

Light:

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"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way. By "M.A.(Oxon.)" 37	Theosophic Teachings. By C.C.M. 43
Power of Imagination 38	Society for Psychical Research 44
A Personal or Impersonal God 38	The Himalayan Slopes 45
Spiritualism at Home. By Miss F. J. Theobald 39	The Domestic Ghost 45
Painting Mediumship 40	Neuric Force 46
Somnambulist Introspection 41	Prenotions of Death 46
Dreams 41	Luminous Appearance in a Church-yard 46
Thought-transference and Clairvoyance 42	Spiritualism in London and the Country 47

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The narrative contributed to the last number of "LIGHT" by Professor Barrett shows that there are two sides to Spiritualism, and conveys an impressive warning against a too hasty meddling with a comparatively unknown subject. No instructed student of psychical phenomena doubts that unbalanced minds may be upset by dwelling on strange and new experiences, any more than it is to be doubted that exciting religious experiences have overthrown many an intellect that possibly wavered before the tide of enthusiasm swept it away. The risk of obsession, too, is one that only the uninstructed will despise. The undeveloped spirits who hang round the threshold of the door set ajar are *sometimes*—but by no means *always*—inconvenient and troublesome guests. I have been troubled by such; but I have also learned from them many a lesson of great value. We are apt to magnify the malignity, or vicious intents, or devilry of these unprogressed spirits. They are not necessarily evil, or even mischievous, because their opportunities for development (thanks to some of our foolish habits, or laws, or prejudices) have during their life on earth been small. If evidence of this be asked for, it may be found in the fact that so little apparent harm results to the frequenters of promiscuous sances. I do not know what is the nature of the *nidus* of which Professor Barrett speaks, which renders some psychical influences poisonous as "the contagion of small-pox or scarlatina." But I should expect to find it rather in the chance gatherings of a promiscuous sance than in the seclusion of such a family circle as he describes. Yet my experience does not furnish me with more than a few, a very few, cases of harm resulting from such sittings. And I do know many cases in which supreme satisfaction and earnest conviction, a reformed life, and the germs of a renovated faith have been the outcome of such experiences as can be had in that easy way. The proportion on the side of good is enormous.

Moreover, the question should be contemplated from the point of view of duty and from the side of the communicating spirits. I have had long personal experience of spirits who habitually came and asked for prayer; I have heard of such cases from others, as I have also read them in books. It is, indeed, no infrequent experience. Such spirits have repeatedly expressed themselves as benefited by prayer, and by association with spirits on a higher plane of progression than themselves. They are elevated and blessed by such intercourse. Who shall say that this is not a sufficient reward for any little trouble we may take, or annoyance that we may suffer from the presence of these undeveloped spirits? I believe that spirits who can be called evil, malignant, or devilish are few: the ignorant, the frolicsome, the earthy, whose treasure is here still, are many. But we can

help them, and they will not hurt us. It is well to recognise the dangers that necessarily attach to the study of this subject. But these are no more to be deterrent, in the light of duty, than the possibility of infection is to deter the physician from visiting his patient. But in this case the question of duty is what presses. Curiosity or idle meddling is another thing.

So that this impressive, and, as I think, much needed warning, must not be pushed too far. My interest in the narrative is the greater from the curious parallel that it presents to my own experiences of some ten years ago. Our circle was the scene of much that is paralleled by what Mr. D. records, as well as of much that transcends what he has written. The power was apparently as irresistible, the phenomena as strange, the influence over one of our number as erratic at first. But persistent and judicious experiment overcame the difficulties, and that which had seemed disorderly was reduced to system. Except where we, or conditions unknown to us, upset the regularity of the proceedings, or interfered with the unseen operators, all was evolved in orderly sequence until the work was complete, and the evidence of spirit-power ceased. It is, of course, absurd to write dogmatically about such a case as Mr. D.'s; but I should expect to find F. a nervous, sensitive, and perhaps, timid person, whose nature was not robust enough to withstand the series of shocks that every medium must go through in the course of development. This development in his case was probably interrupted at a critical period by the abandonment of the sittings; and he has remained, I take it, ever since, in a condition of partial development, in which he is a prey to inferior and unprogressed spirits—a victim to the nervous derangement which would be removed by complete development. It is melancholy to think that he and his friends have got from their abortive attempts to penetrate into a country where all is strange, unknown, and, therefore, more or less calculated to terrify, nothing but shattered health, and an abiding dread of that which (rightly understood) is an invaluable training for the soul; while we, on the contrary, from a somewhat similar experience—in which the ordeal was certainly not less severe—succeeded, by perseverance and patient continuance, in bearing away a settled conviction and a steady faith, a knowledge that no assaults can injure, and a hope that could have sprung (for us) in no other way.

But this is to be expected from the very nature of the investigation, and it is by no means to be deprecated that people should be warned of the risks that they may possibly incur. There is risk, and need of care, and patient thought, and prayerful attitude of spirit. The danger of obsession is real: the risk that frivolous and curious meddling with these matters entails is one that must be reckoned with; but the risk is by no means all. There is, as I have endeavoured to shew, another side to the question. But these experiences, essentially educational in their nature and intention, come most frequently unsought, bringing a blessing to one, to another apparently nothing but confusion and distress. They are not to be reproduced at will; and though the Society for Psychical Research may well hope to throw some light on the facts themselves, as well as on

the laws which govern the influence of mind on mind, and possibly more than this, these *spiritual* experiences will, if I am not very wrong, remain a mystery to human science. No trace of law can be detected in them. We cannot reduce them to system, any more than we can regulate and tabulate the mysterious strivings of a human soul when it is intromitted into the spiritual state, and wrestles in prayer for aid against the tempters that beset it. To each, his own experience, singular and separate from all other. To each, his own peculiar training, of which he must make what is possible for him. But to the curious meddler, the man of unbalanced mind, the depraved, the sensual—and to some who, as man sees, are none of these—grave danger, and sometimes shipwreck. These, however, are the exceptions; the rule is otherwise.

I am told that the "Stars and the Earth," which I lately reviewed, and which is a book of high merit, is the work of Dr. Felix Eberty, of the University of Breslau. It is entered under his name in the British Museum Catalogue, and he is described as its author in a note prefixed by the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* to his articles on "Good and Evil," contributed under his own name to that magazine by Dr. Eberty soon after his book first appeared, more than twenty years ago.

The following cases, which form a parallel to some recently mentioned by me as illustrative of the power of the imagination, are cited in Carpenter's "Mental Physiology" (Fourth Edition, p. 158), from Professor J. H. Bennett's "Mesmeric Mania of 1851":—

"A clergyman told me that some time ago suspicions were entertained in his parish of a woman who was supposed to have poisoned her newly-born infant. The coffin was exhumed, and the Procurator-fiscal, who attended with the medical men to examine the body, declared that he already perceived the odour of decomposition, which made him feel faint, and in consequence he withdrew. But on opening the coffin, it was found to be empty; and it was afterwards ascertained that no child had been born and consequently no murder committed.

"The second case is yet more remarkable. A butcher was brought into the shop of Mr. Macfarlan, the druggist, from the market-place opposite, labouring under a terrible accident (*sic*). The man, on trying to hook up a heavy piece of meat above his head, slipped, and the sharp hook penetrated his arm, so that he himself was suspended. On being examined, he was pale, almost pulseless, and expressed himself as suffering acute agony. The arm could not be moved without causing excessive pain, and in cutting off the sleeve, he frequently cried out; yet when the arm was exposed, it was found to be quite uninjured, the hook having only traversed the sleeve of his coat."

I am indebted to Mrs. Penny for the subjoined narrative, which is sufficiently varied in its main feature from the ordinary story of an apparition at the moment of death, to have an added interest of its own:—

"Two cousins of mine, middle-aged people of remarkably sound good sense, sat one winter day by the fire, about 4.30 p.m., talking of small household affairs. There was a little girl in the same room, and no one else in the house, their one servant being busy in a yard some little way apart from it. One of the sisters said to the other, 'But you know we cannot do that next week'—and before she could finish her sentence, a third and strange voice interposed with, 'Why not?' in the quiet tone of a person conversing with them.

"The little child looked scared, and ran to look behind a table to see if any one was hiding; the sisters, much startled, to door and shuttered windows, to see if any one was in the house or just outside it: but not a creature was near.

"Shortly afterwards they heard of the death of a cousin about the time of that surprising query,—a relation of whom they had seen little, and for whom they cared too little even to think of him often.

"The name of my cousins is Brown, and this happened at Bridgnorth. I sent them this report of what I remembered their telling me, *visá voce*, years ago, and had it verified, before forwarding it to you."

M.A. (Oxon.)

A PERSONAL OR IMPERSONAL GOD?

Feeling grateful for Mr. Haughton's few and admirably clear words about a "personal" God, I wish to express my deep sense of obligation. In these days any fixed point of belief is, by believers, so seldom separated from obscurities of thought that I think the world much indebted to those who can effect such clearance. For want of a fitting equivalent to the word "Ego," the word *person* seems to me to have served to cover the most irrational confusions of thought; and these have landed some minds in an abyss of high sounding verbiage, where not only all clear ideas must have been lost, but the peace resulting from a distinct object of worship also. To worship or obey an impersonal God would be about as possible as to worship and obey magnetism or electricity. It is only of late that currency has been given to the very important conception that all life and power throughout the universe is Divine power under manifold modifying conditions (which widely differs from the belief of the Pantheist that every being is Divine)—but as a personal, *i.e.*, a consciously willing and creating God, claims obedience from creatures cognisant of His love and power, and such claims are irksome to modern philosophers, the perverse and rootless deduction from that truth has been made, that because life and its love and power are diffused in all beings, *therefore* there can be no one Being who diffused it; and that consequently God is, as Mr. Haughton shews, inferior to man—a permeating essence, and not the Father of Spirits, and Maker of Heaven and Earth.

If one or two atomic molecules of skin under the sole of a man's foot could philosophise, they might naturally adopt the same theory as to man, and feeling warm and comfortable might pronounce him to be no individual being, but warmth or circulation of the blood.

I am very much obliged to Mr. Haughton. "Blank Atheism" has so many interesting new names that it is well they should now and then be translated into plain old English.

January 20th, 1883.

A. J. PENNY.

To my mind, as, doubtless, to many others, the letter of Mr. G. D. Haughton in your last issue merely illustrates the utter inadequacy of language to express the Infinite—to define what (in the original significance of the word) we may *understand*, but cannot *comprehend*. For me it is equally impossible to regard the supreme Intelligence of the material and of the spiritual worlds as a *person* or *individual*, or as an impersonal principle. The idea of any "bodily configuration"—even that of the whole material universe—is necessarily inadequate and deficient in reverence, because it implies a limitation. But I apprehend that the Infinite Being, God, is not altogether apart from, is not wholly outside of, any existent being or thing. He is in all, but all are not in Him. The highest Spirit may say: "I and my Father are one"; the lowest has yet to realise the Fatherhood of God and His all-embracing immensity. At every step upwards in aspiration and knowledge must we not still repeat "*nescio!*" till He "hath made the whole complete"?

DESMOND G. FITZGERALD.

I am unwilling to encroach on your valuable space by entering on the never-ending controversy of the nature of Deity, but there was one remark in the article of your correspondent, G. D. Haughton, which seems to me to require further explanation, to elucidate his meaning. I refer to the phrase, "God must be able to communicate with matter, and to originate force to impel and sustain it, for matter is inert in its own essence."

Now, without further entering into the question of the "structure" of Deity, I may venture to inquire what your correspondent understands by the essence of matter, and how that essence can be inert. Are not all atoms of so-called matter the effect of the correlation of two great forces forming, as it were, one? Is not force itself but the outward expression of the interior essence? How, then, can effect be independent of cause, so as to require the *origination* of that cause to impel and sustain it?

London, January 22nd, 1883.

F. ARUNDALE.

In "Notes by the Way," March 26th, 1881, was published a case of an apparition at the time of death. W. L., in America, suddenly taken ill, appeared to his father and mother in England at or about the time when he died, "showing much anxiety to get to England and see his mother." I am anxious to verify that story at first hand for the benefit of the Society for Psychical Research. Will the correspondent who sent it, and whose letter is mislaid, kindly enable me to do so?—M. A. (Oxon.)

SPIRITUALISM AT HOME.

By F. J. Theobald.

About ten years ago some friends, whom I will call Mr. and Mrs. K., came to spend a few weeks in the pretty suburban village where I then resided. They were much interested in Spiritualism, and we held several sances together. My friends were accompanied by their adopted daughter, whom I will call "Annie," and who had become a trance medium. Her power had developed naturally, i.e., without any effort; in fact, rather against, than in accordance with, her own will; for she, having been brought up in the sphere of rigid orthodoxy, had lingering scruples as to the propriety, wisdom, or right of yielding to these hitherto latent and unknown powers. It was only by gentle persuasion that we could induce her not to resist the influence, when we met en sance to wait for the spirit, and in all due reverence and prayerfulness to accept what should be given to us.

Annie had no knowledge of the various phases of mediumship or thought familiar in the spiritualist circles. She knew nothing of the laws of correspondences or of symbolism, by means of which so much that is given by spirit teaching can alone be interpreted. Thus, the little account of the poor spirit calling herself "Betsy," which crops up most unexpectedly at several successive sances, is of the deepest interest, the symbolic teachings conveyed in her simple words being full of instruction. With but slight alterations, and occasional explanations, I now give some few extracts from my Spiritual Diary of the experiences of those few weeks.

I find our first sance took place at my friends' lodgings. Mr. and Mrs. K., Annie, and myself were (as with but few exceptions) the only persons present.

May 3rd, 1871.

In a short time Annie was entranced. Her countenance was expressive of deep sorrow, and there was a peculiar sound in her throat, like choking. As soon as the spirit had gained sufficient control, we entered into conversation with her; for it proved to be the spirit of a very poor ignorant woman. In answer to our questions we learned that her name was "Betsy." She had been in the spirit land about five years, and was very unhappy. She dwelt much on the cruelty of her husband, and of the miserable surroundings of her earth-life. We asked the cause of her death.

"Oh, it was dreadful! I was choked!"

"Do not bright spirits come to help you?"

"Yes, but they are too bright, I cannot look at them."

"What sort of a home do you live in?"

"Very miserable. Only one room. I have no door, and only one window."

She expressed great hatred against her husband, saying she never could forgive him. We told her that, in all probability, it was on account of these revengeful feelings she was kept from rising; that if she would but pray to be enabled to conquer them, and endeavour to forgive her husband, she would soon progress towards a happier state. She promised to try to follow our advice, and then left, unwillingly.

May 4th.

Mr. K. went up to London to-day, to attend some sances, leaving it uncertain as to when he should be back. I determined, in case he did return in time on the 5th, that I would go to their rooms in the evening and have a "sitting;" but I did not mention my intention to any one.

On the morning of the 5th, Mr. K. went—an entire stranger—to Messrs. Herne and Williams, and had a most satisfactory sance with them. John King, the spirit, spoke, and addressing him by his name (which no one in the room knew) said: "Well, Mr. K., how is Miss Theobald?" Mr. K., in surprise, said, "Do you know Miss Theobald?" "Of course I do," replied the spirit. "We could not do without F. J. T. She's going to have a sance to-night. I'll come, and speak, if I can."

On account of this intimation from John King, Mr. K. returned early in the afternoon, called in to see me on his way home, and telling me these details, asked me if John King was correct! Now, had this piece of information been given through "John Watt" (i.e., the spirit who has for years manifested by direct voice through our kind friend, Mrs. Everitt's, mediumship), I should have felt less surprise; it would not have been the only time he has shown himself familiar with my untalked-of plans. But as I never have attended any sance where John King speaks, and have never met any of the mediums through whose power he is able to communicate, it is a matter of surprise

and wonder that he should have thus proved himself so wise respecting my unspoken thoughts!

About seven o'clock in the evening we assembled en sance. First came long, and as it proved, most characteristic messages, given through my writing mediumship, purporting to be from close relatives of the K.'s. Suddenly a fresh influence came, and "John King" wrote a few words, but said he could not do much with me; he would try to speak through Annie. . . . Annie was soon entranced, and "John King" announced his presence in a jolly, rollicking way, but still saying, "I must be gentle here, this medium is very refined." We asked where the medium's spirit was. "Up there," he answered, pointing upwards and chuckling mischievously. "She don't like it much! Too much philosophy for her! The old lady she is talking to is too wise!" From his description we concluded that Annie was conversing with Mr. K.'s mother, who had been writing through me, and whose characteristic shown therein, and recognised thereby, by her son, was a love of discussion upon any deep philosophical subject. . . . All at once came the choking sound in the medium's throat, and John King, turning sharply round, addressed some spirit, saying, "Go away! you shan't come here!" We asked "Who is it, John?" Turning round, again he spoke to the spirit, and after a pause, said, "She says her name is Betsy." "Ask her what she wants to say to us?" we said. (Another pause.) Then spoke John, "She wishes me to tell you she's 'agiven her husband; you know she means forgiven, but she's very ignorant, and said 'agiven. She says she's prayed, and prayed, and prayed, all day, and then she 'agave him. And now she has two windows instead of one."

John promised to "give her (Betsy) a look now and then, and do his best to help her."

We had a long conversation with John, during which he frequently congratulated himself upon his possession of the medium, and chuckled in an amused way over her unwilling absence from her body. We begged him not to exhaust Annie, and John assured us he would not tire her, adding, "You know, those poor things like Betsy, drive upon her too much. Now I'm strong and jolly! bless you, I shan't hurt her." . . . When Annie awoke she had no recollection of where her spirit had been, but felt perfectly well; not at all exhausted, as she did after any sad spirit like Betsy had been.

May 7th.

We had a sance with several friends besides ourselves. "John King" came with difficulty. He told us "Betsy had progressed so well that she sent us word she had a door now!" John added, "She always had the door; but until she had her two windows she could not see it!" . . .

Evidently these messages from Betsy bear a symbolical signification, as well as a literal one, windows signifying light and knowledge; the door meaning progress to a higher condition.

May 10th.

We had this evening one good proof that the answers given to our questions by the spirits, were not the result of thought-reading. Mr. K. and Annie came to spend the evening with me; Mr. and Mrs. H. joined us. Mrs. K. was unable to be with us, because of illness. Annie was entranced, and after several controls, with whom we had much interesting conversation, an Indian spirit came. I (thinking of Mrs. K., who was alone in their lodgings) asked the spirit, "What is Mrs. K. doing?" "She's sitting there reading," he replied, pointing to the part of the room where Mr. K. was sitting. For the instant I was completely puzzled, but soon found that the spirit was referring to Mr. K.'s spirit-mother, and not his wife. He told us she was studying a book "Alpha." This corroborated a message which had been written through my mediumship, early in the evening when Mrs. K., senior, told her son that she was "getting ready to discuss with him." . . . Once during the evening the Indian spirit suddenly ceased speaking. We asked many questions, but no notice was taken. Suddenly he made some remark. I asked, "Why have you not replied to our questions?" "What questions?" he asked. "I've heard none! I've been away looking for John King. I wanted to ask him about those photographs" (referring to a previous subject). He sent a message to you something about a 'Betsy who is a great deal happier, because of a door!' . . .

(This was the last we heard of poor "Betsy.")

May 11th.

This evening we were alone—i.e., Mr. and Mrs. K., Annie, and F. J. T.

As soon as Annie was entranced a spirit, who said he was a "navvy," spoke in a broad country dialect.

We asked him to describe any spirits who were present.

"I see three women," he said, and went on to describe the neat, characteristic Quaker costume peculiar to the family of both Mr. and Mrs. K. . . . He then turned round to me, saying, "There's a ———" Then he stopped, apparently listening to something. After a minute or so he continued, in a very subdued tone of voice: "I'm told I'm to say, 'lady.' There's a lady by you." We could not help laughing, and I said that we might be sure such conventional terms or distinctions were dispensed with in the spirit-world, that I never thought of my guardian spirit-mother as a "lady," but only as a bright, beautiful female spirit.

"I meant no offence," he said. "They are all women to me. I didn't know no better!"

I had a most interesting conversation with mamma, the spirit evidently listening for the reply given by her to my questions, and then repeating it to me. I asked her why she could not herself control Annie, and thus speak more directly. She told us that during the early stages of trance mediumship the less advanced spirits could gain control more easily than the higher spirits. When mamma had left, Mr. K. asked his mother if she could not give some message to him. The spirit, turning round, seemed to be listening attentively, but with a most bewildered expression of countenance.

"Speak plainer! Speak louder!" he kept saying. "I can't understand you."

At last he turned towards us, and in a most disheartened tone of voice, exclaimed:—

"Such a long message, and I can't tell you half! She uses such hard words for me. I don't know much. She can write through you" (pointing to me), "but she can't speak nohow through me! 'Compound,' 'mediumship,' 'rationalistic,' and a lot of words like that; but I can't remember all."

Speaking among ourselves of the spirit in control, we observed that he was evidently a low spirit, meaning undeveloped or ignorant. Suddenly he said, in an injured tone, "I'm not a low spirit; I'm a good sort of fellow. I used to go to chapel and to read my Bible when I was in your world."

We asked, "Do you find all that you were taught by your minister true?"

"No," he replied quickly, "not all, for he said some would be lost, and that is not true, for we are all taught. I go to school; I'm learning well. I'm not low."

During the following week, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt came, and most kindly agreed to have a séance with us. All who have had the privilege of being with this singularly gifted medium will understand the great boon it was to my friends to have this opportunity of witnessing the most beautiful manifestations which occur in her presence. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pearce and my brother (Mr. Morell Theobald) joined us, at Mr. K.'s rooms, so that we formed a circle of ten.

I find entered into my diary that we had the usual raps, movement of the table without human contact, deliciously scented breezes, and brilliant spirit lights, flashing about the room. Then we all heard, first the distant, then the gradually approaching rumbling sound which heralds the approach of "John Watt." So strong was the power that every article of furniture in the room was in a strong tremor.

At last John raised the tube off the table, flourished it about the room, rapping several of us with it on our heads ("to gain power," he said), and then spoke clearly and loudly to us. A very dear friend had recently passed away from our midst. Thinking of him, I said to John Watt, "Have you seen our dear friend, John?"

"I've not seen him yet," he replied, "but I have heard he is here."

"Who told you?" I asked.

"A brother spirit said to me, 'Brother L. has got over the river,' but he is still sleeping. I've not seen him yet."

We had, as we do invariably in Mrs. Everitt's presence, some most delightful converse, upon different spiritual subjects.

When the time came for us to break up the circle, in order that friends present might not lose their trains to get home, John Watt bade us a courteous adieu, threw down the tube, and left.

This was as pleasant a finale as we could have to these few successive séances "at home," in which my friends were as much interested as I was myself.

MEDIUMSHIP FOR PAINTING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have had a rather interesting séance with my old and esteemed friend Mr. J. C. Wright, of Liverpool, a record of which may not be without value to your readers. On Sunday evening, the 7th inst., after having delivered an eloquent oration at New Mills, he accompanied me home to be my guest for the night. While sitting round the fire, after supper, our friend Mr. Wright dropped off into a trance. Among several controls who took possession of him was one who gave the name of James Barry, and who stated that he lived and died in Cork, and was by profession a painter, and concluded by offering to produce me a small painting, under the following conditions: that I should furnish paints (water colours), two paint brushes, one small and the other larger, and a piece of cardboard about eight inches by six or seven. We were to sit in a very dim light, and the medium's face was to be covered over with a cloth, and tied in a knot at the back of the head.

Having provided a box of paints and brushes, and laid them and the cardboard on the table, we sat on Wednesday night, the 10th inst., at 7.30, in a very subdued light. We had barely taken our seats when the medium was entranced. My daughter, who is seventeen years of age and a strong physical medium, sat on the left of Mr. Wright; my wife being opposite and facing the medium, and myself being on the right. I had previously bound a thick cloth over the eyes of the medium, enveloping his head and face entirely down to his upper lip, drawing it tight under his nostrils, thus shutting out all possibility of his seeing by means of his natural eyesight. He took the brushes one by one from the case, examined them, and choosing two for his purpose, immediately set to work selecting the various paints with seeming facility. In a few minutes the ground-work of the picture was complete; a huge rocky bluff put in on the left, and what seemed sea stretching to the right and far away into the distance, until sea and sky blended into one. At this point the medium threw down the brush, lay back in his chair, and seemed thoroughly exhausted. In a minute or two the control said, "I am afraid, John, this will have to complete my first attempt; the medium has been sitting too much this afternoon, and there is a great loss of power." He had given two sittings to private friends, one after dinner and the other immediately before we sat for the painting. The control continued, "Yes, I can now fully appreciate the difficulties I have to overcome; I must be able to grasp the whole of the medium's mind. My main difficulty is want of lucidity. I could not have accomplished this much in any other circle but the one in which the medium has developed. But sit again in half-an-hour."

The medium came out of trance, and we sat chatting until the expiration of the half-hour, when we again took our places round the table, the medium blindfolded as before. The control at once took possession of the medium, took up the brush, and essayed his task again; but the medium seemed very much distressed, shook his head, and the control said that the conditions were not improved—in fact, they were rather worse. I begged him to try and give the painting a little more form if possible. The medium lay back in his chair for a few minutes. At last he roused up, stretched himself, and the control exclaimed: "Dear me! we are all dead; magnetise the medium." I made a few passes. The control raised his hand in signal for me to cease, and said: "I want you all to fix your gaze on the picture; it will assist materially the *lucidity* which is necessary, and I will try and outline it." He then took the brush, and after mixing the colours he touched up the sky and rocks and sea rapidly, and threw down the brush again, saying, "There! I have done what I can at this time; it is our first attempt. I have one or two difficulties to overcome; we shall again attempt the task at some future opportunity, when we hope to have more complete success."

So ended our séance. The painting is far from being a work of art. In fact it is but very imperfectly finished. The scene, however, is before you; the huge rocky bluff washed by an angry sea which stretches far away to the sky line; on the summit of the bluff, in a heap, are large, almost perpendicular rocks; further inland are indications of an old castle in ruins; while along the blue sky are drifting masses of white and grey clouds. And though the picture is far from what I could wish, there is ample promise for the future. However, as it is, there is abundant proof to my mind of avenues of perception and sight outside, apart and independent of, the natural organs of vision. Another fact seems evident from the remarks of the

control, viz., that lucidity on the part of the medium may be supplied by, or drawn from, the minds of the sitters present. How this is effected is a mystery which, I fear, will rest with us till death shall clear our perceptions. Two solutions present themselves, however, to my mind. Either the control, or the spirit friends assisting him, can look through my open vision on to the picture as it is being manipulated by the medium, or they are enabled to look into my mind as into a looking-glass and see the picture in its various stages of progress. However, this is only a guess, and like most guesses, may be very wide of the truth.

I trust Mr. Wright may have an opportunity soon to give me still further proofs of the wonderful elasticity and adaptability of his mediumship, when you may hear from me further.

I enclose a strip of the cloth used in covering Mr. Wright's eyes.—Yours very truly,

Hayfield,

16th January, 1883.

JOHN LITHGOW.

SOMNAMBULIC INTROVISION, CLAIRVOYANCE, &c.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The following contains, apart from its general interest as a history of a cure by vital magnetism, some particulars which, I think, will interest all students of psychical science. I condense it from the records of a case communicated by M. Durville to the *Journal du Magnétisme* of October.—Yours truly,

J.D.

Madame Durieu, aged twenty-five, of a nervous temperament, and mild but excitable disposition, had been an invalid for six years. She had been under the treatment of various physicians, almost all giving a different diagnosis of her malady. She had been treated for debility, for spinal weakness, for weakness of the lungs, for consumption, for nervous disorder, for hysteria, for neurosis; in every case in vain or with aggravation. She was brought to me for magnetic treatment as a last resource.

I made the following record of the case:—A general prostration of strength, congestion of upper portion of lungs, bronchial irritation, pains and strange sensations in the region of the heart, torpid digestion, trouble of the head and confusion of thought, sleeplessness, excessive sensitiveness, pain and weariness and hurried respiration in walking.

I began my treatment of magnetisation by slow, gentle, more or less distant passes, from head to feet, for half an hour at a sitting. At the third daily operation she passed into the somnambulatory sleep, in which she saw her interior condition, and described the minute bloodvessels on the surface of the apex of the heart as congested almost to the degree of extravasation. I would not have her look at this too long.

The next day her somnambulatory sleep was complete, with good lucidity. She saw that the movements of the heart were embarrassed from the congestion. In addition to the careful magnetisation I gave her a small glass of magnetised water to drink. I asked her to note the effect of it. She said, "I see that it goes to the heart; it warms and vivifies it; the heart seems environed by it as with a beautiful flame; it comes from the water in the stomach; oh, it is so beautiful!" &c.

A few days after, on passing into the sleep, she saw all her interior organs as those of another person, and gave particular instructions as to the magnetisations, so as to avoid complicating the condition, and to bring all the organs into orderly action.

At the next magnetisation she became still more lucid, and predicted the disappearance of her most painful symptoms. She said she saw the magnetism attracted to the suffering organs, especially the heart, which derived the force from it necessary for the rectification of its disordered state.

Unhappily, while advancing so well, she was one day overwhelmed by an exciting emotion, arising from some family trouble; this brought back many of her painful sensations. But by tranquil magnetisations and the use of magnetised water, externally as well as internally, we regained our lost ground.

Now family affairs required that she should prepare to go in a few days to Lausanne (Switzerland). In the somnambulatory sleep she saw that I could continue the magnetisation *à distance*. In order to test this I arranged with her husband that at a precise hour in the evening I would, from my home, magnetise her in their hotel apartment. At the hour fixed I directed my will towards her with the intention of bringing on the sleep; at first I acted strongly, then gently; then I addressed certain mental questions to her. At the end of fifteen

minutes I willed her to awake, making the corresponding passes as if present before her. At my next visit the husband told me that at the time agreed upon she spoke of me, seemed vexed, and presently fell upon a couch in the magnetic sleep. I had previously placed the husband in magnetic rapport with her. When he spoke to her she expressed vexation with me for magnetising her without giving her notice, said that she saw me and my thoughts, and apparently gave answers to questions put to her by some one in the room whom he did not see; he handed these answers to me in writing, and they were in conformity with the questions I had put *à distance*.

Her vexation with me remained, although she continued to amend. She wished me to magnetise her *à distance* when she arrived at Lausanne, but I was not to will her into the sleep. She said that magnetism had saved her life, and that it would radically cure her.

Pain in the right shoulder and weakness of the spine were still present; for these I magnetised with warm breathings followed by downward passes. While so operating, her hand became hot. She said, in the sleep, that she saw a dark vapour pass down the arm and off from the finger-tips: her hand was hot to the touch. From this emanation I was careful to free myself, lest it might affect other patients; and I recommended the husband, who was present, to keep at a little distance.

I magnetised her *à distance* while she was at Lausanne, a fortnight, and while she was there I, being in Paris, made three experiments in mental questioning, and obtained answers through another somnambule, whom I caused to mentally travel thither. These experiments were very satisfactory. I made another experiment when she returned to Paris, but still *à distance*, to satisfy some inquirers; but they spoiled it through their not being content with being only observers. In such experiments observers should observe passivity.

I magnetised Madame Durieu from day to day until the end of the seventh week of the treatment, when I ceased, because her health was perfect, and it keeps so.

H. DURVILLE.

DREAMS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I see you are giving something about dreams. Let me relate one to you which occurred three years ago. A friend of mine whom I have seen this morning, dreamed that he was walking along a lane; that there was a shed upon an embankment, and some nettles growing at the foot of the wall of the shed; that there was a dog burrowing amongst the nettles; that he went to see what it was doing there, and found it to be a rabbit hole, and he went into the shed and made a hole inside in a line with the hole outside, and found three rabbits in it. After taking them out he killed them, and left them until he came to tell me, and ask me if I thought it right to take them away. This ended the dream.

The next day he was taking a walk, not thinking anything about the dream; and he was going past the said shed and found the dog as dreamed, and the idea struck him that he would go into the shed and see if there was a hole through the foundations of the wall; and he dug a hole and found three rabbits as dreamed, and after killing them he left them, thinking perhaps he had done wrong, and he thought he would ask me about the matter; and strange to say I was going out for a walk and met him, so the dream was fulfilled.

I consider this something strange, as the rabbits could not, and if they had the power they would not, have impressed him with the dream, to take their life; but I should like the opinion of others upon the matter.

Since that time my friend has with myself been impressed, and we could tell you some strange things we have done by attending to these impressions. I myself have gone sixty and seventy miles by advice of supernatural intelligences and have never been deceived yet. Your journal must be of great service to learned men, but I and my friend are illiterate.—Yours truly

North Ferriby,

BENJAMIN GLEDSTONE.

January 16th, 1883.

PROGRESS IN FRANCE.—Dr. Dumont lately read a paper upon "Vital Magnetism," before the Société de Médecin, of Nancy, and demonstrated his propositions by the re-active aid of four sensitives. This is a remarkable indication of progress, for had merely a proposition to do so been made only a few years ago it would have raised a storm. Satisfaction at the change was increased on learning that the Society requested Dr. Dumont to prepare his communication and demonstrations for publication, with other papers, in its annual report.—*Journal du Magnétisme*.

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PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES

OF THE NEED OF A SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The accompanying case of thought-transference merging into so-called "clairvoyance," reached me in 1877 from a literary gentleman living in the North of England. It must stand on its own merits, and each reader will attach that value to the narrative which he thinks it is worth. Like the one I gave in the last number of "LIGHT," it is simply an illustration of the need for further inquiry into these phenomena, and therefore of the value of a Society for Psychical Research.

W. F. BARRETT.

18, Belgrave-square, Monkstown, Dublin.

CASE II.

THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE AND CLAIRVOYANCE.

In November, 1874, I paid a visit to a lady named F., at her residence in London. I had heard that this lady while in a state of trance was possessed of certain occult power, and my visit was made for the purpose of ascertaining what truth (if any) there was in this statement. When the appointment was made my surname and the name of the town from which I came were given to the lady, as I was a stranger to her.

I purposely dressed myself in a blue pea-jacket, dark trousers and low crowned hat, and also had a huge "muffler" round my neck, giving myself the appearance of a sea-faring man, or it might have been guessed that I was a gold digger who had returned from Australia. The town from which I came had a population of some 200,000, so that the information vouchsafed to Miss F., viz., my surname and the town to which I belonged, could have given her no clue to my identity.

On calling to keep my appointment I was received by Miss F., a middle-aged lady, apparently about forty years of age, medium height, slight in build, pitted with traces of small-pox, and possessing a highly nervous organisation.

She sat in a chair and I sat opposite with one of my hands in hers. After sitting about a minute, she had slight nervous shakings, and passed apparently into a comatose state. She then began to talk to me, much as a person speaks while asleep, with the pretension that I was spoken to by a spirit called Annie. For some five minutes I was amused, as what I was told was very much the same sort of thing that "fortune tellers" are in the habit of uttering to people who visit them, viz., a few guesses and much nonsense. At last she said, "What is this I see? It is like a bookseller's shop, and it is not a bookseller's shop." I remained quite silent and she went on for a minute more with some unintelligible jabber. Then she mused again, about the bookseller's shop and not a bookseller's shop, and began to describe the place she saw. Her description was sufficiently clear to let me know that she was describing my place of business. She then came back to her original description—"It is like a bookseller's shop and it is not a bookseller's shop. What is it? Ah, it's a newspaper office, isn't it?" Involuntarily a murmur of assent was given by me. She then said, "You are the manager of the — (a newspaper) office." I assented. During the course of my sitting with Miss F. she told me much that was known to no other person than myself, my intentions in life, the nature of my relations with sundry persons, the names of some of them being given. She also described the house in which I lived and its surroundings and seemed to trace the whole of my life by describing, so that

I recognised them, most of the houses I had lived in since I was a child. She described accurately the appearance of my wife, and also her state of health.

After speaking of my household with a familiarity and accuracy which surprised me, she said, "Ah, you are thinking of buying a piece of land at the back of your house." Said I, "Should you advise me?" She answered, "Yes." Curiously enough, at that time I had just opened negotiations for the purpose of purchasing a piece of land situate immediately behind my house, and the negotiations resulted in my becoming the owner of it. There was much more in my interview with Miss F. which impressed me as relating to matters personal, but the whole of it, except in one instance, could be accounted for on the theory that some persons, in an abnormal condition, possess the power of reading the mind of another person. The instance to which I refer was, however, so striking, and was given with such minute detail, as to render this explanation of the phenomena unacceptable to me. I shall, therefore, describe it. When near the end of the séance, Miss F. (or rather, the supposed spirit Annie) said, "Will you carry a message from me to your friend A.?" She had previously spoken much to me of this friend, described him accurately, mentioned the circumstance of a death having occurred in his family, and the proceedings that were being taken to make certain changes in the ownership of property, consequent on the death mentioned. I replied that I would take the message. She then said, "There is an old secretaire which stands in the hall. If A. searches, he will find among some old papers a document which will be of great service to him in arranging the property. It is not essential. He could manage without it. But it will help him very much."

I did not fulfil my promise, because my friend A., I knew, would have considered me a fool for bringing him information respecting his affairs from a "medium," and I thought also that perhaps he might think my mentioning matters strictly connected with his private affairs somewhat of a liberty. Some seven or eight weeks afterwards a mutual friend of A. and myself, whom I shall call B., was dining with me. B. had been much mixed up in arranging the family affairs mentioned. After dinner B. (who is a gentleman of considerable acquirements and a materialist in philosophy) and myself were indulging in metaphysical discussion. I told him that perhaps he could inform me if such a message (mentioning the one I had promised to give A.) had any probable foundation in fact. B. then said this was one of the most extraordinary things he had ever known. A., in winding-up the affairs in his hands, had had considerable difficulty with certain properties; but about a fortnight previously (that is some six weeks after my interview with Miss F.), in an old cabinet which I had correctly enough indicated to him, amongst other papers just such a document as I had described had been found, and its discovery had been serviceable in the way which I had stated. No theory of "mind-reading" in my opinion accounts for this.

So impressed was my friend B. with my narrative that he himself paid a visit to Miss F., but, as he afterwards told me, without being in any way convinced of the reality of her pretensions. Indeed, he said, had it not been for the statement I had made to him, he would have come to the conclusion that she was an impostor.

I may add that during the sitting Miss F. made many erroneous statements, and many also which, though probable, I had no means of verifying.

This and another striking narrative, which I received from Mr. Thomas Bell, of Middlesborough, induced me to visit Miss F., whose name will be recognised by most of the readers of "LIGHT," but the most complete failure followed the two or three interviews I had with her. This, however, was merely my misfortune, and in no way invalidates the testimony of other witnesses. W.F.B.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.—The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Central Association of Spiritualists, will be held on Tuesday next, at 6.30. p.m., at 38, Great Russell-street. It is very desirable that as many members as possible should attend, as the Report which will be presented by the Council will refer to matters on which it is important to have a full expression of the views of the members. The names of the new Council will also be submitted, but no voting papers will be necessary as the number of candidates does not, we hear, exceed the number to be elected.

THEOSOPHIC TEACHINGS.

Among the misconceptions about these doctrines which I should like to stamp out at once and for ever is the persistent impression that they deny immortality to a large proportion, if not to the immense majority, of the human race. Mr. Noel refers to the extract from the book of K'hiu-te, in the last November *Theosophist*, in justification of that impression, without one word of allusion to the long and explicit explanation appended. It is there shewn that the whole question relates to the distinction between personality and individuality, and to the conditions under which the former can be perpetuated in the higher consciousness of the latter. The explanation—which I assume Mr. Noel not to have read—is far too long to be copied here, but it sufficiently disposes of an imputation which cannot be repeated in any perfectly well-informed criticism.

Readers of Mr. Noel's articles, who have no original acquaintance with the doctrines he reviews, must have received an impression that nothing is interposed in the latter between the human phenomenal personality and a quite abstract universal Being. That, however, would be wholly to suppress the above distinction, throughout so strongly insisted upon, between personality and individuality. I did not, perhaps, myself keep it sufficiently in view in my article on "The Spiritual Ego." But I deny that I there identified the noumenon with a blank universal. I said that it was not the individual consciousness, the self that is known in consciousness. We may conceive the seventh principle—Spirit—as a formative Divine idea, and thus as a special and particular energy of the Universal, and as *object* in universal consciousness. But it is not a *subject* for consciousness till it becomes such as the sixth principle, the spiritual Ego. That is the individuality constructed by it. And this is where we are really at issue with Mr. Noel. In his view, mere personal consciousness is itself the guarantee of an immortal individuality. And that would be so if the synthetic unity of apperception, which all personality, and even all sentience, imply, were referable only to the direct energy of Divine Spirit. But the Astral Spirit also individualises by action on the material subject to it. As in the Divine, so in this: the individual is the mode of action, and the resulting modality of consciousness. It is urged that the Divine is in the Astral as its deeper life and being. Granted. All Occult philosophy asserts an exact correspondence and similitude between the macrocosm and the microcosm, the universal and the individual. And if we find in the individual a dual consciousness, spiritual and astral, we should infer the same division in the universal consciousness. But individualisation in the astral precedes individualisation in the Divine order. If we conceive the astral personalities as modes, localisations, as it were, of the astral universal consciousness, we see that they must be as transient in their nature as the sensation which for a moment or an hour fixes an animal consciousness at any point of its body. For, thus regarded, the synthetic unity of the "person" is no more than a particular act of attention by the universal. Withdraw that, and the conscious personality is no more. It is absorbed by, one with, the larger consciousness of which, as personal manifestation, it was a special and particular direction. For in the astral order, as in the Divine, the true self has all the time been, not the modal personality, but the universal. But here, again, we must not leap at once to the highest and most comprehensive universal in this order any more than in that above it, but find the unities within unities, or monads within monads, to which I expressly referred in a former article, though Mr. Noel writes as if I had omitted all recognition of them.* The first and subsequent identifications, on sublation of the individual mode, would thus not be with the true universal, but with its included and subordinate unities. It is by rising into this higher and more total consciousness that some attain to those transcendent faculties which to the individual seem miraculous, but which still belong only to the astral order, though to a more comprehensive consciousness in that order. That, I understand, is the meaning of *Samadhi*. And I quite admit that we should be cautious in attributing knowledge of Divine things to those who can give us, from such experience, even the truest and most magnificent expositions of what happens in the astral region. But I do not conceive that these teachers of ours, who so expressly recognise the dual consciousness in the microcosm, can be ignorant of its correspondence in the macrocosm.

Our difference with Mr. Noel, therefore, seems to be this.

* I may also refer to a more explicit, though still very brief, statement in my article entitled "Soul-Substance," in the *Psychological Review* of last November.

He makes the astral mode, or phenomenal personality, a mode of Divine Spirit. Not only does the latter come to individual consciousness in the former—that we both admit—but it is the very individual unity or being of the former and without it could be no consciousness at all. But how, I ask, can the Divine idea be conceived as *subject* till it has a manifestation of its own in consciousness—I do not mean a developed manifestation, but at least a germinal one? Conceive the astral personality as the matrix, and you have another beautiful application of natural laws and analogies in these teachings. The generation of the spiritual Ego—the true individual—is the result of two principles. But the matrix is there *before* its impregnation by the Divine Spirit. I must repeat that it is a question of consciousness. "Precisely," says Mr. Noel, "it is just that, but consciousness of what? Why, of the fact, of the truth, that the spirit, and all which the word connotes, all its attributes, Love, Righteousness, Insight, *are* the substance and truth of us, at the root of our being, as of all being." And then Mr. Noel rises, or falls, into a little invective. But what if I have *not* the consciousness of all these fine things as at the root of my being; nay, not even as principles to which I have any affinity whatever? Wait, says Mr. Noel, it is in process of evolution. The one Divine humanity works in all its members, and will atone all. Yes, I know,

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all."

But meanwhile, what conserves the personal consciousness of man, and yet could not, would not, or did not conserve the transient individual modes through which, according to the evolution theory, he has passed, or from which he has emerged? How is this more precious or more permanent than these, save in the *capacity* for direct, that is, conscious manifestation of spirit, and of the "Love, Righteousness, and Insight" thereof? Capacity for a spiritual, therefore an immortal consciousness. But we may remember the words, "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken," &c., and "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh." That "out of these stones God can raise up children of Abraham," is a grand statement of the possibilities of evolution. But meanwhile, the stone yields to the friction of wave and rain drop. Man is more proximate to his atonement, but it is the atonement, not the capacity for it, that immortalises. Hard as it is to believe our own Scriptures when they conflict with our preconceptions, it may nevertheless be true that "the spirit returns to God who gave it," or in the language of these later teachings, that "the true spirit severs itself, and passes away elsewhere."

The "inconsistency" which Mr. Noel imagines "in the Occultist camp" is not there at all. Surely it is the strangest perversion of our meaning to infer that the person, *as such*, is immortal because we say that his true being is *not* his personality but the universal of which that is only a transient mode. If I say of a chair or table that its substance is matter, do I therefore say that the chair, or table, as such, is indestructible? And does the identity of every particular living organism, as such, consist in the manifold riches of nature and spirit? These, it is true, are immanent, but they belong to the substance and not to the mode. But when the mode becomes, as in a human being, so high an expression of the universal, such a synthesis of its powers, that all that is latent in that can be individualised, the Divine becomes a proximate degree of life, though till actually evolved it is not the very individual. We must conceive the Divine as immanent in the astral and elementary, and so it may be said to be as much in a plant, or in a beast, as in a man. But it is not the individuality of the plant *quâ* plant, or of the beast *quâ* beast; nor is it the human personality. To find in it before conscious realisation, before that quickening which has been called the "spiritual Ego," a ground of individual immortality would be utterly to misconceive and pervert it. Each degree of life before it is consciously evolved belongs not to that which is already explicit or individual, but to an order of being which is at once deeper and higher. It is necessary, but not enough, to conceive spirit as *immanent*; we must also regard it as *transcendent*, or "overshadowing." For the evolution or liberation of the interior degree can only be effected by the presence and action of that degree as a power of conversion. Now I conceive the process of Divine regeneration to be exactly analogous to, nay, to be the very same as, that by which a higher organisation converts a lower, or the inorganic, to itself. Neither could this happen by the mere power of the higher principle unless it *found itself*

in the lower (but not yet differentiated therein), nor could this principle, immanent in the lower, ever emerge to light and energy unless elicited—evoked as it were—by sympathetic compulsion from above. It is the angel who opens the prison door to Peter, the voice which cries "Lazarus, come forth!" This is the "Great Work" of the old alchemists, who did really, I believe, obtain gold and silver from the baser metals, but who also used their chemical terminology to denote the spiritual and transcendental process for those who could understand.* In one of his most powerful essays, Mr. James Martineau has also insisted strongly on this principle as essential to a true conception of evolution.

To Mr. Noel, consciousness is the ultimate *all-comprehensive* fact; and he would find an echo of his sentiments in the letter on "A Personal or Impersonal God?" by Mr. Haughton, in the last number of "LIGHT." To him, and I suppose to the latter gentleman also, the "Abyss" or "Ungrund," of Böhme, Being, and "the One" of Plato † are mere abstractions of our poor little minds. Yet how resolve what is in that case a contradiction, that behind the manifestation of Self, Divine or human, in consciousness, must be the Self that is manifested? Even if we admit that the One Being must be perfectly self-conscious, that does not rid us of the fact that the Being is, and that its consciousness is but the reflection, the objective presentation of its subjective truth. Consciousness is not being, is not even energy; it is phenomenon only. And how does the attribution of consciousness make Order, Goodness, and Will, as principles, more intelligible to us? We do not explain them, it is true, by calling them principles; but we explain them, if possible, still less by calling them principles of which we are conscious. For my own part, I should feel more secure, more happy, in believing that "God is Love, yea, very Love," than in believing merely that He is a Person who loves. If you tell me it is His nature to love, then, I reply, it is that nature I adore, not a consciousness of it which is not mine. And I believe that that nature will respond to my adoration, and so responding will make the consciousness mine indeed. It has been well and profoundly said that we cannot know God, but only *our God*. And that is why God to the worshipper will be always personal. His personality is His relation to us.

Mr. Noel's latest postscript on the "shell" proceeds on a mistaken supposition. It is not at all to be regarded as a diabolical residuum. On the contrary, it is as faithful a representation of the whole man as such a form or body can be. And guided by the analogy of the physical shell which we undoubtedly *do* cast off, I do not believe Mr. Noel would have made so much difficulty about it, had he not started with the erroneous conception that in a state of animation it was described as a quite distinct individual. I venture to think he has not sufficiently appreciated the facts and possibilities of the dual consciousness, by which statements apparently to this effect are explained. And no doubt it is in this condition of partial, or semi-consciousness that the best "tests of identity" are given. But the possible and asserted fact remains that the mere psychic or astral corpse may receive temporary life from mediumistic rapport, and be moved to speech and action according to its wont.

In the foregoing I trust I have succeeded in removing some misconceptions; but I must again warn readers against fixing the responsibility of my expositions upon a system of which we as yet possess only the initial "Fragments."

Since writing the above, I have received from Mr. Arthur Lillie, the author of "Buddha and Early Buddhism," the following letter, which I have permission to publish. Mr. Noel having given a list of authorities in favour of Dr. Rhys Davids' view of the Buddhist "Skandhas," or "Khandas," a subject which rather perplexed myself, I asked Mr. Lillie for a succinct statement of the result of his own studies upon it, having placed Mr. Noel's article in "LIGHT" of December 23rd before him.

C. C. M.

With regard to the identity of the views of Dr. Rhys Davids on the Buddhist doctrine of *Karma* and the *Skandhas* with those of "Burnouf, St. Hilaire, Childers, Spence Hardy, &c.," I think he differs with them all. His theory of *Karma* is that the individual A is annihilated at death, and that the

individual B takes up the fruit of A's good or bad deeds, and that B hands his on to C, and so on. I do not think any student of Buddhism can endorse this.

Childers writes thus: "When a man dies the Khandas of which he is constituted perish; but by the force of his Karma a new set of Khandas instantly starts into existence, and a new being appears in another world, who though possessing different Khandas and a different form, is in reality identical with the man who has just passed away." Childers states also that "The inhabitants of the four Formless Brahma Heavens do not possess the first Khandas rūpa (form) at all."* As in the Ceylon Cosmology three heavens have to be traversed after the Bodhi, or emancipation, before these Formless Heavens are reached, this disposes of many popular essays about Nirvāna. Scholars differ as to what the Five Skandhas really mean. Burnouf calls them the "intellectual attributes"; † Schröter (Bhotanta Dictionary), the "five bodies"; Judson (Birman Dictionary), the "living animal." As opposing the teaching of Dr. Rhys Davids, the following passages may be consulted: Spence Hardy, Manual, p. 463; Colebrook, Essays, Vol. I, p. 397; Hodgson, pp. 44, 45; Beal, Romantic History, p. x.; Oldenberg, Buddha, p. 48.—Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR LILLIE.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The first annual meeting of the members of this Society was held on the 19th inst., at their rooms, 14, Dean's-yard, Westminster, Professor W. F. Barrett presiding.

The Secretary read a brief report of the Council for the past year, giving an encouraging account of the short history of the Society so far. A second part of the Proceedings of the Society will shortly be published, which will contain the substance of the Reports laid before the General Meeting held in December last. Some exceedingly interesting series of experiments have also been made since that date.

The Society numbered 150 at the close of 1882, but there have been a considerable number of additions since the beginning of the present year.

A financial statement was presented shewing that £216 had been received in subscriptions and donations, of which about £200 had been expended in the work of the Society. The Report and statement will be circulated among the members.

Some modifications of the Constitution and Rules were passed by the meeting, and elections were made on the Council to fill the places of members retiring by rotation.

The governing body as at present constituted stands as follows:—

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Alexander Calder, 1, Hereford Square, South Kensington, London, S.W.

Walter H. Coffin, Junior Athenæum Club, London, W.

St. George Lane Fox, Garden Mansions, Queen Anne's Gate, London, W.

Edmund Gurney, 26, Montpelier Square, London, S.W.

Charles C. Massey, 1, Albert Mansions, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, 21, Birchington Road, London, N.W.

Frederic W. H. Myers, Leckhampton, Cambridge.

Fras. W. Percival, 28, Savile Row, London, W.

Frank Podmore, 16, Southampton Street, Fitzroy Square, London, W.

C. Lockhart Robertson, M.D., Hamam Chambers, 76, Jermyn Street, S.W.

E. Dawson Rogers, Rose Villa, Church End, Finchley, N.

George J. Romanes, F.R.S., 18, Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

Balfour Stewart, F.R.S., Owens College, Manchester.

W. H. Stone, M.A., M.B., 14, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.

Morell Theobald, 62, Granville Park, Blackheath, S.E.

Hensleigh Wedgwood, 31, Queen Anne Street, London, W.

G. Wyld, M.D., 12, Great Cumberland Place, London, W.

SECRETARY.

EDWARD T. BENNETT, 14, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.

* I wish I were at liberty to refer by name to a work of marvellous insight, learning, and research (by one of the most valued members of the English Theosophical Society), on the history and meaning of the Hermetic books. It has long been called in and suppressed (except a few copies) on account, as I have heard, of the old nervous dread of instructed Occultists of revealing too much, of giving the key to a knowledge which may be abused.

† To which most assuredly consciousness cannot be ascribed without destroying the conception.

* Pali Dictionary, *sub voce* Khandas.

† Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien' p.

THE HIMALAYAN SLOPES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In "Notes by the Way" of January 6th, I find the following words:—"There is something curiously, startlingly grotesque in the notion of these mysterious unknowns sitting aloft on a Himalayan slope, secure in the possession of absolute truth, which of itself and necessarily kills all the various forms of error that the world busies itself with, while Christian and Brahmin, Mahomedan, Jew, and the rest of us play our little farces, and fancy that we have a revelation from God and a moral code that is not worthless."

The satire conveyed in the beginning of this paragraph sufficiently proves the mental attitude of the writer towards the "unknowns" he thus ludicrously depicts—utter denial and disbelief, not, possibly, of the *existence* of the body of men to whom such extraordinary powers and attainments are attributed, but of their *right* to have such possessions assigned to them. But leaving on one side the simple proposition that there are certain advanced minds on this earth who have pierced through the clouds of error arising from ignorant fanaticism, and ascended into the light of absolute and "positive truth," and are, therefore, able to shew the way to others following after them, I would inquire of the writer of this paragraph if he thinks that in the "revelations" which the Christian, Brahmin, Mahomedan, and Jew, believe that they "have from God," *all truth* is exhausted? Will he not admit (for he has an enlightened mind) that the higher man spiritually ascends, and the more he learns, the broader truth becomes, the aspect it wore to him upon a lower plane appearing completely changed? He has, doubtless, proved this scores of times, even in the short span allotted to him, as all of us, more or less, have, for this is the age of progress—of iconoclasm; when, advancing into the broader light of the higher spiritual truths, we recognise that we have been worshippers of idols, the *appearances* truth wore to our less advanced minds; and we put aside our beloved idols, sometimes sorrowfully and with pain, but, nevertheless, they are put aside, because there no longer remains any reasonable ground for belief. Some of us who have been "converted" from the false dogmas into which we were educated—to which we clung, as it were, for very life—have experienced an utter agony of soul before we could relinquish the ideas and convictions which for years had been the sources of the highest spiritual happiness and comfort; our reason, in the strong light of incontrovertible truth, demanding relentlessly the relinquishment of those soft pillows of an ignorant childhood for the more reliable rest afforded by the immutable rock of absolute truth.

It is an everlasting comfort to know that man, if he lifts himself, can rise into the light of absolute and immutable truth: that error becomes an impossibility for him, and that he may attain the end of existence, whilst still upon the most material of all planes of life, for he then transcends matter, the merely physical animal life and all its illusions; he annihilates, in the supremacy of a Divine intelligence, for himself, time, space, and death, and knows himself immortal and eternal—Brahm. For this he needs no dogmas of man, but that pure, unflickering, unblemished light of *divinity in humanity*, which has shone athwart the dark cloud of the ages from the lives of the noble sons of God who have attained it, in the midst of whom the Divine Jesus stands out supreme, and of whom, without doubt, are these Sages of the East depicted as "sitting aloft on a Himalayan slope." All these shining lights of the past were "initiated adepts," and when we use those words we may bow our heads in deepest reverence.

The "revelations" which "Christian, Brahmin, Mahomedan, Jew, fancy they have from God," contain in their very heart and core truth that is immutable, but overlaid by so much of error that its eternal light is for the time quenched. It is only *knowledge* which can enable each man for himself to remove the clinging dross of error from his hidden diamond, and liberate the quenched rays lying latent in its heart. But this knowledge is not to be gained by reclining indolently and at ease, in a mental condition of *dolce far niente*, beneath the comfortable shadow of a crumbling wall of old church doctrines. The traveller must move on, and as he advances, behind him must inevitably sink into insignificance the objects which rivetted his mental gaze in the earlier hours of his journey, whilst objects now at hand assume their true proportions, and in the distance he perceives the goal he set forth on his journey to reach, and that it is entirely different from what, in his ignorance, he had supposed it to be. His former persuasions, from ignorance of the truth, are not to him, however, like the playing of a "little farce," but those most earnest steps of a toiling childhood of mental development in which his soul made equally as strenuous efforts to reach the truth as he now makes in the enlightened manhood of his spiritual growth. Is not this a more correct view of the real state of affairs than that depicted by the writer of the paragraph I have quoted above?

True religion can never be destroyed, but the falsities which overlay it must perish. It would take a man a lifetime, perhaps, to strip off one by one the grotesque garments which have been manufactured by men to drape around and hide the beautiful proportions of the pure truth; but no man becomes truly

divine who does not engage in this work, at whatever cost to himself. He cannot penetrate the depths of his own interior being, and find and know the God within, whilst he retains, as holy, one of the old rags of doctrines which are called "religious beliefs," but which are, more properly speaking, "false persuasions." We have only to draw a comparison between ourselves and others to feel the force of these words. Looking into the doctrines of Churches, we find, for example, the dogma of the Atonement taught in its gross, literal, and material form, excessively repellant to our more enlightened and spiritual conceptions, for we have divested it of the old rags of an external rendering, and perceive its esoteric meanings. Had we lived a hundred years ago, it is probable we should not have been able to receive this esoteric meaning, but would have died, as hundreds of good people then did, still chained by the old false teaching of eternal damnation for all who did not embrace this "religious belief."

Life is progressive; the human race advances—it is its destiny; and knowledge must inevitably correct the errors of ignorance. Thus what we to-day *believe* to be true, to-morrow we may *know* is false. A hundred years hence the human race will stand upon higher eminences of knowledge, and many of the Christian, Brahminical, Mahomedan, and Jewish errors of to-day will have disappeared into the obscurity of the past.

All false dogmas are doomed to be deserted and left behind by each man as he becomes freed by the truth, for there is the one and the positive truth which is the heritage of man, which he may possess if he will. That truth will most certainly destroy all former errors of belief or persuasion. It was possessed by Jesus, who in the *hidden* meaning of His words indubitably pointed the way to the "Himalayan slopes," for He was of our "brethren the prophets"—i.e., an Initiated Adept of the Essenian schools, and truly a Son of God.

January 13th, 1883.

VERA.

THE DOMESTIC GHOST.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In Mr. Spicer's account of the ghost seen by Mrs. C. Dering, in your last number of "LIGHT," a wrong date (1865) is given, which takes from its interest. You will observe in the account given in Hutchins, that the ghost foretold great calamities affecting this country.

I heard the story from Mrs. C. Dering not later than 1863; I believe in the early part of that year, about a week after she had seen the apparition.

Some years after, in speaking of it to me, she said, "I wonder why the old man came to me," and I reminded her of the war that followed his appearance, and of the death of her brother, Colonel Yea, in the attack on the Redan.

I have extracted the story given in Hutchins, which differs in some details from Mr. Spicer's version.—Yours faithfully,

Walditch, Bridport, Dorset,

January 22nd.

LUCIA C. STONE.

"After the particular account of Mr. Sadler, as in works of this kind even marvellous relations are not unprecedented, which are inserted with a view, perhaps, of relieving the reader, the following prophecy, though it rests entirely on the credit of Cuthbert Bound, may be not improperly introduced.

"This gentleman being (the year after the Restoration) under some distemper of mind, kept his chamber, and had his servant, one Thomas Grey, of the same place (Warmwell) to attend him there; and I, Cuthbert Bound, minister of the parish, coming to visit him, found him sitting up in his bed, his wife and servant being with him. He caused his wife presently to depart, and the door to be shut, and made his man to come to one side of the bed, and myself on the other; and looking steadfastly towards the end of the room, asked whether we saw nobody, or heard any voice; we answered him that we neither saw nor heard anything, but persuaded him to lie down and take his rest; he bid us be quiet, for there was a man who had great things to tell him, and spoke so loud that he did wonder that we did not hear him, and presently ordered his man to fetch his pen, ink, and paper; and looking towards the place where the man stood, he began to write, and so wrote on, as if the man did still dictate to him, and every now and then would be asking whether it were so or not; and after he had ended the matter he read the paper distinctly twice over, and at the end asked whether he had written true, and then caused us to set our hands to the paper, saying he would not be gone till he saw that done; and when he had done it, he said, 'Now he is gone,' meaning the man he had told us of. What he related to us was as followeth:—

"That there would die in the city of London so many thousand, mentioning the number, which I have forgotten, and the time; that the city would be burnt down great part of it; and that he saw St. Paul's tumbled down as if beaten down with great guns.

"That we should have three sea-fights with the Dutch, and that there would appear three blazing stars, and that the last would be terrible to behold.

"That afterwards there would come three small ships to land to the west of Weymouth that would put all England into an uproar, but it would come to nothing; that in the year 1688 there would come to pass such a thing in this kingdom that all

the world would take notice of; that after this there would come good times; and that I should live to see all these things come to pass, but that he and his man should die; and farther, that some wonderful thing would come to pass afterwards, which he was not to make known; that he should be able to go abroad the next day, and there would come three men to see him, one from Ireland, one from Jersey, and his brother Bingham, who did certainly come as he had told us; and I saw him walking early in the morning the next day in his ground.

"Upon the report of this, his man, Thomas Grey, and myself were sent for before the deputy-lieutenant of the county, and made affidavit of the truth of this before Colonel Strangers, Colonel Coker, and many others yet alive, within three or four days after he told it me."

"This narrative was communicated by the Rev. Mr. Bingham, of Pimper, from a friend, who has a copy of it, which has been long preserved in his family, signed by the above-named Cuthbert Bound."—*History of Dorset*. By John Hutchins, 1815, Vol. iv. p. 355.

NEURIC FORCE.

In an appendix to his Essay on Radiating Neuric Force, published in the *Journal de Magnétisme*, Dr. Baréty says that Dr. Planat, of Paris, who interests himself in investigating this force, has demonstrated its action upon an inanimate object without the reactive intervention of a human sensitive. Dr. Planat suspends horizontally, from the centre of an inverted bell-glass, by a film of unspun silk, a piece of thin brass wire with its ends beaten out to tinsel thinness. The neuric force, passing from the pointed fingers through the bell-glass, directed to either end of the wire, and moved laterally, puts it into motion. The bell-glass stands upon a graduated disc to enable the difference of the force in different individuals to be marked. Dr. Planat ingeniously contrived to fill the bell-glass with water and obtained the same result.

Dr. Leger, a French physician, constructed here in London, many years ago, a somewhat similar apparatus, which he called a magnetoscope. Mr. Rutter, of Brighton, also constructed one. Mr. Thomas Slater, formerly of Euston-road, now of Bayswater, made many apparatus similar to those of Leger, and having abundance of nerve-force easily demonstrated their use.

The late Mr. Wallington, a potent mesmeriser, assured me that a new knife, worn in his pocket for a short time, acquired the property of attracting needles.

The radiating neuric force varies much in individuals. It must be from having it abundantly that some are good magnetisers or mesmerisers. M. Adolphe Didier is well-known as a strong curative mesmeriser, and I have seen the needle of a compass strongly deflected by the force from his fingers pointing at it. A fact like this should interest all students of psychical phenomena.

J. DIXON.

Great Ormond-street.

PREMONITIONS OF DEATH.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I cannot tell you how interested I feel in reading "LIGHT," which a gentleman kindly lends to me. An article, "Premonitions of Death," brings to my mind the death of my own dear sister, Elizabeth Wilkins, who lived in service at a Mr. Pedley's, at Highworth, Wilts. We had a brother James then dying of decline at Stratton St. Margaret's, four miles from Highworth. A week before he died Elizabeth came over to see him and take her farewell of him. When she was leaving me she grasped my hand very tight and said, "Try and meet James in Heaven, my dear girl; he is drawing very near eternity, but I have a strong presentiment I shall go first." I said, "How foolish you talk!" She said, "You may think so, but I feel it." She said, "Good-bye, meet us in Heaven." That was on the 29th March, 1855; and on April 4th my brother died, at nine o'clock in the morning. I wrote a note to Elizabeth, telling her of it. Seeing a woman who came from Highworth, I asked her to take it to my sister. She looked with great pity at me, as I was in a very weak state, just got on crutches after losing my leg. She kindly put her arm around me to keep me from falling, and then said, "My dear child, I am come to tell you your sister died last night at five o'clock. She took a cold; they advised her to go to bed, and they would send her up a cup of tea; and when the woman went to her she was dead." So you see, dear sir, she died on the 3rd April and my brother on the 4th; but before either of them died, I dreamed I sent the note by a mason to say my brother was dead, and in the morning I thought he brought it back to me and said, "She is gone." They were both buried in one grave.

A person living at Stratton St. Margaret's died of typhus fever. Her name was Jane Darter. She had a daughter at service six miles away. The day she died she began calling her girl in the morning and continued, "Elizabeth! Betsy!" all day. She was so weary, and at night she said, "If you won't come, I cannot call any longer;" and fell back dead. In the morning the poor girl came home to see if anything was the matter with her mother, for all the day before, go where she

would, her mother kept calling, "Elizabeth! Betsy!" and at night she said, "If you won't come, I cannot call any longer." I was with the mother all that day, and I heard the girl tell her sad tale when she came. Being the fever, they did not send to tell the girl her mother was ill, which was a great grief to her. Please excuse me for troubling you with this, but I thought I should like to tell you.—From your humble servant,

ANNE BARNES.

Middle Cowley, near Oxford.

[The gentleman who lends "LIGHT" to Mrs. Barnes assures us that though she is a poor and uneducated person, he can speak in the highest terms of her intelligence, respectability, and veracity.—Ed. "LIGHT."]

"A STRANGE PHENOMENON."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The following letter appeared in the *Eastern Daily Press* (Norwich) on January 13th.

STRANGE PHENOMENON.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Can some of your readers explain the following? Last evening I had been to see a sick friend, and left at ten o'clock. At about 10.30 I was passing a churchyard about two miles from the city, and noticed a light in the churchyard. As the gate was fastened, I scaled the wall and walked towards the light, when it moved on, waving slightly, as a flame would. The light was of a phosphorescent colour, and was about 5ft. in height and an irregular width of about 18in. It moved slowly across the graves with a sliding motion, in an easterly direction, towards the wind, which shewed it was not an *ignis fatuus*. It disappeared near a yew fence. I am not afraid of ghosts, though I believe in them. I enclose my name and address, which I shall be happy to give, together with full particulars, to any curious reader.—I am, sir, yours truly,

BELIEVER.

January 11th, 1883.

Having read with interest the articles in "LIGHT" relating to supposed appearances of the *ignis fatuus*, I was glad to avail myself of the opportunity of obtaining particulars of a similar phenomenon from an eye witness, and at once sought an introduction with the following results:—

On Wednesday, January 10th, 1883, Mr. H. Herbert Wells, of Rose Lodge, Old Catton, a village about two miles from Norwich, was returning from a visit to a sick person, who resided quite on the other side of the city, and whose house he left at ten p.m. The night was dark, and a strong wind was blowing from the east. While passing Old Catton Church, at 10.30, he observed in the churchyard, by the tower, a luminous appearance, perfectly motionless, unaffected by the wind, and looking like a human figure wrapped in a blanket. Finding the gate fastened, Mr. Wells scaled the low wall which skirts the churchyard next the road, and approached the object. When about two yards distant it slowly moved away over the graves towards the north-east corner of the churchyard, where it disappeared by a yew fence, which forms the boundary on that side. The light was about the colour emitted by luminous paint, and was so transparent that the gravestones could be seen through it.

It is rather singular that on January 10th, 1882 (exactly twelve months before), Mr. Wells lost a very dear friend who had been like a mother to him. On the night of the same evening that she died, Mr. Wells was awoke (one ought to have said the morning of the 11th as it was between one and two o'clock) by a light shining in his room and saw sitting in a chair, at the foot of the bed, his friend as she appeared in life. He spoke, but received no answer and the light died away, leaving the room in darkness. He assured me, upon my suggesting it, that it was a distinctly different experience from a dream.

This incident had escaped his memory, until upon relating the churchyard episode to one of the members of his family he was reminded of it. The friend was buried in the cemetery three or four miles from Catton.

Two or three other stories of interest, personal experiences which he related to me, I will not trouble you with now.

I have Mr. Wells's permission to use his name in full.

Yours obediently,

Distillery-street, Norwich.

GEO. A. KING.

CONCERT AND BALL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to draw the attention of your readers, for the last time, to the announcement of the concert and ball to be held on the 31st inst.? The programme is not complete but promises to be a good one, as I have received very cordial support from several artistes who have so readily promised their very valuable services.

There is every reason to believe that it will be a reunion of a very genial and hearty character, many very old friends having expressed their intention of being with us.

Trusting that it will also be a pecuniary success for the sake of your excellent paper,—I remain, yours faithfully,

FRANK EVERITT.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

ST. ANDREW'S HALL.

14, NEWMAN-STREET, OXFORD-STREET, LONDON.

The third religious service of the series recently inaugurated by the Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum at this hall, was held on Sunday last, and was the occasion of the first appearance there of Mr. J. J. Morse as lecturer, the special subject being: "The Spiritual Platform: its Place and Work To-day." There was an encouragingly large and appreciative audience, and the question raised was treated in the comprehensive and masterful manner characteristic of Mr. Morse's control. Sufficient justification for the introduction of the subject was found in the necessity of reviewing occasionally our resources and methods, as Spiritualists, if we would wrestle successfully with the errors, and crimes, and troubles of the world, and courageously grapple with the advancing forces of materialism. Spiritualism is not a toy nor a plaything, but means hard work, and plenty of it, when regarded as the source of our assurance of immortality, of the universal relationship of souls, or intercommunion of spirits; and of the common inheritance, in greater or less degree of us all, of present inspiration; because those who accept such truths must be aggressive, and make of them a living, vitalising thing, and themselves reflect that the good reached to-day is but a stepping-stone for a further advance to-morrow. Whenever spirits operate—and they are very active—they need human agency. We have power indeed to raise ourselves, but if we trust them, a basis of co-operation is formed of immense value. Our platform should be distinctly spiritual, and enunciate fearlessly the highest conceptions of our faith. We shall thus earn a place as workers for good, and for the promotion of truth, honesty, and virtue—a combination of qualities constituting a force which is a remedy. The legal, the political, the religious, and the medical sections of society may assail us; we must not succumb, nor fail to cultivate the advantage of organisation. Spiritualism has much to say upon every branch of life here, and when its psychical teachings are better understood our madhouses will be closed, and the services to Humanity of our healing mediums will be generally recognised and extended. There is a gospel of individual responsibility; we must each bear the consequences of individual life. With the cultivation of the intellect comes intellectual freedom; the sweeter and better being is developed, and a moral position is eventually established which secures true happiness because based on righteous work. The spiritual platform has, truly enough, much to do in educating Spiritualists themselves, who have usually to unlearn and put aside many obstinate prepossessions before they can even approach sympathetically its searching teachings. But propaganda work is urgent too; while the individual must be cultivated, the outside world, in the mass, must be vigorously and intelligently approached. We are thus, or should be, both defensive and aggressive in action; but while earnestly clinging to proved truth, we are too comprehensive to be sectarian. When we thus boldly face our whole duty, encourage the hearts that burn and the souls that aspire, help the distressed, and raise the fallen, and remember that even apparent temporary failure in any direction of our efforts should but nerve us to fresh exertions, the recognition and the powerful co-operation of the spiritual hosts will be always available for our support.—The address was so full of practical suggestion and distinguished by such terse and effective language that any selection of its points must fail to convey a fair appreciation of its merits.

On Sunday next, the 28th inst., the burning question of Immortality will be specifically raised, and its miraculous or sequential character investigated.

BELPER.

On Sunday last Mrs. Britten delivered an address in the morning in Mr. W. P. Adshad's Lecture Room, on "The Soul of Things." The discourse was one of the best that Mrs. Britten has delivered in Belper, which is saying a very great deal. The audience was a thoroughly appreciative one, and doubtless seed was sown which will bear fruit in after time. In the evening Mrs. Britten occupied the platform in the small public hall, which was densely packed, scores being unable to obtain admission. It had been announced that the subject would be chosen by the audience. About forty subjects were sent up to the chairman from which he selected six, Mrs. Britten afterwards speaking about ten minutes on each subject. Taken altogether this may be regarded as the most satisfactory meeting ever held in Belper. At the close an invitation was brought from the Rev. W. Dawkins and Mr. E. Smedley that Mrs. Britten would address the Blue Ribbon Army then assembled in the large public hall. To this Mrs. Britten at once assented and spoke for about three quarters of an hour. On Monday evening Mrs. Britten again occupied the platform in the large public hall; subject, "Is Spiritualism of Divine Origin?" The lecturer took the affirmative, speaking for about three quarters of an hour, and then invited discussion or expressed her readiness to answer questions bearing upon the subject. A number of questions were sent up, some of which were quite irrelevant, but the whole of which were most felicitously dealt with to the evident satisfaction of a large audience. In consequence of

the indisposition of Mr. W. P. Adshad, Mr. A. Smedley very kindly and ably presided over the three meetings.

EXETER.

The Sunday meetings at the Oddfellows' Hall are usually well attended, and each week new hearers and inquirers are forthcoming. After singing and prayer an address is delivered upon the subject of "Spiritualism in its various aspects," without the formality of taking a text or selecting a topic. At each meeting literature is given away, and all sincere inquirers are invited to remain to the more private meeting—a circle following the public service. Last Sunday about fifty thus remained, arranging themselves for communion with the spiritual powers. Several mediums are being developed, and each Sunday one or another is controlled to address the congregation. Last Sunday Mr. P. was the medium. In addition to this, circles are held during the week with varied results. We have a nice little library of standard works on Spiritualism, which are being used by inquirers. At Newton St. Cyres, five miles from the city, the cause is also making considerable headway. OMEGA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday evening, January 14th, the new executive took their position on the platform of the N.S.E.S. Mr. H. A. Kersey occupied the chair and, after a short address from Mr. Barker, the test medium, took the opportunity of making a statement to the goodly audience present. His sole reason, he said, for taking office was to carry out the desire of the members as expressed by the very numerous signed requisition presented to him, and as far as he was concerned he had resolved to give full and free scope to the thorough ventilation of opinion which was the undeniable right of every member without let or hindrance. He hoped, further, that they would do their utmost to clear off the debt, and as far as they were concerned, to keep the society clear in future. Mr. Kersey also stated that under the peculiar circumstances of his election, having been put there by the express desire of the members, he was prepared at any time, if they thought fit, to resign back to them the position should they consider that they had others, more suitable to their tastes, to fill the office. Hereupon the whole company gave a decided expression of their satisfaction, with reliance upon Mr. Kersey's efficiency for the position.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. W. Westgarth, of Sheriff Hill, lectured in a very acceptable manner upon the subject, "If man die, shall he live again?" At the conclusion of the address Mr. Kersey announced to the members that, during this last week they had been able to reduce the debt of £34 to £10, having received donations to the extent of £24. The announcement was received with enthusiastic applause.—[I desire to correct a "printer's error" of last week, which stated that Mr. Burton was elected as one of the new committee. It should have been Mr. Ashton. Mr. Burton is not a member of the N.S.E.S.; his early and persistent protests against the conduct of the defunct executive led, as it will be remembered, to his expulsion.]

GATESHEAD.—Last Sunday evening, a gentleman at present visiting Newcastle, lectured from the platform of the G.S.E.S. in a most telling manner upon "Immortality." The address was here and there richly illuminated by beautiful and effective descriptions of the most instructive nature, and effectually reached the hearts and heads of his audience. Mr. H. Burton occupied the chair.

DISTRICT MEETING.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. W. H. Robinson gave an able address before a good audience at Houghton-le-Spring, on "The Facts and Principles of Spiritualism." On the same evening Mr. J. G. Grey, of Gateshead, lectured to a large audience made up of Spiritualists and Salvation Army people at Hetton-le-Hole. NORTHUMBRIA.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.—Reference was made at St. Andrew's Hall, on Sunday last, to the earnest charitable work of Mrs. Heckford in the East of London, more particularly among the sick poor, and in connection with the Hospital for Children at Shadwell; and it was resolved to devote the whole of the poor-box collection, for some time to come, to help that work. In support of the same purpose a number of ladies, under the superintendence of Mrs. Williams, of 87, Highbury New Park, N., will immediately get to work at the president's residence, 21, Canonbury Park South, N., to make up and distribute useful clothing. Volunteers are coming forward most encouragingly, and the charitable may be assured that any amounts forwarded to Mrs. Williams will be most economically applied.

DEATH OF DR. S. B. BRITTON.—Readers of the American spiritual journals, and those who may be familiar with the literature of the cause published across the Atlantic, will note with feelings of regret the death of the above well-known and able writer. Dr. Britton died suddenly at his residence in New York, on the 4th inst. Dr. Britton was the first public advocate and defender of Spiritualism in the States, having made his first contribution to the Press in 1846. He was also a poet of no mean ability, and a capable controversialist; and it will be some time ere the place he has left vacant finds a fitting occupant. The *Banner of Light*, from which the foregoing particulars are extracted, promises its readers a full biographical sketch in due course.

THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC PHYSICAL SEANCES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Is of opinion that public miscellaneous seances for physical manifestations should be altogether discontinued.

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

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

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