. Podmore.

“I have just received the joint circular from yourself and Mr. Farmer. I am very glad that you and he are taking action in the matter. I quite agree with the general tone of your recommendation. I think we should strive to cultivate such a tone of public feeling in the matter that dark séances, or any séances under imperfect test-conditions (*i.e.*, cabinet-séances of all kinds) amongst a promiscuous circle, should be regarded by Spiritualists themselves as culpably foolish, if not actually disreputable, as they are already regarded by the outside public.

“At the same time, as darkness and freedom from tests may, and conceivably do, aid the development of manifestations, I should not be prepared to discountenance dark séances amongst select private circles of permanent sitters, who know each other and the medium thoroughly well. I think a very wide distinction should be drawn between the two kinds of circles—the diligent and patient knot of investigators, and the promiscuous, motley (in the old sense) gathering of curiosity-hunters.

“I had intended to open up the subject at this evening’s Council meeting of the C.A.S.”

Mr. W. Eglinton.

“Replying to your circular of the 16th inst., my opinion is that professionalism in Spiritualism should be opposed in every shape and form. The methods of investigation at public circles are not only damaging to the reputation of the medium, but ridiculous in the eyes of the world. Put your veto on such proceedings ; let all Spiritualists carefully read and follow out the propositions contained in an admirable letter in ‘LIGHT’ for September 9th, signed by ‘C. C. M.’ upon the subject of ‘tests,’ and I feel confident that all mediums having the cause at heart will work in unison with Spiritualists to the desired end, thus giving rise to a newer and purer system of propagating Spiritualism. Whilst thus expressing myself on the question of professional mediumship, it should be distinctly understood I am entirely of opinion that if we grant the existence of an agency external to the medium, and by the efforts of which we hope to make converts, we have no earthly right to impose our conditions, whether of light or darkness, cabinet or no cabinet, without in the majority of instances consulting the view of the said agent. This latter essential I believe to be the only true method of harmonic investigation.”

Mr. T. Shorter, late Editor of the “Spiritual Magazine.”

“I quite approve of the suggestions in your circular of the 16th inst. They are good, as far as they go, but I fear that they do not go far enough, and that we shall never get to the root of this evil until we altogether discountenance professional mediumship for physical manifestations. I took this ground twenty years ago in the *Spiritual Magazine*, when this mischief was but just beginning to appear. More recently I delivered two addresses to the ‘Dalston Association’ on the same subject, and I again proposed to bring the question under the consideration of the late B.N.A.S., I think about two years ago, in reply to an invitation I received to read a paper to that body, but my offer

was declined. Had the question then been thoroughly ventilated, I think much of the scandal that has since arisen might have been averted. The adoption of your suggestion would, I think, considerably mitigate the evil, but would not eradicate it: something more than the pruning-knife is required. However, I cannot here argue the question, but every year's experience deepens and confirms the conviction I have so long entertained upon this matter, and supplies only too many fresh illustrations of its truth."

Mr. J. P. Turner, Leamington.

"Your circular is well timed; some action should certainly be taken by Spiritualists to check this degenerating tendency of dark sances with paid mediums. It seems as if there was some malign influence that leads them astray in their course of deception, and then comes the *facilis descensus* that brings such discredit on the cause.

"If they had any sense or self-control at all, one would think that genuine mediums, such as Miss Wood and Firman and others have been, would have seen the inevitable ruin to their character and prospects, which a course of deception must bring sooner or later. I confess I am puzzled how to account for it.

"I shall heartily support such a course as you propose to follow under these circumstances, only wishing it could go farther and restrain public mediumship altogether. I mean that if Spiritualists could combine to patronise no medium, except those who earn their living in some other way, that would be very desirable; but it is a difficult rule to lay down, and would be sure to find exceptions. Whatever in the judgment of yourself and advisers is decided to be done will have my hearty sympathy and support."

Mr. W. P. Adshead, Belper.

"I quite endorse the suggestions of the circular, 'keep the medium in view, and let the light be sufficient for careful investigation.' I believe the cage by means of which we obtained such splendid results at Belper is still intact; if so, it shall be at the service of your committee should they desire to use it. Having the medium secured inside is about equivalent to being in full view, as it is quite impossible for human skill to escape from the enclosure. At all events something must be done, and that at once, to separate Spiritualism from the disgrace brought upon it by these exposures.

"Any plan having this object in view will have my approval and best wishes for its success."

Rev. W. Miall.

"I heartily agree as to the expediency of some such course as you suggest. You will allow me to express the opinion that in order to meet the requirements of the case, and effectually to lift from 'The Cause' the opprobrium which is crushing it, any advice which may be given should be of a kind suitable for public advertisement, and therefore most stringent. Feebleness in reprehension of the evils sought to be arrested would, I think, be more injurious than silence and inaction. The following seem to me to be demanded:—(1) A full admission of the prevalence—the frequent occurrence—of gross deception. (2) An avowal of the conviction of its extreme heinousness. (3) A statement of the possibility, in some cases, of the medium being blameless. (4) Urgent counsel that in view of the liability of even intelligent 'sitters' to be imposed on, and so to come to lend their countenance to fraud, all results obtained through professional mediums in dark or dimly-lighted sances, or when the entire person of the medium is placed beyond the possibility of sight or touch, should be regarded by all Spiritualists as tabooed, and that the support and adhesion of those Spiritualists who fail so to regard them be deprecated and repudiated. I venture thus to express my impressions as to what is needed, relying on your kindness to attribute my doing so to interest in the subject."

Dr. Geo. Wyld.

"In reply to your request for my views on dark sances for materialisations I would say:—

"1. I consider that I have obtained, through the senses of sight and feeling, demonstrations that Spirits can manufacture forms apparently identical with solid human hands.

"2. I have never personally received any demonstration that the entire human form can be thus manufactured, although, if hands can be made, the presumption is that solid forms in the likeness of the entire body can likewise be made.

"The innumerable instances of the doubles of living beings and the ghosts of departed human beings appearing in the light, I regard as unanswerable facts; and so the presumption is

that such forms may also sometimes appear at dark sances; but, so far as my experience goes, I have never obtained any demonstration of this, as the figures which I have seen at these sances might all have been composed of muslin, or by the medium either consciously tricking, or of the entranced medium unconsciously tricking.

"4. Those who, for scientific purposes, investigate Spiritualistic phenomena, need not abolish darkness as a factor in these experiments if they take rational precautions, but those who for idle or credulous curiosity sit at dark sances, must thus not only themselves be continually befooled, but they are guilty of assisting in the encouragement of fraud."

Mr. T. Graham Ponton.

"Many thanks for issuing your circular, every word of which I most cordially endorse. I have long been of opinion that we Spiritualists have been lacking in bringing about an investigation, thorough and accurate, which shall prove to the world at large either that for years, despite the evidence of our senses, we have been the victims of a monstrous delusion carried out by a series of exceptionally clever conjurers, or, as I believe, despite exposures of mediums, that the Spirits of the departed can and do hold communion with us. I am but a Spiritualist of fifteen years' standing, but have seen a good deal of phenomena produced through mediums, and also of so-called exposures of mediumship worked by professional conjurers. I venture, therefore, to make a suggestion, and it is this:—A committee of the Central Association of Spiritualists for the purpose of investigation should be formed, consisting of twelve members, all tried and experienced Spiritualists, among whom there should be an admixture of ladies; that they should meet once or twice a week with a medium with whose materialisations previous experience has been had; that the room should be fairly well lighted, and the form of the medium always in view of the sitters. It must, however, it seems to me, be understood that the members of such a circle should make it a duty to be present each time of sitting, and to wait patiently the development of events. If it be three years the time will be well expended, if a dozen mediums are tried in succession; money will be well expended in proving either that the thousands of Spiritualists on the face of the globe are or are not the victims of a delusion."

M. A. (Oxon.)

"There is no reasonable doubt that reiterated exposures of fraud are dealing a death-blow to Spiritualism as a public and popular movement. Many who are recent investigators are coming to believe that fraud is mixed up so inextricably with all the manifestations, that it is at least questionable whether there are any free from it. Such will soon abandon the profitless task of endeavouring to sift out what may be, after all trouble, worthless.

"I have nothing material to add to what I have repeatedly urged on Spiritualists. I would abolish the cabinet as a pest-house of deceit, and abandon illusory tests connected with it. If a medium wants to cheat, a cabinet provides the means. If a medium is entirely honest, I consider tying in a dark cabinet to be a deceptive test, even when skilfully performed. Not one person in fifty can tie a woman so that she cannot get out of the bonds by normal means, if she is a practised trickster. No human being can tie a medium so that he cannot be released by abnormal means.

"The only test worth countenancing is a clear view of the medium during the whole sance, and, of course, in light sufficient for exact observation. And investigation should lead up to a view of the medium and the Psychic Form simultaneously.

"I do not anticipate that promiscuous circles will sit with sufficient patience to attain success under these conditions. It is therefore a question whether any such circles should be encouraged to seek for such manifestations at all. I am strongly disposed to think that materialisation is too difficult and delicate a matter to be obtained in the wholesale way in which public mediums profess to obtain it. The temptation to resort to illicit means when the legitimate fail is enormous, and no medium should be exposed to it.

"There are also grave reasons for believing that there are dangers of other kinds connected with promiscuous circles for materialisation, as now held, which it is the part of wisdom for Spiritualists to avoid.

"I, therefore, incline to urge that the phenomenon of materialisation should not be sought for at all in promiscuous circles, but that it should be evoked in select circles only,

composed of experienced Spiritualists, and without the use of illusory tests.

"There can, I think, be no two opinions as to the necessity for promptly abandoning methods of experiment which set a premium on fraud, and which have proved well nigh fatal to public Spiritualism.

"I confine myself to the points on which you ask my advice, though there are other particulars in which public Spiritualism needs purgation."

Mr. S. C. Hall.

"I take the same view as that taken by the two gentlemen whose respected names are appended to the circular; although I do not quite clearly understand what their proposal is.

"I abominate these so-called 'materialisations' or 'form-manifestations,' and regard them, perhaps all, as frauds. The two, and only two, I have witnessed, I more than suspected to be frauds. All rational (to use no stronger term) Spiritualists should, I think, ignore, and abjure, and condemn them.

"I strongly object to public sittings in the dark; they not only tempt and invite to fraud, but suggest the idea of fraud (and justifiably so) when there is no fraud.

"I limit this view to 'outsiders.' Dark sittings should never be permitted where 'strangers' (doubters, or neophytes) are present; although, as an advanced Spiritualist, I do not object to them for advanced Spiritualists, as I believe disembodied Spirits can better bring themselves into strong, palpable, and convincing communication in darkness than in light. I can effectually sustain this position, but to do so will take space.

"The medium should always be kept in full view, or both his or her hands should be held, the holders having the implicit confidence of the party. A cabinet, or a screened-off corner, I consider a sure indication of contemplated fraud. In fact the more advanced Spiritualists should always be prepared to test results with suspicious scrutiny.

"The atrociously wicked frauds which have been recently exposed and reported, no more prove that there is no veritable evidence that the 'dead' constantly communicate with the 'living' than the production of false coins proves the non-existence of the true.

"I do not know that I can say more within brief space.

"If I believe that good Spirits, God's loving and comforting messengers, are always about and with us (which, thank God, I do as firmly believe as that I am now writing with my right hand, with pen and ink, on white paper), I must believe that evil Spirits are as perpetually striving to influence—eager to teach doctrines of devils—and that such influence directs and controls wicked persons whose blasphemous frauds postpone the benefits to be derived from the holy lessons of true Spiritualism.

"Exposure is but a slight punishment for an enormous crime; yet that may do something. I honour the motive, and admire the courage, of the Spiritualist, Mr. Cade, at Peterborough. If you induce all Spiritualists to 'try the Spirits' in this way you will, I consider, effectually arrest and crush such a system of fraud, especially hideous and revolting to all who hold the faith for which so many good and great men and women are grateful to an abundantly merciful God, by whom a new light has been given to mankind."

Messrs. James Robertson and J. McG. Munro, Glasgow.

"I duly received your letter, and, subsequent to perusal, handed it to a friend, and we desire jointly to express our thorough appreciation of the attempt that is making, or proposed to be made, to reform the conditions which have hitherto by a great number of Spiritualists been deemed absolutely indispensable to the production of 'form' manifestations, but which, in the light of recent experiences, have been proved worse than useless to subserve the end in view in their adoption, viz., the demonstration of the reality of a Spirit-world, and the power of the inhabitants thereof to make themselves physically discernible.

"There can be no questioning the fact, that all the real evidence thus obtained is practically nullified and robbed of its importance for investigators by the revelations of such frauds as that attempted in the house of Mr. Catling, of Peterborough; while the cry against dishonesty on the part of mediums is unavailing. Doubtless, for some time to come, many will ventilate their indignation against Miss Wood, whilst others will be found to take up the cudgels in her defence—each side having a *raison d'être* for its contention. The essential point at issue, however, is not Miss Wood's act, nor the motive or influences which impelled her, but rather the state of things which render it possible for such frauds to be enacted.

"Surely it is time for Spiritualists to wake up to a recognition of the dangers attendant upon the practice of sitting for physical manifestations in almost total, if not absolute darkness, and to dispense for ever with cabinets, and all other questionable paraphernalia. Should a reform in this direction be accomplished, no doubt we should hear of 'successful' séesances less frequently; but then the winnowing would and could only affect the spurious and fraudulent manifestations, the residuum being thoroughly satisfactory, and admitting of no cavil. Even should the abolition of cabinets, and the substitution of light for darkness, result in the total lapse of the phenomena of form manifestation, no harm would accrue to the cause, for it would then have been proved that it required thoroughly untrustworthy conditions to produce them; and, consequently, whether genuine or the reverse, such phenomena were *ipso facto* worthless as evidence.

"We think it would be a wise proceeding to send a 'carefully worded statement' broadcast amongst societies and individual Spiritualists, with a view to the revival and reform of the method adopted in holding physical séesances, as by this means those who are unacquainted with Spiritualism, but ready to investigate, might have wiser advice imparted to them by those who know the subject and its difficulties.

"You invite suggestions, but we cannot think of any better method of achieving the results aimed at than those set down in your circular letter. Spiritualists ought clearly to understand that they are helping neither themselves nor the movement by adopting certain methods of research; while those who are not yet Spiritualists should have due warning and proper instructions concerning the false and the true way of proceeding in search of physical and spiritual truth.

Mrs. Hardinge-Britten.

"GENTLEMEN,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 16th inst., to which I hasten to reply as fully as the present moment will permit. You may judge how deeply I am personally interested in the subject-matter of your circular when I remind you that I have given the last twenty-three years of my life, with all I am and all I have, to the promulgation of what I know to be the truths of Spiritualism. In thus helping to build up a noble cause I have deemed myself amply rewarded by witnessing its triumphant acceptance in many parts of the world by tens of thousands of capable thinkers. I now see this work—to me so holy and sacred—degraded by imposture, and repudiated by the most respectable portion of the community, chiefly on account of the notorious frauds practised upon it in the name of Mediumship. If I have of late forborne to take any public part in a movement justly and necessarily tabooed by the classes whose influence is most needed to sustain it, it is because I have felt that my single voice was insufficient to stem the tide of fanaticism and credulity which ever seemed ready to shield the impostor, but exercised no charity for the victims imposed upon; neither could I any longer, with respect to myself, subject my remonstrances to the virulent denunciations which are visited upon those who dare to ask for test conditions in the investigation of so unprecedented a subject as Spirit communion. It is not that I fear these ever ready denouncers, but like many other of my most esteemed associates, however willing I have been, and still am, to debate the proven facts of Spiritualism with the enemies of the cause, I shrink with aversion from contest with the foes of 'our own household,' especially those who descend to abuse instead of argument, and mistake vituperation for logic. When I find any well-conducted movement bent on redeeming our noble cause from the vultures that seek only to devour it, I am ready with heart and effort to take my part therein; and in the anticipation that such a desirable result may grow out of your endeavour, gentlemen, I offer you the following suggestions as the fruits of my own personal observation and experience:—

"First, however, I would kindly take exception to those passages in your circular which seem to lay the burden of the imposition practised in 'form-materialisation,' solely upon 'professional mediums.' I am in possession of abundant evidence to show that in this country, as in Holland and other places, some of the grossest impositions have been practised in the simulation of the above-named phenomena by *non-professional* mediums; and without attempting to analyse the motives of either class, I am in a position to show that both have availed themselves of the equivocal conditions furnished by cabinets, darkness, and the credulity of those around them, for practising cruel and heartless deception.

"In reference also to your fourth paragraph, wherein you plead

for the exclusion of the public 'in dark circles,' I would ask, whom you would propose to admit *but the public?* To me it has always seemed as if the chief value in holding circles was to convince the public of the truth of Spirit communion. When modern Spiritualism was first known it found the whole world sceptical, and the millions now convinced of its truth have become converted from their scepticisms chiefly by circles. I have often read with astonishment the plea put forth by Spiritualists for the exclusion from the circle of all but 'sympathisers,' 'true Spiritualists,' &c.; in other words, of all who would not accept whatever was presented without question, or who might be likely to expose palpable fraud.

"Now, if Spirit circles are only to be held for the delectation or amusement of 'true Spiritualists,' any attempt to redeem Spiritualism from its ill-odour in public opinion is supererogatory and the movement itself must end with the 'sympathising' few of this generation. If, on the contrary, the aim of those Spiritualists who have realised the worth of their belief be to convince others of the same salvatory truth, then is one of the best methods to be found in circles, and those circles which are not fit for the public may well be deemed equally unfit for private gatherings. I know the outcry that will be raised against this position, and the assertion that 'sensitives' require 'special conditions and special influences' around them, &c., &c. In answer to well-worn platitudes of this character, permit me to cite some of the experiences of the early mediums, with nearly all of whom I have been intimately acquainted, and associated in circles. The Misses Fox of Hydesville, Messrs. George Redman, J. B. Conklin, Henry Slade, Charles Foster, and numerous other powerful physical mediums, have sat heterogeneously for all comers in public, as well as private, circles for years. Their best tests have generally been given to sceptics, strangers, and very often to bitter opposers. J. C. Mansfield, Lizzie Keizer, E. C. Wilson, and many of the best American Seers have given their best tests in large public audiences. Mrs. Ada Foye for eight months gave public tests at the end of my lectures in San Francisco, two years ago, to over a thousand people, by rapping, writing, seeing, and clair-audience, the hall being brilliantly lighted, and multitudes of sceptics present. All through America and Australia this same lady has given the same class of tests in public and private without mistake, failure, or the shadow of suspicion during a period of twenty-five years. Miss Laura Edmonds, Mrs. Sweet, several other ladies, and I myself have sat as *non-professional* mediums, giving tests to all comers. I sat in this way, in the commencement of my public mediumship, for eighteen months in New York City, and, being very enthusiastic in my work, admitted strangers of all classes; and neither my co-workers nor myself have found that sceptical or 'heterogeneous influences' marred our work, or prevented the Spirits from giving tests. On the contrary, the Spirits were equal to all demands; and though, now and then, some rarely exceptional person might bring with him a peculiar influence, wholly antagonistic to Spirit power, and impossible to overcome or explain, the general rule with us all was, the stronger sceptic the more striking were the evidences of Spirit power and presence. Miss Kate Fox, now Mrs. Jencken, held public circles, made free to the public by the generosity of Mr. Horace Day, under the room in which my séances were held, and I had frequently seen the apartment crowded by scoffing sceptics, as well as by the strangers that sat around her, but I never heard her make one mistake, or failure, in giving correct tests, through rapping and writing. But, it may be argued, the conditions requisite for 'form materialisation' differ essentially from all other phases of phenomena, and imperatively demand cabinets, darkness, or the isolation of the medium. Once more I call *experience* into court, as my witness, to see if this position is irrefutably proved.

"I have known Mr. D. D. Home for many years, and witnessed all his most marvellous and striking phases of mediumship. In my own house, and those of Mr. Howitt, Mr. S. C. Hall, and numerous other friends, I have seen, felt, and been caressed by hands of many sizes, and conditions of warmth, and density. I have also seen arms attached to them, and some faces, *visible to all present*, and apparently, to sight and touch, as human as my own; and yet I have never sat with Mr. Home on his own premises, in darkness, nor when he was isolated in any way from everyone in the room. I have sat with Mrs. Underhill (Leah Fox), and in her presence, and that of Robert Dale Owen and William Lloyd Garrison, luminous forms, one of whom we all recognised as Mr. Underhill's father, came through the door and halted in our sight, the lights

burning by which I had been reading aloud, and the medium, Mrs. Underhill, clinging to me in terror, but neither isolated nor in a cabinet. In the presence of Messrs. Slade, Foster, Redman, and Conklin, I, and scores of other still living witnesses, have seen hands and feet, from the size of infants to those of giants, formed and dissolved before our eyes, and that in brilliantly-lighted rooms.

"I could re-duplicate examples by hundreds, if necessary, to prove that hands and portions of forms have been exhibited and made palpable to sight and touch in broad light without cabinets, and in circles of heterogeneous and sceptical sitters. Of course, we are in no position to ask why the same conditions could not suffice for the materialisation of the entire form as well as a part; but we, at least, have a right to say, when so much has been manifested, and such illimitable possibilities are predicated for future unfoldment, under conditions which admitted of no shadow of chance for deception, that neither Spirit nor mortal has the right to ask investigators to accord belief to investigations differing only in degree, but not in quality, which are produceable only under the most equivocal conditions, and which place the inquirer at the mercy of those who are constantly being proved to be remorseless and unscrupulous tricksters.

"Spiritualism does not depend for its proofs on form materialisation only; and however wonderful and interesting such a phenomenon might be, if it can only be given under the most equivocal and doubtful conditions, better to dispense with it altogether than throw a priceless pearl to the dogs, simply to gratify a few persons, who are contented to endure the pernicious and often disreputable conditions of the dark circle, and that at the risk of catering to the behoof of unprincipled impostors. I have read with sufficient attention all the attempts to excuse the base frauds that have been perpetrated, and the plea of 'evil Spirits,' 'unconscious trances,' or the malign influences of heterogeneous sitters, &c., &c. To all this I have but to ask whether the mediums were 'unconscious,' or under the influence of the wicked expositors, when they bought, made, and carefully prepared the paraphernalia by which they proposed to delude their victims.

"I have myself endured the martyrdom, and borne the cross which every unpopular cause puts upon the shoulders of its propagandists. Both in public and in private I have endured persecution, desertion, ingratitude, and scorn, and none have ever felt or manifested, more kindly than I have, all the sympathy which my fellow labourers deserve; nay, it is in my resolve to stand by them and protest against the pharasaical raid made upon them, under the pretence that they alone of all mankind should give life, time, and service *for nothing*, that I have determined never to lecture even, without the fair compensation that honest labour should ensure in every department of usefulness. I would demand, besides justice to mediums, kindness, courtesy, and special sympathy for special conditions of sensitiveness; but that which I demand for them, I surely have a right to demand also for the investigator, and if I feel just indignation towards those who fail to treat mediums with the utmost impartiality and justice, am I to have no pity on those who come to the circle with bleeding hearts, and in the agonising hope to be restored to their banished dead, only to be mocked with rags, tinsel, masks, and puppets? There is yet another and a very solemn plea to be made for pure, honest, unadulterated Spirit intercourse. There are wild, monstrous, and wholly unsupported theories growing up, on the new soil of Spiritualism, like fungi, ready to eat the life out of the movement, quench its most momentous revealments, and substitute hideous ghouls and phantoms for the immortal existences with whom Spiritualism has brought us face to face. And what is the corrective to these fantastic and groundless fantasies? Nothing under the high heavens but the *FACTS* of Spirit communion. Let a set of remorseless swindlers take our facts away, and we are at the mercy of as many wild theories as there are sects in theology.

"There is much more to be said, gentlemen, in behalf of your attempted movement, and in relation to its best methods of practicalisation, but although I can hardly feel that I have written one word too much on so important a subject, I dare not press my individual opinion further on your attention. I can only bid you God-speed, and assure you that in your attempts to purify and elevate our noble cause from the degradation which human folly and wickedness have put upon it, you may command to the fullest extent of my power, yours very faithfully,

"EMMA HARDINGE-BRITTEN."

(Continued on page 439.)

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

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

We beg our Correspondents to have patience, and to stay their hands. We have already more contributions than we shall be able to use for some time to come.

THE CRISIS REACHED—WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

We make no apology to our readers for having devoted so large a portion of this week's "LIGHT" to the letters which have been received in response to the circular recently issued by ourselves, in conjunction with the editor of the *Psychological Review*, and a copy of which we reprinted in our last number. We felt that something like a crisis had come in the history of Spiritualism in this country; that fraud—or at least the suspicion and semblance of fraud—had become so obvious a factor in connection with public mediumship as to bring down upon our cause and all connected with it so much righteous obloquy and scorn as to endanger its healthy growth and development; and we resolved, therefore, to rouse our friends, if possible, to a full sense of the evil and to a resolute determination to grapple with and destroy it. Our work, so far, has been amply justified by the result. A careful perusal of the communications which we this week have the pleasure of laying before our readers, cannot fail to convey to them the very gratifying assurance that a large number of the most thoughtful, earnest, and experienced Spiritualists are not only ready, but anxious, to co-operate in the honourable purpose of sweeping away from our midst not merely the appearances but the very opportunities of fraud. Of course they will not altogether succeed. That is not to be expected. But they can do enough to make it manifest to the world that they have no sympathy with deception; they can do enough to demonstrate that Spiritualism is something better and higher than either delusion or charlatanry; they can do enough, in short, to rehabilitate its shattered reputation.

With but very rare exceptions, our correspondents are agreed that *something* must be done for the attainment of the important ends which we have indicated. Naturally, they differ a little as to what and how. But even these differences, we venture to think, are the result of slight misapprehensions. Some, for instance—whom no one would suspect of entertaining any other than the most profound detestation of imposture—remind us that in the conduct of their private circles they cannot have conditions imposed upon them. We allude to this protest in order to assure our friends, once for all, that to our own mind there has never been present any purpose of "imposing," or attempting to impose, conditions upon anybody, much less upon private and family circles. We have sought rather to create amongst Spiritualists a healthy sentiment which shall be mostly brought to bear upon sésances with professional mediums—to which strangers or neophytes are admitted—with the view of discountenancing any conditions which can possibly afford opportunities for fraud. Mrs. Hardinge-Britten—whose letter is replete with wise and excellent suggestions—has also fallen into error in supposing that we would exclude the public from sésances of every kind. A careful perusal of our circular will shew that we had no such desire, and that our suggestion had reference to "dark circles" only; and in her very valuable communication Mrs. Britten herself clearly demonstrates that for bringing conviction to inquirers, "dark circles" are by no means necessary, and therefore by no means desirable.

Vexed and discouraged by a recent event, some of our correspondents have not hesitated to denounce Miss Wood in very strong terms, doubting her mediumship altogether; while others give explicit assurances that they have had sésances with

her at which "forms" have been manifested while she has been in full view of the sitters. We do not care to discuss the question whether, when seized by Mr. Cade, at Peterborough, Miss Wood was consciously cheating or whether she was not. It is more to the purpose now to consider carefully how cheating, and every appearance of cheating, can be successfully prevented in the future. If it be true that Miss Wood has been in the past a successful medium for materialised "forms," while sitting outside the cabinet, in the light, and in full view of the circle, how is it that these conditions have been allowed to give place to darkness and isolation, and is there any reason in the world why there should not be henceforth a rigid adherence to the better method? Miss Wood offers to sit with a representative committee of Spiritualists, under *any* conditions they may unanimously approve, and to "stand or fall by the result." We hope her offer will be accepted. If she succeeds in clearly establishing the fact that she can obtain satisfactory manifestations while she is in full view of the circle, it will help to dissipate the very natural apprehension that all her sésances in the past have been deceptions—whether consciously so or not; and it will leave no excuse for darkness and isolation in the future. But, whether she is successful or not—if she fails and if every other medium fails—one thing is clear and imperative, that all conditions which leave an opening and a temptation to fraud must henceforth be severely condemned. Better—a thousand times better—that all physical manifestations should cease, than that professional mediums should continue to sit under circumstances which in every case will sooner or later most assuredly bring the cause into ignominy and disgrace!

We are strongly tempted to touch on some other aspects of the question before us which occur to us as we write, but we must be content to leave it here for the present. The Central Association of Spiritualists, as our readers are aware, have taken the matter in hand, and we have every confidence that they will deal with it prudently and, at the same time, effectively. They will no doubt take counsel with other societies, and with the best and wisest men within our ranks, and we sincerely trust and believe that their conclusions will be such as to command the cordial assent of all who have the best interests of Spiritualism at heart. Should this be so, we may encourage the blessed hope that our darkest days have at length ended, and that a bright, cheerful, and unsullied future is before us.

INSPIRATION AND THOUGHT-READING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am fully convinced, both by experience and reason, that the true solution of the problems of inspiration and thought-reading, is to be found, not in the direction indicated by Dr. Wyld, "Trident," Miss Havergal, or "T.C.E."; but in that desiderated by Mr. Barlow, and positively asserted in "The Perfect Way." For myself, I need no fuller or clearer statement than is contained in the first portion of the third Appendix of that book, to the effect that it is to the spirit of the man himself, and not to any extraneous influences, that the only true illumination is due. It is no doubt the case, in the spirit no less than in the body, that one may receive suggestions from personalities other than one's own. But to require for the phenomena in question such interference from without as postulated by Dr. Wyld and his co-believers, is, practically, to ignore the fact that man himself not merely has, but is a Spirit, and does not necessarily lose his spiritual powers by his investment with a material body. The human organism is not, as these writers seem to suppose, a mere instrument dependent upon any chance wandering influences which may alight upon it. It is the peculiar *habitat* and mode of manifestation of an incarnated portion of Divinity, and it is through the unfoldment within him of the powers of this, his own fixed, indwelling Spirit, that he finds his true inspiration, and not through the suppression of this in favour of strangers. And yet even more than this. Even where under the overshadowing of some separate Spirit—often it may be the phantom of one of his own past selves—he finds fresh and valuable knowledge, it is due, not to actual suggestion proceeding from such entity, but to the fact that under such magnetism he is lifted into a sphere of his own system not ordinarily accessible to him, and enabled to regain the forgotten perceptions and recollections of his own soul. Such is the nature and method of "inspiration"; the quality varying according to the degree of purity of the individual's mind and life. Thought-reading is equally due to the action of the Spirits themselves of the persons concerned; where in full affinity, they can reach each other's minds directly, and without aid from aught exterior agency.

CANTAB.

"THE PERFECT WAY."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In your number of Saturday, the 9th September, I find two letters, one from Dr. George Wyld, M.D., and another from Mrs. Penny, in both of which my name appears in full, with a very apparent stigma attached to it—in the first, that of "failing to see in the teachings of Christ Jesus the most perfect nourishment for all those souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness": and, in the second, that I welcome the Angel of "Knowledge" as the herald of a *new* Gospel.

I beg of you to afford me space for a few words in self-defence, and in defence of the truth, in reply to these two letters.

To the first I reply that I know of no higher teaching than that of our Lord and Saviour, **THE TRUTH**, as it is in Christ Jesus: and that I *do* see in it "the most perfect Theosophy which the human mind can conceive, and the most perfect nourishment for all those souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness—the teachings, in fact, of the (most) 'Perfect Way' to purity, unselfishness, love, truth, light, and spiritual knowledge." It has, however, often been said that a person gets from all teaching that which he brings to it—in other words, only they who *have* can receive, or in still more Divine words, "Whosoever hath to him shall be given; and he shall have more abundance."

It is, therefore, not my fault, but my supreme happiness that I am able to find a far deeper meaning in the blessed words of the Great Teacher than that which is conveyed by them to those who do not see their esoteric meaning, or are unable to read deeper than the letter. And it is because I find so very much in those Divine teachings which is so evidently not perceived by the generality of those who hold forth in the name of Christ, that I welcome and hail with delight the advent of a Book which makes known so much of that deeper and more interior meaning of the holy and blessed words which has been until now only given to the very few to perceive and understand.

I allude, of course, to "The Perfect Way to the Finding of Christ;" for as Mrs. Penny very thoughtfully asks: "Have the hungry spirits of our day attained that rest for their souls, or quenched their thirst from the 'water of life' that He offers? have they found the peace which He bequeathed to all who deny themselves, taking up their cross daily, and following Him?" Alas! no, they have not—as Mrs. Penny most truly suggests, and yet His *words* have now been publicly taught for more than fifteen hundred years.

This, then, may be the very reason the Great Ruler of all events has judged that the time has *now* arrived, (the time, times, and half a time specified having been completed) to send farther light upon these Divine teachings, to reveal a little more of the hidden mysteries therein contained, to the growing children of earth, by lifting another veil, (from *re-velare*, or Revelation), which is precisely what the one whom Mrs. Penny designates the "Angel of Knowledge" has now come to do—not to teach a *new* Gospel however, or one, as she says, "widely differing" from that taught and lived on earth by the Holy One, whom I believe in and love, as reverently and devotedly as she does, but to put us on the track to find again that path which is the **WAY**, the truth, and the life, and which we have disputed and argued about so long that the very words in which they were given to us have become so hackneyed among us that people fail to understand the full import of their esoteric meaning, and they have been so perverted and distorted that the very One who sacrificed His life to point out **THE WAY**, the life, and the truth, has now become a barrier to those who seek it, and by Mrs. Penny's own showing few Christians have as yet found it.

This, then, is the good that the interpretations of the Mysteries of God are destined to do in this end of the nineteenth century of Christianity—viz., to put Christians in the *way* of finding Christ, by taking Him from the tomb of history, where they have laid Him, and making Him a living fact in each man's soul, ever present and ready to save.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit who is now working amongst us, and who has inspired such books as "THE PERFECT WAY," "THE NEW MAN," and that most lovely, perfect, and holy of books "MORGENRÖTHE."

The central spirit of the man is the God of the man, and the "New Man" built up by the operation of that Holy Spirit in the soul, is the Christ, his Saviour, and is the only "Divine Man" who can avail him aught. What Jesus did was to afford an illustration of the process indispensable to everyone; as an

"Elder Brother" He led the way, He did not make the way; it is there eternally, open to all. For all is in each, Heaven, hell, God, devil, Virgin-Mother and Christ, Judas, and all the rest. That from which we have to be saved is our own lower self, and its vexations of God, and that by which we are saved is by our own *re-birth* upon the higher plane of the Spirit, by means of our co-operation with the Holy Spirit, that is, not an historical personage, but God in us.

It seems to me Mrs. Penny allows herself to condemn too hastily, perhaps through carelessness in forming judgment, or perhaps through prejudice, when she *insinuates* a want of practical acceptance of the revelation from on high already vouchsafed to us, and her surprise that the Angel of "Knowledge" (or the Gnosis) should be welcomed as the herald of better times, through the wider dissemination of the deep esoteric truths contained in the Gospel, which have hitherto been kept hidden from the unripe understanding of the children, when Christ Himself told us eighteen hundred years ago that He had "other things" to tell us which we could not then bear, and that for this reason He spoke in parables, that seeing we might hear, and *not* understand.

At that time only three, Peter, James, and John, were able to understand and receive the deeper interpretation, and therefore He gave it to them alone. But eighteen hundred years have probably ripened the human understanding, when now these interior meanings are not only permitted to be given publicly, but even **COMMANDED** to be taught. Aye! for so it is, and I do not advance so much unadvisedly; but I do most earnestly warn all my Christian brothers and sisters from persecuting them through ignorance or through prejudice, *lest they should be found to be fighting against God.*

The "knowledge" we exalt as necessary to salvation is the knowledge of things spiritual, *i.e.*, of God, and God's method, and we insist that to attain this it is necessary to be so absolutely humble as to suppress utterly the outer and lower self—whereas the knowledge represented as causing the Fall, was the knowledge of things material—in other words, that intercourse with matter which comes of fostering the lower self, and invokes, not *humility*, but pride.

I am aware there are many self-supposed Christians who still cling to their idol, material and historical, and tangible to sense, and who will, therefore, still cling to the letter of the Word, although warned that it "killeth," rather than accept the Spiritual interpretation now given, and they will, therefore, still insist upon what they call the historic method of "Redemption by the Lord Christ," as if the new creature required within, and in the present, could be performed by one existing without and in the past! and they may even call "anti-Christian" the revelation whereby the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, seeks to abolish for ever an idolatry so gross and pernicious. For it is because of this very doctrine, that men can be saved by some one without them, instead of by their own intelligent and voluntary co-operation with the Divine Spirit within them (as Jesus Himself has saved), that Christianity hitherto has been an apparent failure.

For those who cling to an idol, of course the teaching is poisoned which robs them of their idol, and bids them "worship God only." In thus putting between man and God some one, or something, extraneous to both man and God, they shew themselves to be under the dominion of what are called Astral Spirits. These Spirits ever insist upon the immensity of the interval between God and man, and so put between them another man, or "Man-God," or a bevy of angels, these angels being of their own order and fellow-workers. Thus both are essentially anti-Christian, without, however, being aware of it, and this through want of that spiritual "knowledge" which is now being so liberally bestowed; as it is said in Lecture VIII., 47, of "THE PERFECT WAY to the Finding of Christ"; and the holders of this anti-Christian doctrine will denounce as anti-Christian this true doctrine, that which the Bible everywhere insists on, namely, the presence and efficacious working of God in man himself, without any third party whatever, of such working *the Christ being the product.* And thus will this Gospel of Interpretation, when it shall be fully comprehended and received, succeed in taking Christ from the tomb of history and restoring Him as the ever-living Christ to the world.

MARIE CAITHNESS.

WE are requested to state that Miss C. E. Wood desires all letters to be addressed to her at "Post Office, Cardiff," until further notice.

**SUPERSENSUOUS PERCEPTION AND
PROPHETIC DREAMS.**

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Professor Barrett, in "LIGHT," has asked for an accurate version of an incident reported about two months ago in a Plymouth paper (the *Western Mercury*), and copied into the London papers. Being at Exeter when the paragraph appeared, I went on to Plymouth with a letter of introduction from a friend to the proprietor of the *Mercury*, hoping to get the exact evidence as far as possible at first hand for the Society for Psychological Research. The proprietor of the paper introduced me to the editor, from whom I learned that the matter was already the subject of a correspondence between himself and another member of our Society, in whose hands I should have been quite satisfied to leave it. The editor informed me that since the publication of the account in his paper one of the women who had made the statement on which it was founded, had called upon him, and had stated that they had received no official information of the death of their relative, the petty officer at Alexandria, from the Admiralty, as they almost certainly would, had the fact been so. Although I suspected this to belong to another class of cases, in which the anxiety or distress of living persons has been simultaneously communicated to friends at a distance, there was no chance of establishing this by evidence without the testimony of the man himself as to what was happening to him at the time his voice was heard. Curiously enough, this man's name was included in a list of killed at Alexandria sent to the editor by the naval correspondent of the paper, but which had not been published when the letter of Mr. Revington giving the women's statement, was received.

Possibly some further and more particular information might now be obtainable; and the "vexatious fact" (as another investigator of those things has described it) that the man was not dead should not prevent further inquiry, as the case may possess another significance, though not just that which was supposed.

The following cases of anticipatory dreams have been communicated to me by a gentleman who has authorised me to publish his name and the names of the other persons mentioned. I give them in the words of my informant, Mr. E. R. Pearce, 5, Paper Buildings, Temple, a member of the Western Circuit:—

"Mrs. Lawrence, of Camelford (my great-great-aunt) dreamed (*circa* 1810) that she went to London, and that on her return home an accident happened as they were driving through the streets of Glastonbury; that she was seriously injured, lost a shoe, and was taken to the hotel senseless. She said next day that this would never come true, for she should never go to London again. Many months afterwards her husband had to go to London, and she went with him. Coming back from London she was sitting bodkin in the post chaise, and in driving through Wells* an accident happened, the horse taking fright at some men who were mending the street. Her head was badly injured, and she was taken senseless to the hotel, where she was laid up for a long time. In the accident she lost a shoe. This account is from my aunt, Miss Eliot, a niece of Mrs. Lawrence."

In reply to my further inquiries, Mr. Pearce wrote me, "I hear that there is no written record of Mrs. Lawrence's dream. The oral account is doubly verified. Miss Eliot, from whom I had it, heard it several times from Mrs. Lawrence. Besides this, my grandmother, Miss Eliot's sister, was one of the party at the time the accident happened. The party consisted of six in two carriages, and my grandmother, who must have been thirty-one years of age at that time, was in the first of the two, and it was in the hinder one that Mrs. Lawrence was travelling. My grandmother stayed with Mrs. Lawrence and nursed her, and my aunt, Miss Pearce, has heard my grandmother (her mother) tell the story numbers of times, and she entirely confirms Miss Eliot's version of it."

Now, the above is "hearsay," but it is good evidence of its kind. There are two living witnesses who heard the story, one, Miss Eliot, "several times," from the lady to whom the dream and fulfilment occurred; the other, Miss Pearce, "numbers of times" (as would be likely) from her mother, who was present at the time of the accident.

It would, however, be satisfactory to ascertain from Miss Eliot whether she had heard of the dream *before the accident*. If so, her evidence would be more valuable than that of Mrs.

Lawrence herself would be, were she now living. One would also like to know to whom Mrs. Lawrence said that the dream would never be fulfilled because she would not go to London again. Miss Eliot resides at Bodmin, Cornwall. Mr. Pearce took down the above account, verbatim, from her, as also the following:—

"Mrs. Essery, of Launceston; her husband died *circa* 1818, and she dreamed one night that her husband came to her and said to her, '— will come to you and say "Perhaps you are not aware of it, Mrs. Essery, but I am £20 in your late husband's debt;" and you are to say that it is £80.' Next morning she was sitting in her window, and round the corner of the street came the very man, which made her feel very queer. He came in and sat down, and said, 'You may not know it, Mrs. Essery, that I am owing your husband £20.' She at once said, 'I think you are mistaken, sir, it is £80.' He appeared somewhat disconcerted, and she reasserted it most positively. Some discussion took place, and he said that he would go home and consult his books, and the result was he paid her the £80. She had known nothing of the debt, and her husband had left no record of the loan. She would never tell the name of the borrower, as she said he was a friend of her husband. Miss Eliot heard the above from Mrs. Essery."

In a third case of a dream and literal fulfilment, also communicated to me by Mr. Pearce, I find on inquiry that the dreamer's present recollection of the details is defective, and he moreover objects to the publication of his name.

C. C. M.

MISS WOOD AT PETERBOROUGH.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Many letters and remarks, mostly favourable to the belief that Miss Wood is not an impostor until further proof is forthcoming, appeared in your last; and she also writes vindicating herself and offering you most fairly a direct challenge to test her, in the following words:—"I offer to sit either three times or such number of times as a national representative committee of Spiritualists may judge proper, and under such conditions as may be decided upon unanimously by them, free of charge, and will stand or fall by the result," &c. Now, if you refuse to accept this challenge, then you never ought to allow one word in your columns against her.

If the form "Pocha" was black when it was seized did the person who seized her find Miss Wood with black face, arms, and body? If not, how did it get wiped out when it became Miss Wood? Let Mr. Catling explain if he can and then study that excellent letter of Mrs. Mould's in the *Newcastle Herald* on this subject before he ever lends himself again to the breaking of conditions and assists at Spirit-gabbing.—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES BLACKBURN.

[We did not understand Miss Wood's offer to be made to the Editor of "LIGHT," but to a representative committee. We fully agree with Mr. Blackburn that the offer should be accepted, and we have no doubt that it will be. For ourselves, we have expressed no opinion on the *conscious* guilt or innocence of Miss Wood. The question is beset with too many difficulties to justify a hasty conclusion. Our chief concern is that in future séances the conditions should be such as to render similar disasters impossible.—ED. OF "LIGHT."]

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am informed by a Spirit that when a materialised Spirit form is seized by an opposing person, if the Spirits are unable to restore at once the material they have abstracted from the medium to make the "form," they are obliged, in order to save the medium from serious injury or death, to bring the medium to the "form" as instantly as is possible. The Spirit said that in most cases they were not able to restore material used, so therefore the result is the seizure of the medium.

If the above statement contains a law it should be known, as it does away with all foundation for the charge of fraud. For myself, I feel my ignorance most sensibly after a quarter of a century spent in honestly examining my own mediumship and that of others.

Of Miss Wood I have only to say I think her as honest and genuine as I am.

As to sifting my testimony and that of my husband, we should only state again the facts we have witnessed. What sifting could make clearer the statement—"I saw Miss Wood standing before me, and a goose-like form was lying at my feet,

* Wells is some miles from Glastonbury.

and two tall forms were standing within three yards of the medium." Or, "I saw a tall form appear by Miss Wood soon after we sat down." Or, "a form that I am as familiar with as my own shadow, came from the cabinet in white garments, and gave me a sign, agreed upon years ago, and repeated with strange mediums at every opportunity since."

We speak truth or falsehood. Those who know us will believe us, and those who know Miss Wood will believe in her entire honesty as a woman and a medium.—Yours,

MARY S. G. NICHOLS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have read the letters of Mrs. Heckford and Mr. Desmond FitzGerald, in your last week's issue, with considerable surprise—especially the first-mentioned.

Mrs. Heckford is, in my opinion, one of the class of votaries referred to in the concluding paragraph of the able letter of Signor Damiani in the same issue of "LIGHT," who do much harm by unlightened action from within the camp, under the pretence of seeking for more light. Such inquirers, however honest they may be—and of this I have not a suspicion—err on the side of zeal for the truth as they, mistakenly, see it.

Mrs. Heckford's letter contains some most extraordinary premises, taking into consideration her writing from the position of a Spiritualist possessing some acquaintance with the phenomena produced through Miss Wood's mediumship.

She admits, without question, an "exposure," and assumes on a mere *ipse dicit* that the exposé is a "gentleman and believer in Spiritualistic phenomena." What proof has she of any of this?

Then arguing from what may be a false basis she states "facts." 1st. Miss Wood personated Pocha.

How and why is this a fact?

When and where has Mrs. Heckford heard any statements which "make it evident" that Miss Wood is *occasionally, or probably frequently*, an impostor? or that Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Eglinton, and others, are subject to *extraordinary delusions*? Let us see what Mrs. Heckford asks. Merely that the ladies and gentlemen who have attended thousands of sittings with Miss Wood shall swamp your columns with the results of the "sifting" of their experiences, because one man has thought proper to violate his word as well as such simple conditions as obtain during the production of materialisation phenomena. I doubt your sinking "LIGHT" from its high position to that of an "obituary of experiences." Mrs. Heckford will perhaps be astonished to hear that Miss Wood supplements her professional sittings by *free sittings* whenever she has been asked to do so for charitable purposes or other unselfish ends.

This does not carry out the "trickery" supposition. I consider the statement advanced in the subsequent paragraph of the letter I am referring to—viz., that the "select circle of students" would take into consideration the fact that Miss Wood has been "convicted of trickery," and that consequently they would "have no scruples," &c.—to be most uncalled for.

Let me tell Mr. Desmond FitzGerald, in answer to his "How long, O Lord, how long?"—just as long as promiscuous circles are allowed to profane the occult mysteries of what is called Spiritualism, and until the Spiritualists as a body unite in protecting their mediums from the coarse instincts of seizers, as well as from the dissecting knives of "select circles of students" who are to have no scruples. Is this not like an anatomist searching for the soul in a dead body?

I think that a few earnest, pure-minded seekers of truth, gathered for one purpose in one place, will ever obtain higher and more certain proofs of the continuity of life, through their much-abused mediums, than all the "select circles" since the world began, including the circle of students who condemned Socrates, and that presided over by Pontius Pilate.—I, am, sir, yours fraternally,

WILLIAM PAYNTER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In reply to the correspondence in last week's issue of your paper, I have only to say that the reports sent you about the séance here were true and unprejudiced. As truth is the most important factor in any question, if the C.A.S. could see their way to appoint a gentleman to call on us, he could thoroughly investigate the whole case. I see from "LIGHT" that the Council of the C.A.S. came to an important decision relative to the subject of investigation, last week. If any member then selected should be sent here, we will do our best

to assist him in getting at the facts. If the Council approve of this inquiry, details could be arranged. I would like to remind some of your correspondents that our reports said nothing about the genuineness of Miss Wood's mediumship. For my part, I consider the genuineness of her mediumship long and well established. The question is not what has been witnessed in the past or may be in the future. The question is what happened at Peterborough. Has the simple truth been told? I know the truth has been told without any malice or ill feeling, and with an honourable purpose. Signor Damiani questions the competency of the sitters to witness and report on what they saw. I think he presumes a little too much on our ignorance. He informs us that any tyro knows that fruits, &c., are being brought into circles by the invisibles. Will Signor Damiani allow me to inform him that none but tyros would accept these facts in the absence of test conditions? If Signor Damiani argues that because fruits and flowers were brought to Mrs. Guppy's séance, and other places, under test conditions, therefore, when muslin was brought into the circle in a surreptitious way at Peterborough, and concealed in the garments of the medium, the deceitful work was done by Spirits,—if the Signor argues thus in the absence of test conditions, then with all deference to his great experience I must refuse to accept the soundness of his conclusions. If your space and my time permitted, I could easily show that the method of reasoning pursued all through the Signor's letter is loose and inconclusive.

Miss Wood says she offered her services at half-price. She asked a guinea for each séance, and part of her travelling expenses. A guinea, I am told, is the terms stated in a printed circular issued by her. Two guineas for two séances, and her travelling expenses, would have been handed to her if things had turned out differently. With regard to the cruel treatment of which Miss Wood complains, I may simply say that she was received as a friend at Mr. Robert Catling's, where mediums have always found a home. She was treated with kindness up to the hour of the exposure. After that, Mrs. Catling, who considered her friendship sinned against, and the holy cause betrayed for which her husband spent much time and money, expressed a very determined resolve not to rest till Miss Wood had left the house. On the part of two or three there were strong expressions of indignation, but on the whole, less than might have been expected—less than I witnessed on a similar occasion in London about eight years since. On the present occasion I heard Mr. Cade say, "We must not forget she is still our sister"; and this statement met with approval and sympathy.

I cannot see why the Peterborough people should be blamed over this affair. Miss Wood came here well recommended. A number of highly intelligent and well educated and honest ladies and gentlemen, who had often asked to see a little of what they had read and heard so much about, were invited to attend, and what was regarded as a fraud was discovered. We could not, if we would, hide the deception, and more—we would not if we could. For my part, I believe the exposure will prove a benefit to the movement. I hope it will result in good even to Miss Wood. If she is the unconscious instrument of deceit she should cease to be used for such a purpose, and turn to the path of truth and duty.—Yours respectfully,

New Fletton, Peterborough.

THOS. MCKINNEY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I quite believe Miss Wood's version of the unfortunate affair at Peterborough to be consistent with both truth and reason. For some years past I have known that mediums run into great danger by allowing themselves to be wholly entranced by any Spirits that may have an opportunity of doing so. And granting that they have the power of so complete a monopoly of the organism, what more natural than that a medium should be powerless to prevent his or her body from being used for a dishonest purpose? So completely has this giving-way to external influences weighed upon my mind, and the consequences likely to result from it, that I never by any chance in my séances (and they are very few now) allow myself to become unconscious for one moment and strenuously oppose with a firm mind any such attempt. I am myself, as I think is generally known, a materialising medium. I have never had but one outrage committed upon me, and that was in the house in which I now write. A man, from the Brazils, I think, having met me at the B.N.A.S., in 1877, begged me to give him a séance. I appointed a day. All the morning I was restless and declared many times to Miss F. M. and Mrs. Nichols that I would not sit to please

anyone. This feeling was intensified as the hour approached, for I was certain something would happen. However, when one o'clock came and no man appeared, I felt relieved and freed from a great trouble, but shortly after (the appointed time was twelve noon) my visitor was announced, and in the presence of Miss M. I told him I could not sit for him, not only because he had not been punctual, but because I felt averse to do so. But being over-persuaded (alas! so many, and especially mediums, sink to the ground by a want of judicious firmness) I yielded, and we two were left alone. I entered a cabinet in a moderate light, and soon became unconscious. Of a sudden a confused ringing in my ears awakened me, and I saw my visitor standing before me with the curtains opened, and the gas turned on to the full. He said he had found the "materialisation" to be nothing but myself dressed up. I again became unconscious, during which time it appears I went into Dr. Nichols' study and, still under control, narrated the events of the morning. He proceeded to question my guest, but he failed to get one word from him, and after sitting quite still for ten minutes, the man got up and left the house. Now, if he caught me personating the Spirit—and I have no wish to suspect him of a falsehood—it only proves to me all the more—in the face of my word of honour that I was guiltless of any participation in the wrongdoing—that I run a most awful risk of being used for an unlawful purpose if I submit to be entranced to the exclusion of any exercise of my own will to prevent such disgrace. This is precisely my argument in regard to Miss Wood. No one will deny that she or I are mediums. Why, then, should our evidence not be taken that we are guiltless of any knowledge of being palmed off as a "materialisation," when Spiritualists know the helpless position one is placed in when one submits to be entranced?

The remedy lies in the abolition of all public séances where, by the payment of a small sum (a shilling at Peterborough!), people can have the entrée to them to do as they please. A study of this subject leads us to the conclusion that it is not intended for the eyes of the many; and when better conditions are obtained, as prevail, for instance, in the home circle, these catastrophes can never happen. All the time these influences say, "Give us better conditions." Why not turn over a new leaf and do so?

In support of Miss Wood's assertion that she was unconscious during the seizure, I have just remembered that at a séance given by her in the presence of some well-known gentlemen at Cambridge, she remained in a state of trance for, I believe, the extraordinary period of thirty-six hours. During that time she was oblivious to everything passing around her.

I am able to confirm Mrs. Nichols' statement about Mr. F. having called at my office and being told by me not to smoke a cigar my partner had given him, as a voice whispered in my ear, "Pooha told you during the séance of Sunday not to smoke again, and you promised her not to do so." As I had had no communication whatever with any of the sitters, this incident, to my mind, is a striking corroboration of Miss Wood's mediumship, apart from the evidence presented to Mrs. Nichols by the appearance of two materialised forms and the medium at the same time.

It is because I am a medium that I write to defend Miss Wood from the aspersions cast upon her character; and it is because I am a *man* that I refuse to believe a woman to be so utterly debased as to nightly parade herself before both friends and enemies in the state of undress in which Mr. Cade is reported to have found her. We know nothing derogatory to Miss Wood's moral character; she is, I believe, respected and trusted by all who know her. Then why imagine her guilty of so heinous an offence, so devoid of all the best feelings that tend to make womanhood loveable and beautiful? when not only is she proved to be a medium, but may have been an unconscious instrument during the recent seizure of the "materialised form" in Peterborough.—Yours, &c.,

W. EGLINTON.

32, Fopstone-road, Earl's Court, S.W.

DEATH OF MR. W. HAXBY.—The friends of Mr. Haxby will hear with regret that his late severe illness terminated fatally on Sunday evening, the 17th inst. Much kindly sympathy had been expressed towards Mr. Haxby, and everything possible was done by his friends to alleviate his sufferings, but their kind efforts were without avail. As a physical medium Mr. Haxby was well-known to many Spiritualists in the Metropolis.

TEST AND PROFESSIONAL MEDIUMS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your columns are much burdened at present, but perhaps you can find space for the following explanation. Commenting upon my letter on the above subject, "M.A. (Oxon.)," doubts whether any circle would be unanimously agreed that a phenomenon was "indisputably genuine." I fear the danger is rather the other way—too general and facile acceptance. But, of course, I was referring to a circle of really competent investigators. And as regards "materialisations," I was thinking of such cases as I have read of though I have never witnessed them; where, for instance, the gradual growth and formation of a figure outside the cabinet from a little hazy cloud to a perfectly distinct human body is observed throughout by all. And others, where the medium has been led out by the "Spirit," or where two figures have materialised, &c. For necessary precautions against confederacy are not among the "tests" I was objecting to. Some such cases will, I think, be found in Colonel Olcott's "People from the Other World." Of my own investigations with the Eddys I said in the *Spiritualist*, November 12th, 1875, "I required one of three tests—(1) a sight of the medium and of a Spirit form at once; (2) two Spirit forms together; (3) a single, moving, well-defined child figure *outside* the curtain. Neither of these was I once fortunate enough to obtain, though Colonel Olcott testifies to the frequency of the two latter." These proofs were quite independent of testing the medium by tying, &c., and in one of the materialisation cases, or whatever they should be called, which I witnessed with Mrs. Huntoon, the medium actually came out of the cabinet at our call, and stood beside the figure in front of the curtain. Other phenomena witnessed by myself which carried conviction by their character, independently of any applied tests, I have also described in the *Spiritualist*, but regret I cannot now find the reference, as I am sure "M.A. (Oxon.);" would allow that no one present could candidly refuse to admit their genuine character.

But it is weary work. Altogether, out of, perhaps, from 200 to 300 séances in which I have taken part, there have been about a dozen in which the evidence has fully and permanently satisfied me. Of the rest, though I believe the "manifestations" at very many to have been genuine, I cannot certainly aver it; and truth compels me to add my decided opinion, formed at the time and confirmed by repeated experiences, that a large proportion of them were simply what the Americans call "bogus." Being a patient investigator, and not wishing to be excluded from further opportunities, I never, or very seldom, avowed my suspicions. I saw the utter uselessness of doing so after one experience, having been soundly rated by my good friend the editor of the *Medium* for writing an "exposure" in his paper on an occasion of more than commonly audacious and palpable imposture. One result of an exposure is to elicit scores of testimonials to the genuine mediumship of the inculpated person from Spiritualists who have not yet learned the melancholy fact, which ought by this time to be so well-known to all of us, that the two things are quite compatible. I must add my belief that sooner or later we shall have to forego the Spiritualism which depends on professional mediumship altogether. C. C. M.

THE TRUTH OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Clairvoyance is in itself so remarkable even in this age of wonders that one cannot call too much attention to its truth. I had some remarkable proofs of it a few days ago through the mediumship of Miss Lottie Fowler, with whom I was previously unacquainted. Even in her normal condition she commenced by telling me some facts that had happened in my past life, and then passing into the trance state without any disagreeable twittings, immediately began to speak of a friend of mine just dead, giving his Christian name, telling of the disease he died of, of the feelings of his relatives towards him, and of some money matters in connection with him; all of which were strikingly accurate, and told without the slightest hesitation or guessing. Then she voluntarily entered into a detail of the characters of some of my friends, but when handed a letter frankly declared she was unable to speak of its writer by this means. She afterwards mentioned some private details of my own life, speaking of them in a strikingly graphic manner, and without any of that colouring, or vagueness capable of being construed into many meanings, or fitted to many events, of which I had previous experience. All matters she touched on she spoke of with great conciseness, so that the séance was extremely satisfactory to me.—Faithfully yours,

J. FITZGERALD-MOLLOY.

34, Woburn-place, Tavistock-square.
September 16th, 1882.

DARK AND CABINET SEANCES.

(Continued from page 433.)

With our numerous other correspondents we must deal more briefly, but we desire to put on record the expressed opinions of as many as possible. We give what we take to be the most salient portions of the communications; but the letters will be placed, entire, in the hands of the C.A.S., that no important suggestion may be overlooked:—

A. CALDER:—"My opinion, given with diffidence, is that cabinets and total darkness should be abolished."

JAMES DAWBARN, London:—"To your question, 'Is it wise to continue methods tending in every case sooner or later to such disastrous results?' I most decidedly say No!"

PROFESSOR BARRETT:—"The circular has come to hand. It would be most desirable to call a sort of ecumenical council of delegates from all the country societies, but I quite think that dark sittings should be steadfastly discouraged."

S. T. SPEER, M.D.:—"I entirely concur with the spirit in which the circular is drawn up. The progress of 'Spiritualism' has, I conceive, been absolutely blighted during the last ten years by these miserable exposures, immunity from which has now become imperative."

T. EVERITT, Hendon:—"I think all thoughtful Spiritualists will see the advisability of discountenancing dark sances with paid mediums, and also the folly of admitting the inexperienced public to dark sances at all. Dark sances in my opinion can be profitably held only by the experienced Spiritualists who are personally acquainted with the mediums with whom they sit."

GERALD MASSEY:—"I have been so long and so much out of the 'movement,' and so absorbed in other matters, that I have not the data to form an opinion on the subject. If it were thought worth while to call a few people together for a confabulation on the subject, I should take sufficient interest to look in if invited. It seems to me that a preliminary discussion would be necessary before publishing a programme."

J. BOWMAN, Glasgow:—"I heartily agree with your proposition, that at all sances held for form-manifestations, it is desirable that the medium should be in view of the sitters. My experience has proved to me that it is most difficult for the Spirits to manifest without the cabinet, but I am quite sanguine that form-manifestations could be got with the medium in view if a number of honest Spiritualists were to form a circle, and sit for the purpose of developing mediums for obtaining that end."

Mrs. NICHOLS, London:—"Though your circular was not sent to me, I think proper to remark respecting it that different circles of inquirers are likely to differ in their methods, and, though you may advise them, you have no Pope to trouble them if they do not take your advice. As regards our circle, we are under orders, and sit in the dark if we are requested to do so; and it would take a stronger power to induce us to disobey than is likely to be brought to bear upon us. The inner qualification of entire good faith in medium and sitters seems to me of more value than any quantity of rules and regulations and conditions."

DR. NICHOLS:—"In reply to your circular I beg to say that I cannot consent to have imposed on me, or to impose on others, any conditions or limitations in the investigation of Spiritualism any more than in that of any other science. I have had satisfactory manifestations in full light, partial light, and perfect darkness, with cabinets and without. I think the Spirits who operate should be free to choose their own conditions, and I have found the tests suggested by the Spirits themselves better in many cases than any I have been able to contrive. Mediums should not be treated like malefactors until we have conclusive proof that they are dishonest."

MORELL THEOBALD:—"I think it (the proposed statement) should be very carefully drawn up by a special committee. While it should depict the conditions carefully to be observed in investigations, it should as carefully avoid making such restrictions as would prevent psychic phenomena altogether. The conditions for private and for public sittings should certainly be different. More latitude can be admitted in one than the other. I am convinced, from sittings which have been held by some members of the Physical Phenomena Committee of the S.P.R., that their caution imposes a restraint which will, for a time at least, keep at arm's length all the more delicate phenomena."

C. C. PEARSON, London:—"I have carefully read your circular referring to the great discredit attaching to Spiritualism on account of the dishonesty of mediums in resorting to fraudulent methods at sances, and I heartily concur in the necessity of adopting precautions by which such practices may be prevented in the future. I think the suggestions given in the fourth paragraph of the circular are admirable, and if they were adopted in Spiritualistic circles generally, much of the odium now attaching to the movement would be avoided. People who form circles for form-manifestations cannot be too careful in selecting those who are really earnest in seeking the truth on this important subject; and all who merely join circles from motives of idle curiosity should be rigorously excluded."

J. ENMORE JONES:—"My many years' opposition to dark sittings is well known."

R. BAIKIE, M.D., Edinburgh:—"I concur most fully in the sentiments therein expressed, and shall be most happy to forward its objects in any way that can be pointed out."

G. F. GREEN, Plumstead:—"In reply to your circular of 16th I concur in thinking some public action is called for, and I wait to see what form you propose it should take."

E. LARRAD, Leicester:—"The medium should be in full view of all the sitters, with sufficient light for everyone to see all that takes place. I fully endorse your programme, and may also say that our Society does the same."

T. H. EDMANDS, London:—"I quite agree with you, and although so many have fallen victims to temptations this does not shake my confidence in the truthfulness of Spiritualism. Avoid putting temptation in the way, and we shall have greater purity in the mediums."

THOS. MCKINNEY, Peterborough:—"I am not able to give advice in this matter, to say what should be done, nor who should do it. Of one thing I am certain—that Spiritualists, so-called, need instruction and caution. I have been for a long time thoroughly dissatisfied with present methods of investigation."

W. GILL, Brighton:—"I am strongly opposed to dark sances generally, but more especially for form manifestations, when I know from actual experience that good materialisations can take place in the light, and that darkness is so favourable to deception. I think the action you are taking in the matter is very judicious."

MR. C. W. PEARCE gives the following advice:—"Make no further efforts to convince unconvinced forms of mind. Abandon absolutely all outside effort, and devote all your means, of whatever kind, to promote the perfect growth of those you know to be one with you, if you can once again gain their confidence."

FRTZ:—"Dark sances, and all sances that do not render fraud impossible, should be condemned by the public action of Spiritualists, and all mediums who persist in sitting for persons who will not first test them so as to establish confidence (without which success is impossible and fraud almost certain) should be repudiated."

J. J. MORSE:—"I quite concur in the need of some such action as your circular points to, alike in the interests of mediums and the cause; otherwise the repeated experiences of alleged 'exposures' are calculated to prove insurmountable obstacles in the present progress of the movement, preventing its usefulness to the world, and marring its value to believers."

Mrs. FITZGERALD:—"I write at once to say that I heartily approve of the circular sent to me. Yes, hasten; and until we take such means as you suggest, the finger of ridicule will not cease to be pointed at us! We have suffered long and patiently, and the time has come for stringent steps to be taken to rescue our great cause from the odium which has been cast upon it."

A. JOY, M.I.C.E.:—"I have long considered that sances for physical manifestations with public mediums are of very doubtful utility in forwarding the higher aims of Spiritualism; and that they are generally, if not always, so demoralising to the medium that they had better be discontinued altogether by those who look upon Spiritualism as a means of raising mankind, unless conditions can be secured which will give confidence to the investigators and protect the medium from the demoralising influences I have referred to. I doubt much whether such conditions are attainable in a general way; but the question is worthy of inquiry and discussion, and I therefore cordially concur in your proposal."

R. FITTON, Manchester:—"I quite agree with its contents, but would deprecate any hard and fast lines being laid down, because the conditions under which form manifestations take place are so varied and peculiar that it is useless to formulate them for the guidance of all investigators. I may state that I have attended several sances for this kind of phenomena during the last fifteen years, all of which were in the dark or semi-darkness, thereby leaving room for doubt and strong suspicion of their genuineness. . . . I have, however, made up my mind to have nothing to do with such meetings where total darkness is demanded, and I think on no account ought strangers to the phenomena to be admitted."

J. FOWLER, Liverpool:—"I am quite in sympathy with your circular. I believe dark circles should be discontinued by Spiritualists as a means of furthering the cause of Spiritualism. In sances conducted for purely scientific purposes by scientific men, darkness may be permitted, but for ordinary and general investigation, I would discontinue sances held in the dark. The experience of the past has been anything but satisfactory. The painful exposures which the cause has experienced, may be attributed, perhaps, to the ignorance of sitters rather than to the cupidity of mediums. No doubt, the credulity of many Spiritualists has afforded advantages to unreliable mediums to commit fraud and personate the Spirits. It seems to me that the only safeguard to the cause is to repudiate dark sances altogether."

J. C. ENO :—"I would with great earnestness say, 'Abolish at once all dark cabinet sittings.'"

ROBERT CATLING, Peterborough :—"I most cordially support your ideas in reference to physical mediums."

J. L. BLAND, Hull :—"I fully coincide with the tenor of your circular. I strongly protest against dark séances and will lend all my influence in favour of their abolition by our societies."

MRS. NOSWORTHY, Liverpool :—"Knowing as I do that all mediums are subject to such influences as sitters bring with them, I agree with you in your proposed manifesto on this important question."

W. PAYNTER, Cardiff :—"I really cannot see what objections can reasonably be made to such a plain and patent statement of the case as that contained in your circular. I wait the development with interest. Miss Wood also begs to express her adherence."

W. C. ROBSON, Newcastle-on-Tyne, sends an account of a successful materialisation séance with Miss Wood, who sat in the light on an armchair outside the cabinet, and he therefore urges that in future, with all physical mediums, a similar arrangement should be adopted.

JOHN ROUSE, Croydon, sends us a long letter, in which he expresses his conviction that a large proportion of the manifestations obtained where the public are admitted for a fee, are the result of deception and roguery, but thinks that all this could be avoided if Spiritualists could only be got to agree upon the subject.

R. COOPER, Eastbourne :—"I am of opinion that darkness is a condition favourable to the production of some phenomena, especially the important phase of the 'direct voice'; but I think that dark séances should be confined to believers who have confidence in each other's integrity. It is not advisable for sceptics to be admitted to them."

W. OXLEY, Manchester :—"I know nothing that would justify me in characterising the 'exposure' of Miss Wood as anything but worthless. I have now sat with five exposed mediums—in fact, with six, nay, with seven—before and after the exposures, and found in every case genuine mediumistic qualities beyond all cavil and dispute, and my experience seems to shew that the expositors are the exposed. In every case that I refer to the 'exposers' were men who have had but one or two séances, and to suppose that such can at one meeting undo what has been most carefully watched and developed for months, if not years, by those who have spent time and money in patiently developing the psychic powers of the medium, is rather too much of a good thing; and I more than suspect something of the kind in Miss Wood's case."

T. BARKAS, Esq., F.G.S., Newcastle-on-Tyne :—"I desire briefly to reply to the paragraphs in the order of their occurrence :—(1) I accept every statement in this paragraph. (2) It is of vital importance that the opinions of experienced and educated Spiritualists should be obtained. (3) A statement such as that proposed would be invaluable, but before issuing it, it ought to be sent in proof to all those to whom this circular has been forwarded, with a request for suggestions and criticism, and the revised proof should be forwarded for final correction to about twenty Spiritualists of known precedence, who have contributed to the literature of Spiritualism. (4) Speaking generally, I agree with the statements in this paragraph. (5) The suggestions are valuable, and should be considered in the document proposed to be issued."

R. HANNAH :—"Much stress should be laid on the importance of conducting such séances in the most simple and straightforward manner so as to avoid any pretence for an accusation of dishonesty. . . . Such of my own experiences as would be most valuable and convincing to beginners have always been in the light, as with old Mrs. Marshall, with Forster in bright sunshine, with Slade in like conditions, and with a committee of the Dialectical Society in full gas light, when with no other mediumship than that of the members themselves, after comparatively few sittings together, a heavy dining table moved from six to about fifteen inches eleven or twelve times in various directions as requested. The record by Mr. Wallace there and then may be seen in the report, and it was attested by all present at the time. I give this experience to shew that the medium power desiderated is not by any means unattainable."

J. R. GREENWELL, Secretary of the Goswell Hall Committee :—"It will be better to remain in ignorance of a future life demonstrated, than to so frequently suffer and feel ashamed to own we are connected with such an 'ism.' I am at one with you in both propositions, (1) medium in full view, and (2) a sufficiency of light for careful observation. . . . With the two ladies named, we, in Newcastle-on-Tyne, sat for some time in conformity with your two propositions, and everyone was highly satisfied with the results. Why they were discontinued I am at a loss to say. . . . I am fully persuaded of the necessity and importance of adopting these means. We may have to wait some time before success crowns our efforts, but far more preferable will it be to meet with failure and disappointment than to expose our mediums and ourselves to so much suffering and indignity."

J. G. MILES, Cardiff :—"I heartily agree with the remarks and suggestions in your circular of 16th ult."

HAY NISBET, Glasgow :—"I fully acquiesce in the suggestions you make. If speedy measures are not taken we shall soon be in a mess like the Americans. Go a-head."

F. M. PARKES :—"I have much pleasure in expressing my concurrence in the object you have in view, in regard to the conditions at spirit circles for the uninitiated public."

COL. BRAYN, Jersey :—"I heartily thank you for your circular. . . . I feel more thankful to you, and to those who help you in the course you propose, than any words of mine can express."

H. A. KERSEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne :—"I cordially endorse your sentiments, and shall be happy to assist in any movement having such a desirable end in view. But we cannot dictate how people shall hold séances in their own houses."

R. S. CLARKE, Plymouth :—"I am and always have been against dark and cabinet circles. I thoroughly concur with you as to the advisability of some such course as that suggested in your circular. You may rely on my co-operation."

ROBERT HARPER, Birmingham :—"In response to your circular, I beg to state that I heartily endorse the sentiments set down. I would be glad to see the project carried out. At the same time I am of opinion that some advice should be tendered as to what forms of manifestations should be cultivated, and how to obtain them."

E. ADAMS, Cardiff :—"The object set forth in your circular meets with my fullest sympathy. . . . I am oftentimes led to think that materialisation has been placed at the wrong end of the ladder of investigation, and that as a rule, acquaintance should first be made with simpler forms of mediumship. I think materialisation should be developed amid much more refined and elevated surroundings than has usually been the case. It should be sought for in a *sanctum sanctorum* of the earnest investigator, and while it should be approached in a calm, earnest, and reverent frame of mind, the sitters should be alike prepared to appreciate the genuine and eschew the counterfeit when presented. The light should be sufficient, while all other conditions should be above suspicion; and the medium should be willing to aid in making them so."

J. B. SLOMAN, Plympton :—"Your circular has my entire sympathy, and I am thoroughly in accord with you on the matter. I have been convinced for some time past that action was necessary on the part of Spiritualists to deal with the subject of 'Form Manifestations' by *paid* or *professional* mediums. Dark cabinet séances are unsatisfactory to sitters, and 'demoralising' to the medium; they offer a premium to fraud, destroy the confidence and harmony that should exist between the circle, and sooner or later are bound to result disastrously both to the medium and the cause. . . . Any lengthened observations on my part are unnecessary. I can leave it in your more able hands to give expression thereto. You will deserve the thanks of all true Spiritualists for taking action in the matter. To have one's highest and holiest feelings trifled with in such a manner by conscienceless individuals for purposes of personal gain, is monstrous, and making our blessed cause a bye-word and reproach with the public."

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

- Sunday, October 1.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Conference. 7 p.m., Lecture, "A. T. T. P." (See advertisement.)
 " October 1.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Iver MacDonnell. (See advertisement.)
 Monday, October 2.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m. (See advertisement.)
 " October 2.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 6.30 p.m., Experimental Research Committee Meeting.
 Tuesday, October 3.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Entertainment. (See advertisement.)
 Wednesday, October 4.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.
 Thursday, October 5.—Dalston Association. Usual Weekly Meeting of Members, 7.30 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 advertisement page.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"LILY" sends us a letter expressing her warm appreciation of the late Mr Haxby as a good, honest, and reliable medium. The letter should have been accompanied by the name and address of the writer; but in any case we should not have been able to find space for it.