

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul

No. 1,993.—VOL. XXXIX. [Registered as]

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1919.

[a Newspaper.]

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

The old order is passing with many a pang, and all the futility of a struggle against overwhelming forces. We are witnessing the spectacle of a great disintegration—the dissolution of an ancient scheme of things that has served its turn, but is not to be got rid of without an immense amount of riving, cracking and grinding; old bonds and clasps and rivets are parting with many a vicious snap. The ancient things uprooted shriek, as the mandrake is fabled to do when it is torn out of the earth. It is the same everywhere we look. If we survey the ground covered by the influence of our "New Revelation" similar portents are visible. The opposition which faces us looks formidable and menacing until closely inspected, and then we see eloquent signs of its weakness: it is flurried, is passionate. Here, wrought to a frenzy of hatred, an angry writer tells his readers that the idea of spirit intercourse is not one for argument. Every healthy mind will repudiate the thing and trample on it without debate as something opposed to human reason and dignity! A scientist throwing science, accuracy and the judicial method of inquiry to the winds in his passion utters statements so reckless and wide of the truth that it is found that even some of the least informed and unscientific of his readers can put him to confusion. It is all very edifying, significant and instructive.

\* \* \*

It is not easy to gain a fairly correct estimate of the nature of the struggle unless one can take a wide view embracing many regions of inquiry. Observation of a single section or even two or three sections is likely to be misleading. We observe a furious onslaught on professional mediums and the evidences derived from physical phenomena. How little they know of the question who know it only in these aspects! All over the country thousands of people have tested the subject in their own family privacy and gained tangible results, and all the vociferous hootings and yellings, as of a raucous blast of steam whistles, in the Press, leave them cold except that perhaps they wonder at the general imbecility of the proceedings. A thousand Mrs. Partingtons are engaged with their egregious mops trying to keep out the Atlantic. For the tide is coming in at a great rate, and many stranded argosies will soon be able to put to sea on those new adventures which mean so much to the future of the race. For let there be no mistake as to the colossal importance of the question. There is a temptation at times to regard psychical science as one amongst many other things of relative importance. That is the case, considering the subject as a science or mere branch of human knowledge. But it cannot be too often repeated that with the solution of the problem of death are bound up con-

siderations so vast that they will react on every other issue of human life from the highest to the lowest. It will give us a new world. Materialism, legitimate and useful in its place, had invaded the spiritual order, bringing war, poverty, disease, moral decay. It is now being cast out, and its struggle is that of a wounded dragon, filling the whole earth with clamour and convulsion.

\* \* \*

Of late years great numbers of persons of superior intelligence and of that critical judgment which was so lacking in the earlier days of our subject, have taken up the serious study of the question. To those of them who have come in our way, we have had to explain that, although the subject is simple enough in its essential principles, there is a great amount of complexity in the investigation of the smaller questions. Indeed the pursuit of any one phase might well be a life work. We recommend to some who are equipped for the task by natural aptitude and experience a consideration of the psychology of the matter, because along that road lie so many of the perplexities that beset the inquirer. We hold, as a result of much study and experience, that the sources of a large proportion of the confusion and misdirection are to be looked for in the minds of the mediums and investigators and not anywhere outside. Unhealthy pathological or psychological states, combined with undeveloped mediumship and slovenly methods, are accountable, in our view, for a great deal that is loosely attributed to disorderly spirit influences.

## "THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS."

(FROM "LIGHT" OF MARCH 23RD, 1889.)

DECEASE OF SAMUEL CARTER HALL.—One of the oldest journalists, and one of the oldest and staunchest Spiritualists, has been relieved of the burden of flesh, which he has borne for eighty-eight years. The "Times," the "Daily News," the "Standard," and other journals mention Mr. Hall's literary labours, his vast circle of acquaintances amongst men of letters, his advocacy of the cause of temperance; but they do not notice what was unquestionably the chief characteristic of the man. He was an uncompromising Spiritualist. In season and out of season both he and his wife gave testimony to their faith and reason for it. Mr. S. C. Hall lived, since his wife was removed from him, in the full consciousness of communion with her. From that conviction he never wavered: and in that faith, firm and assured, he rejoined her. Peace to their honoured names.

Some more than ordinary lunatics have been in conference and have decided that the world is to come to an end on March 5th, 1896, at twenty minutes to one. It is well to be precise. Let us hope that these prophets will come to an end before the world. (From "Jottings.")

L.S.A. SOCIAL MEETING.—It was encouraging to see so large an attendance at the social gathering of the L.S.A. on Thursday evening, the 13th inst. The address given by the author of "I Heard a Voice" was an excellent rejoinder to some of the criticisms levelled at our movement and was greatly appreciated by the audience, some of its more effective points being greeted with hearty applause. We hope to give an extended notice of "A King's Counsel's" remarks in our next issue. The musical contributions, which afforded much pleasure, consisted of three brilliant pianoforte selections—"Arabesque" (Debussy), by Mrs. Hervey Webb, and "Polonaise" (Liszt), and No. 1 of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words," by Mr. H. M. Field.

## COMMON-SENSE SPIRITUALISM: TWO SYMPOSIA.

By STANLEY DE BRATH, M.Inst.C.E. ("V.C. Desertis").

(Continued from page 82.)

**PHYSICIAN.** Of course completely open relations might be great joy or great pain. We find it so already—to have one woman know our every thought may be happiness; with another, a torment. After all, we need only have no squalid thoughts. That might even improve our relations here.

**ARTIST.** But it is all a guess. (*Turning to the ENGINEER.*) What have you got from it all? Could you not have gained your knowledge from other sources? I detest this spookery; it is so childish and futile.

**ENGINEER.** I have gained this: That heredity and environment are not forces, but the limitations placed on the growing soul by the consequences of remote and recent acts, both its own and those of others; that each act of ours goes to form a part of the environment that we create for ourselves and our children; that this growing soul is the real Self, of which the visible personality is the mask; that at death it is freed from the body, but not otherwise much altered; that it is then seen exactly as it is; that there is no penalty for past acts other than the condition into which those acts have led ourselves and others (which, by the way, is quite penalty enough): that in the after-life the same forces of attraction and repulsion operate as they do here, but, owing to the telepathic conditions, much more powerfully—like going to like: that selfishness makes a terrible loneliness, and materialism makes blindness to realities: that those we have loved and lost, love us still and follow our lives with the same affection and much more insight than they had here: that there is no breach of continuity between this life and the next—one principle being common to both; it has given me a consistent interpretation to life, and has revealed Law as sure in the meta-physical as in the physical domain. And last, but not least, it has for me abolished for ever all doctrinal controversy and given me peace of mind. I don't find this childish or futile; it gives consistency.

**P.** Our Artist friend will not be satisfied with that. You see, "he believes in most of the creeds and all the heresies!" (*Protests from the Artist.*) Oh yes, he does! Because he sees in each a beautiful idea. Mere consistency does not trouble him more than it troubled the editors of Genesis: he says, "Consistency is for the ignorant." And you are, you say, aiming at consistency. You divide Truth into truth of fact, truth of theory, and dramatic truth. But how is common-sense to distinguish what is true in fact from what is only dramatically true?

**E.** I grant that in many cases it cannot; but again in many cases it can. For instance, it can feel that there is much more in the story of Samson and Delilah than a mere record. But why "only"? To me dramatic truth means one example embodying a spiritual truth, which is true for ever in all its many manifestations. The consistency of meaning which runs through the two thousand years covered by the Bible shows to quite average common-sense that the great Drama is the action of the Spirit—the Power behind Evolution—on raw human material.

**P.** You have not answered my question, How is the average man to distinguish between facts and fiction, dramatic and beautiful perhaps, but still fiction?

**A.** Is there any need to?

**E.** That I take to be the province of the clergy who give their minds to that part of their task. Meanwhile each mind must do that for itself according to its lights, always remembering that no such distinction can be absolute. Some, like our Artist friend here, do not feel any such need—they feel that there is some underlying truth in all beautiful ideas, and don't care if it is put into words or not; in fact they would rather it were not.

**A.** Just so! Words only cause disputes. An idea should be expressed by a work of art. The San Sisto expresses one idea, a submarine another.

**P.** I am not going to follow your red-herring, and I repeat my question to our friend here: What are you going to say when you are up against such a direct question as—Was Jesus born of a Virgin or not? Is that drama, i.e., fiction, or is it fact?

**E.** Well, may I not say—I cannot tell, not having enough knowledge of what is possible? It is just these questions on which positive answers are impossible that needlessly divide men. But if I were asked to prove the "Divinity" of Christ, I should rest it, not on the Virgin Birth (to which Jesus never once alluded), nor on His miracles (which were proofs to those who saw them but difficulties to some of us who did not), but on His sayings:—"The Truth shall make you free"—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me"—"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"—"If a man keep My saying he shall never taste of death." Have not these tremendous claims been verified? Do they not involve recognition of that paramount reality which gives the courage to deal masterfully with all conditions, and the knowledge that death is not the end of life, but an episode in it?

**P.** I stick to my point. Is it or is it not true?

**E.** You are pressing me for that valueless thing—an

opinion without the data, and I would much rather not reply; but if you must have an answer I say: The first Christian documents are the letters of St. Paul, written between A.D. 30 and A.D. 50, which speak little of the earth-life of Jesus, but much of the mystical and indwelling Spirit and of the Risen Christ. St. Mark's Gospel comes next, written, scholars tell us, about A.D. 50, obviously to give St. Paul's Greek converts some idea of the earth-life of the Master. He does not mention the Virgin Birth. Either he had not heard of it (which seems unlikely) or he thought it wiser to say nothing. The gospel of the Beloved Disciple whose home was shared by the Mother of the Lord, which is probably the last book of the New Testament in order of time, is equally silent; possibly because he thought the miracle too well known to need reaffirming, but possibly for quite other reasons. Personally, I feel that the Virgin Birth may be an expression in fact of the Lord's superhuman conception, or it may be the figure under which the human mind understands a divine sonship. It was no new idea to antiquity—Buddha, Plato, and even Alexander were all supposed to be so born. I simply don't know. All I object to is founding a belief in the ever-living Christ on a dogma which is incapable of proof or disproof.

**SOLDIER.** Yes; I agree. It is the present fact that matters, and there are many who could bear witness to the healing presence of the Living Christ. It is not what Jesus was, but what Christ is, that concerns us most to-day: if He is not a living leader and king, He is but a memory.

**P.** Then you think the physical resurrection is a fact?

**S.** I have seen the "materialised" forms of men and women who have "died," and I interpret the Resurrection by the facts I know. The accounts in the gospels—the sudden appearances and disappearances—even the materiality which convinced the sceptical Thomas—seem to me under the same laws as the things I have seen. If our small personal souls survive (and I know they do), then much more must He survive. That seems to me common-sense.

**E.** And so we come back to common-sense for the greatest mystery of all! That is what I mean. Granted that the modern occult happenings are small. Of course they are small, because the actors and the occasions are small. But they are not insignificant—they signify much. Gravity is not insignificant because it gives form to the dewdrop as well as its orbit to the planet. They reveal laws under which souls can and do manifest in Time and Space. They give a glimpse of vast possibilities for a power too great to need special conditions.

**P.** (*turning to the SOLDIER.*) Then you believe in miracles?

**S.** What is a miracle? Did not we learn at school that the word means only "something to wonder at"? If you mean an infraction of natural laws, I do not; if you mean "the action of unseen intelligent agents producing results to which known laws are inadequate," I do. But I dislike the word; it savours of old theories and "exceptions" to laws.

**P.** Bible miracles too?

**S.** Some of them, certainly; but not all. Miracles of healing have plenty of modern parallels.

**P.** That is mental suggestion.

**S.** Very likely; what in the gospels is called "faith." It seems curious that what is there so often stated to be the means of healing should be adduced to discredit the fact. But if mental suggestion can heal so rapidly, why do you not use it in your practice?

**P.** (*with a laugh.*) Touché. But there is so much in the Bible that is legendary or contrary to known laws, and Biblical miracles must stand or fall together.

**E.** I don't see why they should. The Bible is not a book, it is a whole literature. If some of the miracles like Joshua's arrest of the sun (i.e., of the rotation of the earth) are contrary to known laws, and therefore quite impossible, and others are found to be in accord with psychic facts, why not accept the latter and reject the former? Is not the objection an echo of the discredited literal inspiration, which ignores the fact that the Old Testament was compiled, edited, and re-edited, between B.C. 450 and B.C. 150? For my own part I think we shall see in our own day a vindication of much that is at present mysterious. Events are moving in a very interesting manner. Thirty or more years ago I read a book by Dr. Grattan Guinness, called "The Approaching End of the Age." Anyone can refer to it and its date of publication. It was disfigured by much theological bias, but the author showed that by the year-day system of interpretation, the years through which we are now passing would be the birth-throes of a New Age. He gave 1919 as the opening year of a new order of things. It would be curious if the typical nature of Hebrew institutions and the general inspiration of the two most discredited books of the Bible (Daniel and Apocalypse) should be vindicated by undeniable modern facts.

**P.** Well, we shall see. *Qui vivra, verra.*

The party broke up, and the wife turned to the writer—"We are fortunate in our friends; the Artist worships Beauty; the Physician, Truth; and the Soldier, Goodness."

"Yes," said the writer, "but no one would be more astonished than the Soldier to hear you. He thinks only of Duty, and rarely speaks even of that."

"No doubt," she rejoined, "and is it not the height of goodness to be unconscious of itself? If the man who went through the retreat from Mons, and rescued a comrade under

spraying machine-gun fire, and is only aware that he did his duty and never thought of doing less, is not a worshipper of goodness, I don't know who is."

"Perhaps that takes him further than any of us."  
 "It does. His battalion would fall to a man rather than fail him. Why? Because however tired himself he will not rest till he has seen every man provided for: because though he can be stern to his men, he has never been unjust, or overbearing, or rude, to any of them; because they know he feels for them and with them. If this is not Love and Goodness, what is? Love does not talk, it acts, and is ever nearly inarticulate. 'He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' He is the man of action; what would you have him say?"

"Why, nothing! For in the long run actions speak louder than words; but in daily life they are nearly always misunderstood at the moment. But I think you understand what I wish to express."

"Of course I do. You mean what Browning meant when he wrote—

So now I conclude. All's Love but all's Law.

I have gained a whole world where a dewdrop was asked.

You mean that the Law of Consequences is as invariable for the results of good as for the results of evil; you mean that the more justice there is in the world, the less cause for strife. You mean that if the pain produced by human ignorance and human wrong were abolished, the remainder which is inseparable from material existence would be no more than is necessary to develop character, and that 'death' would be merely happy transition. You mean that this change of individual hearts is, by natural law, the only possible remedy for the sickness of the world, and is the creedless Christianity of Christ, the ever-living King."

"Yes, my mate," said the writer, "I mean just that, and something more. The nineteenth century opened with Dalton's discovery of the atom as the basis of chemical science. On that theory all subsequent advances took place. The thousand processes used by civilisation are all of them direct results from that master-principle. Every branch of physical science is closely connected with the truth of the Atomic Theory; it is on the postulate of the nature and grouping of atoms, that every new process from quinine sulphate to synthetic rubber and high explosive has been found. It has armed humanity with terrible instruments for peace and war, for good and evil. At its inception it was of course disregarded as a vagary of the scientific mind, of little interest even if true; the man in the street observes with arrogant ignorance that students of Nature are always running after theories with no money in them. The twentieth century opens with the discovery of the electron. The average man scoffs at the idea that the 'indivisible atom'—ten thousand times too minute to be seen under any microscope—can be proved to be a nucleus of positive electricity with negative electrons, a thousand times smaller still, revolving about it with planetary speeds—being in fact a miniature solar system. The man of 1918 repeats the man of Dalton's time. How can such a thing possibly be proved! It must be a fantastic guess! and what is the use of it anyhow? He is quite unaware that chemically produced electricity is but the escape of perhaps .001 per cent. of these electrons; and, thanks to the neglect of science in our schools, he does not even understand wherein scientific proof consists. It has recently been shown to be probable that all the varieties of chemical atoms are produced by successive additions of one or more electro-ionic units to the primitive type—the hydrogen atom. Be that as it may, nothing is more sure than that the release of *all* the electrons in even so small a mass as a single drop of water would give more power than the broadside of a battleship.

"The secret, how to release this power by the 'atomic engine' must and will be solved in the near future. It turned to the uses of war it will give effects such as were anticipated by the prescient genius of Lytton ('The Coming Race') and of Mr. H. G. Wells ('The War of the Worlds'), a single ray may in sober fact be swept over a city and annihilate all its life. If turned to the uses of peace it will give a source of power which will reduce all our present engines to children's toys. In the hands of human devils such as those who by the allurements of the lust of gain have directed the energies of an industrious people to a war of insensate ambition, the new power may even involve the suicide of the white race. It will involve that suicide, unless it is directed by the temper of forbearance, goodwill and co-operation—that is by the Spirit of Love. Such powers will be an immense danger unless in the hands of those who will use these vast energies neither for the enrichment of individuals nor for the destruction of their fellows. It must be in the hands of just and unselfish democracies. Fair play and vital religion can alone avert fatal quarrels. The temper must be that

Making sure to each his own, that he reap where he have sown,

By the peace among our peoples let men know we serve the Lord.

But in the hands of a democracy which can see nothing but the conflicts of Capital and Labour for spoils it may be the precursor of horrors which will make this war seem small.

"If they are to be avoided—if this war is to end war,

in Europe at least—the will to justice and co-operation must come first; and it can come in no other way than by the change of individual hearts; for public opinion is but the resultant thinking of average men and women. The change must come by the recognition of the world of Spirit as directing the world of Energy, which in its turn rules the world of Matter. This depends on the certain knowledge that the world of Spirit is a reality; and that supplies a reason for the scientific examination of the Spiritualist phenomena. They may be futile, or even dangerous, amusements, according to the use that is made of them, but they contain the germ of knowledge which will finally unify Religion and Science."

(To be continued.)

## DOCTRINE AND DEMONSTRATION.

### THE ÆOLIAN HALL MEETING.

From the point of view of the interest excited, the meeting on the evening of the 10th inst at the Æolian Hall in New Bond Street, may be pronounced a success, the large hall being well filled and the proceedings followed with marked attention. The Battersea Spiritualist Society, under whose auspices the gathering was held, and whose president, Mr. Percy Smyth, occupied the chair, may therefore be congratulated on the result of their enterprise. In his opening remarks, Mr. Smyth emphasised the importance of serious investigation. We must, he said, realise, with Ruskin, that if we want knowledge we must toil for it. Those who had had the greatest experience readily admitted that there was still much to be learned, but if Spiritualists could bring more closely home to men and women the knowledge they had already gained and help them to realise that, whatever their position in life, their birthright was happiness, they would be doing a noble work.

The speaker of the evening, the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, began his address by declaring that Spiritualism—speaking as it did of man's eternal destiny and welfare, and answering questions which had puzzled men from the beginning of the world—possessed an importance which it was impossible to exaggerate. He (the speaker) regarded the facts of Spiritualism as fully established. To him, the most important thing was the teaching to which the phenomena called attention. It had reference to the great eternal Spirit we called God, to man's strict accountability, the inevitable consequences of his actions and the immense importance of character. Mr. Fielding-Ould related one remarkable incident which had come within his own knowledge. It occurred only last December. A Roman Catholic priest unexpectedly visited a sick lady and confessed her just before she died. Asked how it was that he arrived so opportunely, he replied that he came in answer to a telephone message, and he was greatly astonished to receive an assurance, confirmed by his subsequent inquiries, that no such message had been sent. That was a clear case of action either on the part of the spirit of the dying woman herself or of some angel friend on her behalf. The Church knew all about the phenomena of Spiritualism, but viewed its teaching with a distrust due partly to jealousy and partly to the fact that her own doctrines were fixed and formulated. They were the result of a long and passionate search for truth, and it was right that they should be guarded with care. We should think twice or even thrice before throwing over teachings which came to us with so great a weight of authority. We must not accept as the truth of God everything we heard from someone who happened to have quitted this life. One could not overestimate the importance of a right belief. Spiritualism was a good thing in many ways—he knew many people who had been converted from agnosticism by its means—but, like all good things, it might be misused. There was a danger lest, puffed up, we should reject the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Mixed with much good and high teaching from the other side we might get inadequate conceptions and honest errors. It was as though we opened the front door of our house and listened to everything that passed. How were we to avoid evil? By high aspirations. A refined realisation of the true and the false only went with a holy life. "Do the will of God and you shall know of the doctrine." Spiritualism was not a substitute for Christianity. It reaffirmed religion, and religion was the progressive knowledge of God. He was a Spiritualist not because he wanted to get in touch with dead friends, but because Spiritualism strengthened faith, turned hope to certainty and put love back in the old place where Jesus Christ put it.

Mr. Tom Tyrrell then gave some nineteen or twenty clairvoyant descriptions, accompanying them, in many cases, with the name and, sometimes, even the one-time residence of the departed friend or relative described. In a large number of instances the description was recognised, though not always by the person to whom it was specially addressed. Mr. Tyrrell would probably have been more successful but for the fact that he was only newly arrived from a long railway journey from the North and was evidently very tired.

By way of prelude to the meeting, Mr. Alfred Clegg gave a beautiful organ recital and, later in the evening, the audience was treated to two solos, rendered with much musical feeling and expression—"The Better Land," by Miss Queenie Braund, and "Arm, arm, ye Brave" (from "Judas Macabæus"), by Mr. Richard Farmer.

D R.



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### PSYCHIC SCIENCE, THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC.

A great deal of valuable emotion and brain tissue has been and is being wasted over this question of physical phenomena in connection with the Welsh collier medium. Life is too precious to be frittered away in this fashion. There is a right and a wrong way of doing things, and in this instance we have seen an obstinate persistence in entirely wrong methods, which lead nowhere except to confusion and distraction.

The "Daily Express" says that the result of the test séance with the medium Thomas is to show that there is "no evidence of any supernatural power." Nobody but a fool looks for any evidence of the "supernatural" anywhere. Whatever powers and forces there are in Nature must obviously be natural. The only suggestion of anything supernatural we have seen in life is the almost supernatural want of elementary common-sense in the popular investigation of the reality of psychic phenomena. If a man seriously wants to discover the facts he can do so by consulting the records and testimonies of authorities—their names have been repeated in the Press almost *ad nauseam*. If he regards himself (as some do) as the only satisfactory authority on the question, then it is open to him to go seriously to work and investigate the question in his own domestic circle, just as hundreds of others have done, and then there can be no question of fraudulent mediums, conjurers, and all the other red herrings so sedulously trailed across the path of investigation.

We who have given years of careful and painstaking study to the question have arrived at certain conclusions, and we recognise, therefore, that we cannot speak with the same freedom and assurance as those who, knowing just nothing at all, are untrammelled by any sense of responsibility or limitation of knowledge. We know there is a force or power associated with certain human beings, not yet properly understood, more or less capricious, but capable of use as a method of demonstrating the existence of intelligence apart from the human experimenters. The evidence is piled up in many volumes: it is attested by the experiments of thousands of people ranging from eminent scholars and scientists to the ordinary Smiths and Joneses of the community.

Of course there are many persons who are totally unaware of the fact, and seem to feel a sense of injury about it. They passionately repudiate the matter, and appear to labour under the delusion that it is somebody's duty to convince them on pain of their severe displeasure. They vociferate denials and hurl abuse right and left. Of course it is very serious. Obviously the whole cosmic scheme ought to stop until they have had the matter explained to them and given it their solemn imprimatur. We have met them often and had to explain (politely, of course) that it did not really matter a straw whether they believed or not. Their disbelief was their affair, not ours.

All we know is that the question is not to be decided by a general inquisition of newspapers or a whole universe of conjuring entertainments. It can only be settled by serious and scientific study and experiment by people who are willing to abide by the logic of facts.

The "Daily Express" inquiry was by the method of a dark séance held under conditions practically fatal to any possibility of success. We of *LIGHT* have for years discountenanced the method of the dark séance as a public means of inquiry. It is open to the gravest objections—a fertile source of dissatisfaction, misunderstanding and disputation. It is little better than a *cul de sac* as a method of getting anywhere.

Whether the medium, Will Thomas, was well advised in consenting to such a method of vindicating his genuineness is an open question. It was probably a rash proceeding; but it is no affair of ours. The results at best were dubious. That anything at all, doubtful or otherwise, was elicited rather surprised us. We were inclined to anticipate a complete blank in a mixed assembly, some of whom were frankly hostile and contemptuous. However, we noted that the medium and his brother were healthy, "hefty" young miners with very little of gossamer fragility about them, and they appeared to be fairly confident of a successful issue. They struck us as honest, good-hearted, simple minded men, desirous of vindicating their good faith and the reality of the mediumship possessed by one of them. The net result, after some hours of strenuous sitting and singing, was the alleged removal of a metal spring bangle from the medium's arm, but as nobody saw it on his arm before the proceedings commenced, it cannot in strictness be admitted; the removal of a button or medallion from the medium's coat, too trifling an episode to rank as evidence; finally there was the removal of his braces, but as no one could swear he had them on at the time, that also was dismissed as of no particular account. Then several people thought they saw a figure move to and fro in the circle. We did not see this ourselves, and no doubt those who did would be at once classed as Spiritualists, and their evidence discounted. For it is quite understood by this time in newspaper offices and elsewhere that what the Spiritualist says is like what the soldier said—it is "not evidence."

We were sorry for the brothers—they are good fellows enough; kindly, unsophisticated souls. Of their *bona fides* and of the reality of Will Thomas's mediumship we have no doubt whatever, having some previous experiences of the latter under better conditions.

All these excursions and alarms in the Press, the torrent of Press cuttings which descends upon us like a kind of murky snow, the deluge of correspondence imploring us to answer all kinds of silly opinions and ignorant attacks—these things are rather wearing to one's patience. We would much prefer to look on and deal only with the people who are serious in desiring more information, and have no axes to grind, and no private ends to serve. We are frankly tired of the *gobe-mouche*, and of that peculiar type of person who thinks that a fact cannot be a fact if he has not heard of it and given it his approval. Most of all, we are weary of the vacuous people who air their opinions in the Press, having apparently not the remotest idea of what they are talking about. It is about as valuable as an office boy's opinion on the structure of the atom. However, it is apparently what a section of the public want, and they are quite welcome to it so far as we are concerned.

To put the matter in a nutshell, John Bull is, vulgarly speaking, "up against" a new idea, which he regards very much as he regards the influenza germ—something to be sneezed out or otherwise got rid of. He is not fond of new ideas—he never was. It almost needs the use of a surgical instrument. Perhaps the present clamour will do something to accustom him to the innovation. Some little residuum in the way of a faint mental impression will be left. He is told that there is scientific evidence for a life after death and is very much annoyed about it.

Of course, being only human, we may be on the wrong tack and have to admit that, after all, we have only got evidence of a new force or power not previously cognised by Science. So far as human knowledge and certitude can go we feel we have the true solution and that we are really in contact with departed humanity on another plane of *natural evolution*.

But as we do not want to nourish any delusions, we are quite content that our critics shall hammer and pound and pulverise and denounce and deride to their hearts' content. If they are wrong they will find it out in due time. If they are right, then they will have done us a service and destroyed a delusion. So far, however, they have had little success, and there are

eloquent signs that they are aware of having embarked on a hopeless task. We who have tested our position in every imaginable way await the issue with confidence. We have added to our faith knowledge, and can remain tranquil whatever befall.

## FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

Even with a journalism abbreviated by a general dearth of materials, it is impossible to keep abreast of the Press references to our subject. We can only take stock of a few of the more important. It is noticeable that the favourable allusions proceed almost entirely from those who have made themselves acquainted with the matter and who know what they are writing about.

In the "Daily Sketch" of the 11th inst, "Rita"—Mrs. Desmond Humphreys—writes in defence of Spiritualism, and explains some things that puzzle the unthinking. Of the knock or rap she remarks quite aptly that it is the usual method by which we make our presence known on paying a visit "on this material plane." Of course, the grade of intelligence that requires to have this simple matter explained to it reflects severely on the educational methods of the last few generations. Mrs. Humphreys points out, also, that "Our ecclesiastical friends who have got devils on the brain forget that the whole Christian faith . . . is based on spiritualistic phenomena of one kind or other—visions, speaking with tongues, levitation, materialisation, trance, etc."

In the same journal of the 15th, Miss Lind-af-Hageby, has a brightly-written article, "Do the dead live—and speak?" in the course of which she says, "Apart from the froth and frivolities of those who play with ghosts as they would play with God—had they the chance—there is evidence of the growing interest in Spiritualism throughout the world to-day," and she adds: "I am not only absolutely convinced of the possibility of communicating with the so-called dead; I firmly believe that higher human faculties are in process of development which will some day make such communication a perfectly normal and ordinary occurrence." Miss Lind mentions that she has been a student of Spiritualism for some twenty years. The article is accompanied by an alleged photograph, of which we could only say, with the Prince of Arragon in "The Merchant of Venice," "How much unlike art thou to Portia!"

We gather from various pontifical statements on the subject of Spiritualism by leading members of the opposition, that any evidence on the question is suspect if it comes from a Spiritualist. Now the law accepts testimony from the supporters as well as the opponents of any disputed case. And we have it on the authority of Mr. Bumble and many others that "the law is an ass." Can it be that the critics of Spiritualism do not come up to the level of this humble quadruped?

Some observant detective, perhaps fortified by a little Pelmanism, was badly needed at the "Daily Express" "test" séance. Although the medium's thumbs were tightly tied together, a spring bangle was, to all appearance, taken from his arm, but as the search committee had not observed whether he had a bangle on his arm or not, the matter was left in doubt. When his braces also were removed and thrown out into the lap of one of the sitters, once more a blank was drawn, for the observers were unable to testify that he had his braces on at the beginning of the séance. For these lapses of observation, of course, the medium had to suffer, but the whole business was conducted with grave defects of method, to say nothing of the subtler side of the proposition, which concerns mental forces, sympathies and antipathies.

The "Evening Standard," which has given considerable attention to the subject of psychic phenomena, has published a proposal by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (made to Mr. Ulyss Rogers, a representative of the journal, in an interview), that six newspapers—the "Evening Standard," the "Daily Sketch," "Daily Express," "Daily Mail," "Evening News" and "Daily Chronicle" shall send representatives for the purpose of considering a sheaf of correspondence in his possession. This correspondence consists of some thirty letters from various people who have visited Mrs. B., a well-known medium, and received what is regarded as conclusive evidence that they were actually in communication with departed friends.

The "Evening Standard" has (as already indicated) published many articles, letters and interviews on Spiritualism. Amongst these are an interview with Mrs. B. (referred to above) by a representative of the journal, who admits that he received some arresting results, and a brief interview with the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, who is reported as saying that he re-

gards the facts as proved beyond a shadow of doubt, which, of course, we already knew to be his position. He is also stated to have said, "The Church is not astonished or alarmed at the phenomena, but she looks with the utmost distrust at much of the teaching which is given." To our thinking, this movement of modern Spiritualism has been raised up because the Church has failed in its duty. When a truth is neglected or cast out by those appointed to be its custodians or exponents it has a way of coming in from outside, often in a very barbarous and menacing shape for the confusion of those who failed in their duty towards it. Orthodox medicine failing in the same way to recognize the spiritual method, finds itself to-day similarly confronted with Christian Science, New Thought, and a host of other unorthodox healing cults. "God fulfils himself in many ways," and the balance of Nature is always redressed.

The torrent of Press allusions is now growing so formidable as to be beyond all possibility of handling, even if it were necessary. Fortunately, it is not necessary. Many of them are, of course, hostile, which we don't mind. What we do object to is the uninstructed character of a great deal of the criticism. It is ignorant and bumptious to the last degree, and consequently not flattering to the general intelligence; the catchpenny and claptrap element is, of course, also noticeable. But, on the whole, and we speak with some experience of the past, the general level is higher than of old, and many letters and articles are such as we could never have looked for a generation ago. They are the productions of intelligent students of the matter, who can testify to what they know. They are really the only people worthy of any serious attention. We except, of course, the people who sincerely want to know, and who admit their ignorance. They can be taught. But the obstructionist must be left to his own devices. To argue with him is merely to flatter his vanity and minister to his personal ends, which are usually either malice or a desire for notoriety.

The energy of the president of the S.N.U., Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, is to be envied. The last fortnight in February (16th to 30th) he spent in touring South Wales—conducting Sunday services, addressing public meetings and giving lantern lectures on spirit photography. The towns visited included Cardiff, Swansea, Ystrad, Port Talbot, Caerau, Maisteg, Pontypridd, Penrhiwceiber, Merthyr, Barry and Tredegar. Mr. Oaten met everywhere with a courteous reception; many of the clergy attended his week-night meetings, and his audiences were often large—sometimes even crowded—and always deeply interested.

The "Sunday Express" of the 16th inst. publishes an interview with "The Great Raymond," a "clever exponent of legerdemain," who told the interviewer: "I have seen things at séances that it is impossible for me to explain away, and I doubt if any other person could." So now we can breathe more freely. But let the "Great Raymond" have a care. To testify to the existence of a fact in quarters where the fact is unwelcome, is to convict oneself of bias, credulity, emotionalism, weakness of will or judgment and other defects from all which the opponents of the fact are, of course, quite free. They have said so themselves.

From the same journal we learn that at the request of the Rev. J. B. Rattenbury, superintendent of the West London Mission, Sir Henry Lunn is giving a series of addresses on Spiritualism at Warwick-gardens Chapel on Sunday evenings at 6.30. "Sir Henry has announced that he intends to devote his energies to propagating Spiritualism, and he is lecturing gratuitously."

## NAPOLÉON AND THE MUSIC HALL ARTIST.

We take the following from the "Evening News":—

The latest contributor to the controversy on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's spiritualistic séance at Cardiff is Mr. Leo Dryden, the music-hall artist.

"Last October," he writes to "The Evening News," "I received a 'spirit' message from Napoleon which I put into song form and sang with great success. The title of the song is 'The Spirit of Napoleon.' It predicted events that have taken place since I received the 'message.'"

"My latest prediction is that the system of government that Edward Bellamy advocated in his work 'Looking Backward' will be adopted in a very few years. The League of Nations is a step in that direction."

"I would put this question: How is it possible for an uneducated person to write, compose, and sing songs predicting forthcoming events unless inspired by an unseen force? And what is that force?"

\*\* We are rather shy of the multitude of Napoleons, Shakespeares and other great names so freely quoted in these cases. They do not affect the reality of the psychic experience, but they seem to suggest an obscure psychological factor which needs close investigation by trained psychologists.

## THE EVIDENCES OF SPIRIT RETURN.

FINAL EXTRACTS FROM AN INQUIRER'S NOTE BOOK.

BY FRANK KNIGHT.

Looking again through the notes of my sittings with Mr. Aaron Wilkinson, from which I gave extracts in my articles in *LIGHT* of December 28th and January 18th, I find material for one or two more headings, and accordingly submit to the Editor what shall be my final contribution upon this subject.

## 1. Evidence that the communicators retain their earthly affections unimpaired.

(a) My sister-in-law, Mrs. Herbert Knight, has been present at the sittings occasionally. I know very little of her family history, and the persons mentioned in the following description were unknown to me.

Mrs. Herbert Knight's grandmother was stated to be present on one occasion, and her name was correctly given. The further statement was made, "I am her grandmother, not her *step*-grandmother."

I thus learnt for the first time that Mrs. Knight had had a *step*-grandmother.

At another sitting the *step*-grandmother manifested, giving her name, Sarah Rawson, correctly, and requesting that Mrs. Herbert Knight would at once go to see her Aunt Helen, who, it was said, was living alone, getting into years, and much in need of a little love and attention.

Many correct details were given about this Aunt Helen, and after the sitting I found that she had lived with Sarah Rawson, and had nursed her through her last illness. Sarah Rawson had evidently not forgotten this, and was still solicitous for Aunt Helen's happiness.

The next two incidents I mention seem to me rather impressive. I knew neither of the communicators concerned, but have verified the details. Unfortunately I do not feel justified in setting out all the particulars lest I should give pain to surviving relatives, who might possibly recognise them, if, by some remote chance, they read this article.

(b) My friend, Mr. Oddy, was present at a sitting, when a long communication was received for him. It was signed by initials recognised by him alone, and it purported to come from an acquaintance of his recently deceased; a married man, who had left a wife and two daughters.

The writer was apparently suffering from considerable distress of mind, and lamented that he had not earlier returned to consciousness on the other side. "All is so dark at home. In fact my home seems to have gone. Where are the girls, and what of her? If I could have opened up my mind sooner how much better it would have been." Other matter, too intimate for reproduction, followed.

It transpires that after this gentleman's death his family removed to another address. Apparently on returning to consciousness, the father had gone straight to his old home, to discover it dark and empty, and he was quite keenly distressed at his inability to find those he loved.

(c) My cousin, Alfred Thornes, who was killed in the war, has frequently appeared at these sittings. On a recent occasion the medium heard him say, "I have brought Johnson with me, and he wants to send a message to his wife."

Several identifying details followed in regard to Johnson, who was personally unknown to any of the sitters, though I had a vague idea that Alfred had had a friend named Johnson, but I did not know that he was married, or even that he was dead.

Enquiries which I have made confirm all the particulars given by Mr. Wilkinson, and have supplied me with an excellent reason for Mr. Johnson's desire to send a message to his wife.

## II. Indications that the earthly homes of the deceased sometimes provide a link between them and us.

(a) My wife's family home is away in a country town some miles from our present address. She has been present at all my later sittings, but very little of interest has been obtained from her people.

The house in which she was brought up, and in which her mother still lives, was occupied many years ago by a family of the name of Verity, who were distant connections, and it is curious that we seldom have a sitting without some manifestation from one or another of the Verity family, in whom, to tell the truth, my wife is not greatly interested, and of whom I had never previously heard. Presumably the house is the connecting link.

(b) An old gentleman was described, who stated that he had died in the house where we were holding the sitting. He gave the name Edward Umpleby. I thought I knew all about the previous tenants of my home, and denied that anyone had died there, but I was mistaken. On inquiry I have discovered that Edward Umpleby knew better than I did where he had died.

## III. Trivial touches, which help to prove identity.

It is a commonplace in psychical research that trivial details, correctly given, provide the best evidence of personal identity. I give here one or two instances of what I mean.

A man whom I had known very well was described. His full name and many identifying details were given, and it was stated, among other things, that he had died "a disappointed man."

Now he was in quite comfortable circumstances; had a

wife and grown-up family, all doing well. On the surface there was no reason whatever to suspect anything wrong, but I knew his life history, and I know that he was quite rightly described as "a disappointed man."

Another man described and named was stated to have been "a great autocrat." I have good reason to think that the medium was not aware that the gentleman he so described had been for a long number of years the headmaster of a public school, and that among his many good qualities he was famous as a splendid disciplinarian.

Two other examples may be given. An elderly man and his daughter were described and named correctly. They were neighbours of ours many years ago, and the medium was impressed to state that my mother had once given them financial help at a time of great stress.

This was true, but I am sure that the incident was known only to my mother, myself, and one other person, now deceased.

Another neighbour of thirty years ago, who could not give his own name, gave correctly the names of his father and mother, which I did not remember, but afterwards verified. The medium described him as "a very dressy young fellow," and it is a fact that his exquisite attire on all occasions is the outstanding feature of my memory of him.

Just a final word. If the reader cares to go again through the succession of incidents I have narrated in my three articles I think he must be impelled to some theory of supernormal power on the part of Mr. Wilkinson.

The supposition that the medium possessed normally-acquired knowledge of the details is untenable. I could make this clear if I could give exhaustive particulars, but as to the nature of his supernormal power I leave the reader to determine for himself.

## NOTE BY MR. J. ARTHUR HILL.

I have pleasure in confirming the above details and those of the two preceding articles. Mr. Knight took careful notes at all sittings, and I possess duplicates of all his records, sent to me within a day or two of each sitting. We also discussed, with such critical faculties as we possess (this is mock modesty, for we think extremely well of them) the various explanatory hypotheses; and we have arrived at the same conclusions.

*A propos* of the case in which a spirit returned to find his house dark and empty, I may say that I have had similar incidents in my own sittings. A few months ago there died an old friend of our family, who had read a little psychic literature but was not a Spiritualist and had never sat with a medium. I had never mentioned him to Mr. Wilkinson, and I do not believe that the latter knew of his existence or had ever heard his name. At a sitting two months after his death, he was described and named correctly, the medium seeing him quite distinctly, standing by the door with a walking-stick in his hand. Mr. Wilkinson felt that the old gentleman was rather puzzled at finding someone gone away, or his home broken up, or something of that sort. The facts were that the home *had* been broken up and that the daughter who lived with him had gone away; the house was empty, and remains so. It is curious that the spirit was puzzled, for it is pretty certain that he knew while alive that his daughter would go to a married brother or sister after his departure. However, perhaps he was only just waking up from the *post mortem* sleep, and had not quite realised the situation.

I had another similar case recently, concerning a man who had lived in a house belonging to me. Here again I have no reason to believe that the medium had ever heard of him. But the full name was given—with some difficulty—and a line of a certain hymn, this latter apparently for some special reason. The hymn turned out to have been a favourite of his, though I did not know anything about his preferences in that direction, and did not know the hymn. I hope to publish this case in full later on, for it is important as eliminating telepathy from the sitter. The spirit gave the medium an impression that his home had been broken up which was true.

Apparently their first interest after waking up is to see how things are going on at the old place. This is natural enough, as a preliminary to further progress in the new conditions.

ERRATUM.—In the conversation between the Artist's wife and the Engineer in Mr. S. De Brath's Symposium last week (p. 82), we permitted the Engineer to attribute "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism" to Wallace, instead of to Stainton Moses, and to refer to Miss Dallas's book, "Across the Barrier," as "Across the Border." Exceptional pressure of work falling on an inadequate staff is our only excuse.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S MEETINGS.—Mr. Ernest Oaten, who accompanied Sir Arthur on his recent tour, sends us the following list of towns and the numbers of the audiences addressed:—Cardiff, 1,200; Merthyr, 2,000; Newport, 1,500; Swansea, 2,500; Cheltenham, 1,000. Sir Arthur's next tour is as follows:—April 2nd, Darlington; 3rd, Gateshead-on-Tyne (Town Hall); 4th, Edinburgh (Usher Hall); 6th, Glasgow (St. Andrew's Hall); 9th, Liverpool (Philharmonic Hall).



## THE GENESIS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

THE TESTIMONY OF HORACE GREELEY.

By B. M. GODSAL (San Diego, California).

Let us not forget that March 31st is the birthday of modern Spiritualism. It is true that "Spiritualism" in the broad meaning of the term is coeval with humanity—it is true also that much of Christianity was taught in years B.C., but this does not lessen our appreciation of Christmas.

The fascinating story of the advent of our faith, in its modern form, is well told in a book that fully lives up to its long title: "Modern Spiritualism: Its Facts and Fanaticisms, its Consistencies and Contradictions," by E. W. Capron (Boston), 1855. This book should by all means be reprinted, because it is most informing, and open-minded, and frank about the early difficulties—to many of which we have since given names. Moreover, it does justice to the much-suffering mediums, and completely refutes, by original documents, calumnies that are actually repeated to-day. Books go out of print, but lies live on and seem never to lack tongues favourable to their reproduction.

Some day, when the various well-known incidents connected with this first communion between two worlds (under everyday conditions) stand out clearly in their just proportion, we shall appreciate the inherent beauty of the scene. No doubt an artist will arise capable of grouping into one picture all the attendant dwellers of various worlds, from the brightest angels of Heaven down to earth-bound spirits and the children of earth, and prove once more that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." The story should certainly be re-read by Spiritualists because we possess no clearer evidence of direct spirit agency.

It is an error to suppose that the Fox mediums were at all pleased with the notoriety that had been thrust upon them, or that they derived anything from it, during the first six months at any rate, but trouble and financial loss. While the family prayed to be left in peace, the spirits kept urging them to make the facts known far and wide. This struggle with reluctant mediums reached a climax in the month of November, 1848, when after many warnings the spirits withdrew entirely. We are told that after the withdrawal—"for the first three or four days the mediums continued their stoicism; but they soon began to realise their loss, and were affected even to tears when their friends called." So it happened that, when twelve days of complete silence had confirmed this repentant mood, and when the author and another old friend called at the mediums' home and asked the spirits as an especial favour to rap for them, "immediately they were greeted with a perfect shower of raps on the floor, the walls and the ceiling"—and this message was spelt out, "You all have a duty to perform! we want you to make this matter more public." To the reply that ridicule and abuse would be heaped upon them it was retorted, "That will be so much the better—your triumph will be so much the greater." And somewhat later the grand object of this long struggle against mortal fear and obstinacy was divulged through the same mediums: "It is to draw mankind together in harmony, and convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul."

In the spring of 1850 the Foxes were invited to New York, where they remained for two months giving public exhibitions—an event in the history of modern Spiritualism comparable to the arrival of St. Paul at Rome. And here a tribute should be paid to Horace Greeley, America's greatest editor, who at a time when every newspaper in the land was denouncing what a New York paper called "the most superlatively silly, dishonest, immoral, blasphemous imposture ever set up among men" opened the columns of the "Tribune" to the representations of both sides impartially. Undoubtedly this helped the cause enormously—and at a time when it was in need of help. He was the first man to call upon the mediums in New York; and before they returned to Rochester he received them as guests in his own home. After their departure he published in his paper, over his own initials, a long testimony to the genuineness of the phenomena, from which, perhaps, even now, it might be well to quote:—

"Our own dwelling was among those they thus visited; not only submitting to, but courting, the fullest and keenest inquiry. We devoted what time we could spare, out of three days, to this subject; and it would be the basest cowardice not to say that we are convinced beyond a doubt of their perfect integrity and good faith. Whatever may be the origin or cause of the 'rappings' the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly and to our entire satisfaction. How are they caused? . . . He must be well acquainted with the arcana of the universe who shall presume to decide that these manifestations are natural or supernatural. But if we were simply to print the questions we asked and the answers we received we should at once be accused of having done so to sustain the theory which regards these manifestations as the utterances of departed spirits.—H.G."

Our author's comment upon this is quite applicable to the present time:—

"This testimony was due to the Fox family, and was honourable to the independent and high-minded editor, who

dared to brave public opinion, and utter his convictions after a candid and patient investigation. Such a course presents a striking contrast to those lesser lights of the editorial profession who condemn without ever having investigated at all."

In England Spiritualism was for a long time condemned as a species of "Yankee notion." Spirits have explained that in order to break a road through to our world of sense it was necessary for them to commence operations in a small western settlement, because the mental attitude of Americans was favourable, in that they rather look for the unexpected to happen, and will investigate any new thing. Imagine the simple folk of an English village of those days suddenly changed into "spirit mediums" and charged to go forth and tell it to the world! Though the squire might not have known what to make of them, and though the rector might have desecrated the devil in them, still the last word would always have rested with the doctor, who no doubt would have tapped his forehead to indicate the seat of the trouble that would render their confinement in a lunatic asylum inevitable.

But supposing the planning angels had made a concession to our prejudices (if that were in fact possible) and the earliest manifestations had been restricted to high altars, with officiating bishops and priests for mediums, and the odour of sanctity as an essential condition, what a splendid start the new revelation would have made! Yes, and what a miserable finish there would be in store for it, when the human stock upon which the Divine word was engrafted went the way of all human institutions—to decay and death.

Evidently the good God does not graft His truth upon human organisations; rather it is we who insert our scions upon His truth. His hand sows seed, which for a season may be trodden under foot; so let us never feel ashamed of our lowly origin, but rather let it always impart its character to our philosophy. Nature is forever taking us down from our pinnacles—is unceasingly telling us that our conventional superiorities are valueless; but we cling to our easy virtues, and wonder why they receive no recognition from above, oblivious to the truth that as long as we get others to lift us above the grime of the world it is our own souls that receive the stain of it.

### IS THE HOUR OF DEATH PREDETERMINED?

I am constrained to admit the strength of Mr. R. B. Sargeant's argument, and must confess that the catastrophes he supposes have all the appearance of genuine "accidents." We must, I think, take a wider view of Providence, which in its care of the individual will not be disconcerted by such a trifle as death. Let the special protection from wave and wheel, murder and microbe, be conceived of as accorded to those who have a work to do of sufficient importance to warrant their continued physical existence until it is accomplished. God can no doubt prevent our sailing in the ship which He foresees will sink, and will do so if there is any real benefit in our avoiding it. But is there any benefit? The good will gain by passing into the higher life, and the wicked, who must now give an account, will in the long run gain too. It is the people who are neither one thing nor the other, the immature, who are the difficulty; for them the premature passing seems unreasonable, a regrettable "accident" indeed, disorderly, irregular and not in accordance with design. "All things work together for good to them that love God"—but, then, how many love God? "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"—but how many are saints? As Lot was dragged out of falling Sodom by the spirit people (Gen. xix. 16) so some may have been, by a like agency, saved from Pompeii, San Francisco or Ypres.

F. FIELDING-OULD.

### TRANSITION OF MRS. MARY DAVIES.

We have but just learned of the decease of Mrs. Mary Davies, the well-known medium and speaker, who passed away on Friday, the 7th inst., at a nursing home, from cancer. She had been ailing for some time previously. The body was cremated on Tuesday, the 11th inst., at Golder's Green, in the presence of some thirty friends and relatives. Mr. Ernest Beard conducted the service and made some impressive references to the earth life and work of the arisen spirit. There were many floral offerings, including one from the Marylebone Association, which has especial cause to appreciate Mrs. Davies' work as a speaker and clairvoyant on its platform. Indeed, as one of the Council of that Society wrote, "Mrs. Mary Davies has been a great help to the M.S.A. Her clairvoyant powers were always fittingly used from our platform and her assistance to inquirers was of great service. With many others we shall sorely miss this good worker." LIGHT joins sincerely in the expressions of regret and of sympathy with Mr. Davies.

We own to being a little disappointed that no information was received by us concerning the matter until nearly a week after Mrs. Davies had passed on. In the present deluge of Press allusions and discussion it is impossible for us, unaided, to keep abreast of all the events in the movement.

## THE CHURCH AND RECONSTRUCTION.

By ELLIS G. ROBERTS, M.A. (Oxon).

"V.C.D." has achieved a record. I trust he has also established a precedent. In his article on "The Church and Social Service" (LIGHT, p. 77), he has offered a criticism founded on personal, up-to-date knowledge, aimed at a real evil, and calculated to strengthen the hands of reformers within the Church itself instead of merely kindling irritating and otiose controversy. *O si sic omnes!*

The procedure he criticises is only too familiar to the much-enduring clergy. We are "cited" to "conferences" at a centre perhaps fifty or sixty miles from our homes. The meeting is opened with prayers for guidance. Archdeacon Arbuster, whose very considerable periphery, by the way, is encased in a tight-fitting suit of khaki, moves a cut-and-dried resolution. This is seconded at unlimited length by that notable Churchman, Sir Porcius Money-Bagge, who achieved fame by his corner in sausages, and supported by half-a-dozen gentlemen who have been well primed for the occasion. Robinson, late tutor of Trinity, makes some objections to the official scheme, but he is not in the know and thinkers are not men of a ready tongue, so he falls an easy victim to the sarcasms of the Rev. Athelstan Bosher, whose many disasters in the schools were compensated by his triumphs in the debating society of "Cats." And so we pass resolutions in favour of "Life and Liberty," or whatever may be the official panacea for the woes of creation, and we sing "The Church's One Foundation" very much out of time and tune. Then a jaded bishop, who since a hurried breakfast has endured seven or eight hours of oratory, rapidly pronounces a benediction and rushes away on a forty-miles' journey to open a gate—I mean, of course, to consecrate a memorial Lych-gate in the malodorous hamlet of Moreton-in-the Mude.

No wonder that the unsophisticated layman regards such "devotions" as an insult to the Power to whom they are offered. They are one illustration among many of the utter unreality of so much of official religion. And it is at the unreality of the religionist that the Spiritualist should aim his blows, not at the genuine, if obsolete, beliefs of a generation which is extinct or passing away.

"V.C.D." is equally instructive in his practical suggestions. This is no time for building Lady Chapels. If the Church does not within a very short time recover a great deal of the spiritual power she has lost, then her ancient cathedrals will, ere long, be in the hands of Bolsheviks, or, at best, be museums under County Councils. The Church is in desperate plight. Her ablest men are fully aware of the fact, though the Arbusters and Money-Baggies are at present too much for them. The "Hereford Diocesan Magazine," which represents the views of one of the most scholarly chapters in England, deploras the fact that the Church has alienated and continues to alienate "persons of stalwart mind, unblemished record, and deep religious conviction." The Bishop of Manchester, distinguished alike as scholar and administrator, tells us frankly that "want of statesmanship has driven the Church of England on the rocks." He adds that her leaders are trying to rescue the ship "by the aid of compasses pointing in two directions." Such a situation is not to be remedied simply by bidding the crew sing "Yeo, heave ho," and by clamouring for five millions.

Bumptious officials of a Church in such deadly peril are certainly ill-advised to sneer at "revelations which come through automatic scribble and dislocated furniture." But there is a right and a wrong way of replying to such gimcrack gibes as these. "V.C.D." has chosen the right one. More power to his elbow!

## PUBLIC TESTS: WHY THEY ARE OFTEN FUTILE.

"Old Fleet-Streeter" writes:—

"As with religious conviction, the truth of a spiritual world must be brought home to the heart and mind of the individual man or woman. It cannot be done by wholesale methods. I know several men who, like myself, are aware of the reality of physical phenomena. They have tested it, after which they have felt no further interest in the matter. All it has demonstrated to them is that physical phenomena are facts, but as to what these imply they are quite indifferent. They have taken a step in advance of the complete ignoramus who knows all about it without inquiry: but that is as far as they have gone. The fact is that a hostile investigator can always prove the matter to be a fraud if he wants to, by the simple process of destroying the conditions under which any evidential results can be obtained. The protagonists of Spiritualism, on the other hand, are handicapped by a complete inability to command results. All they can do is by care and pains to provide suitable conditions for those who sincerely desire to know the truth, and all these can be rendered completely futile by the interposition of some ill-disposed person who, by a mere twist of the finger, so to speak, can prevent himself or anybody else from getting any evidence whatever."

REDE well thyself that other folks canst rede,  
And truth thee shall deliver, 'tis no drede.

—CHAUCER.

## INDIAN MAGIC.

J. M. T., a lady who has lived in India, sends us the following description of a performance which impressed her even more than the mango and rope tricks, as the latter leave no traces behind and the "water chatty" trick does:—

"The conjurer squats himself down in front of your bungalow and spreads out his paraphernalia on the ground. He takes in his two hands an earthen pot, or 'chatty' (as it is called), quite round, like a big pumpkin, with a narrow, round neck, or mouth to it. He turns it upside down, and with his wand rattles the inside to show that it is empty, and from the sound and the fact of its being upside down resting on the stick, one knows that it is empty. He then puts it on the ground, when a bubbling of water comes out of the mouth. He holds up his wand and tells the water to cease flowing, and it does. Then he holds it perhaps on his shoulders or on his back or against his cheek and the bubbling overflow begins anew. He puts it down and perhaps proceeds to display some sleight of hand wonder, then returns to his 'chatty' and the bubbling overflow starts once more. When he goes not only is his skin wet, but a large pool of water is left in front of the house, which my little boys always gleefully examined when the conjurer was out of sight. All the spectators, natives and Europeans alike, exclaim after one of these visits, 'How is it done? How can he turn the pot upside down on his stick and yet keep the water in?' Persons acquainted with the Madras Presidency will be able to corroborate by their own experience the above account."

## THE MEDIUM AND HIS CRITIC.

The following story reaches us concerning Mr. Tom Tyrrell, the famous provincial clairvoyant:—

On one occasion at a meeting at Warrington a local preacher interrupted Mr. Tyrrell in the course of his clairvoyant delineations with the remark: "It's all rubbish and guesswork!" Mr. Tyrrell retorted that he would willingly vacate his position on the platform and surrender it to the objector, who could then proceed to improvise descriptions himself. This challenge, however, the interrupter refused. The clairvoyant, remarking that he would deal with his critic later, proceeded with his descriptions. The man, who little expected what was coming, had not very long to wait. Suddenly addressing him, Mr. Tyrrell said: "There is a lady of about 73 building up beside you, who gives me the name of Jane Twist." The recipient of this statement was so taken aback that he ejaculated: "Why, that's my mother!" Mr. Tyrrell thereupon added that the lady had brought with her two gentlemen, Joseph and Edward, and his astonished critic, now completely disarmed, promptly claimed one of them as his father. The sequel of the story is that the whilom scoffer subsequently became a convinced Spiritualist.

## THE SOUL AND NATURAL PHENOMENA.

Some mystical writers have traced a subtle connection between humanity and the convulsions of the physical world. Thus the following curious coincidence was noted in the "Times" of the 14th December last:—

"A somewhat strange coincidence has been noted in Jamaica, where, in the district of Portland, an earthquake on August 4th, 1914, preceded by a few hours the news of the declaration of war. On the morning of November 11th, 1918, an earthquake in the same area was felt, shortly before the report of the signing of the armistice arrived."

Another item bearing on the same idea is contained in a letter which lately reached us from a Newcastle contributor, M. M. H. This lady, an intelligent student of psychic problems, tells us that a few evenings previously she was visited by an old friend belonging to what the world calls "the humbler walks of life," who is a remarkable medium. After some chat on ordinary matters the visitor, passing under control, began to speak about the present terrible epidemic of "black sickness," stating that it was caused by the foul condition of the atmosphere, aggravated to some extent by the misuse of science. To the question whether it would soon pass away, she replied, "Not soon; it will go on floating about the world till it wears itself out." Asked if there was no remedy, she said, "Yes, from the earth, from the ground," and, stooping, lowered her arms to the ground and then raised them above her head, repeating the action two or three times. "How?" inquired M. M. H., and the answer was "Minerals." Our correspondent got nothing further in explanation till after her visitor had left, when she suddenly seemed to hear the word "Earthquake." The whole suggested to M. M. H. a prediction of a volcanic eruption, which seems to her a not unlikely event. We must be content to "wait and see."

We are informed of the death recently, in Paris, of Mr. Liddell Mathers, author of "The Kabala Unveiled," but at the time of writing have no further particulars.

## TO-MORROW'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

These notices are confined to announcements of meetings on the coming Sunday, with the addition only of other engagements in the same week. They are charged at the rate of 1s. for two lines (including the name of the society) and 8d. for every additional line.

**Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W.1.**—6.30, Dr. W. J. Vanstone. March 30th, Mrs. E. A. Cannock. See front page.

**The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke-place, W.2.**—11, Mr. E. W. Beard; 6.30, Mrs. Worthington. Wednesday, March 26th, 7.30, Mr. Thomas Ella.

**Camberwell Masonic Hall.**—11, church service; 6.30 Mrs. Cannock. 30th, 6.30, Mrs. Beaumont-Sigall.

**Croydon.**—117b, High-street.—11, Mr. Percy Scholey; 6.30, Mr. Robert King.

**Harrow and Wealdstone.**—Gayton Rooms, Station-road, Harrow-on-the-Hill.—6.30, Mrs. James Allen.

**Kingston-on-Thames.**—Bishop's Hall.—6.30, Miss Violet Burton, trance address.

**Lewisham.**—The Priory, High-street.—6.30, Mr. H. Boddington.

**Reading.**—Spiritual Mission, 16, Blagrove-street.—11.30 and 6.45, Mr. P. R. Street.

**Walthamstow.**—342, Hoe-street.—7, Address and clairvoyance by Mr. Trinder.

**Battersea.**—45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.—11.15, circle; 6.30, Mrs. Neville; cornet solo by Mr. W. T. Hedger. 27th, 8.15, Mrs. Bloodworth.

**Holloway.**—Grovedale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station).—11.15, address by Mr. Thos. Davis; 3, Lyceum; 7, Mrs. Crowder (late of Sheffield). Wednesday, Mr. W. J. Parry.

**Woolwich and Plumstead.**—Perseverance Hall, Villas-rd., Plumstead.—7, Mr. R. G. Jones, address and clairvoyance.

Wednesday, 8, Mrs. Cannock, address and clairvoyance.

**Brighton.**—Windsor Hall, Windsor-street.—Mrs. A. Jamrach, addresses and descriptions: 11.15, Windsor Hall; 7, Athenæum Hall. 3, Lyceum. Monday, 8, healing.

Wednesday, 8, public meeting.

**Brighton.**—Old Steine Hall.—11.30 and 7, addresses and clairvoyance, Mrs. Bloodworth; 3, Lyceum. Monday, 7.45, brief address and psychic reading, Mrs. Bloodworth.

Tuesday, 7.45, special lecture, Mr. H. G. Massingham, "Buddhism and Its Humane Ideas," admission free, collection. Thursday, 7.45, enquirers' questions and clairvoyance. Friday, Guild. Forward Movement, Athenæum Hall, Sunday next, 3 p.m., lecture, Miss Lind-af-Hageby, "Spiritualism and Progressive Thought." Chair, H. G. Massingham, Esq. Reserved seats, 2s. and 1s. Admission free. Collection.

**LITTLE ILFORD SOCIETY'S DISTRESS FUND.**—Mrs. Alice Jamrach (11, Sheringham-avenue, Manor Park) desires, on behalf of the above fund, to acknowledge with warm gratitude the receipt of two parcels of clothing from Mrs. Hudson, of Huddersfield.

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## THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES

By 'M.A. (Oxon.)'

## ADVICE TO INQUIRERS

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct seances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

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

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

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

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

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restriction on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

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

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

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