

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

Knowledge of July 6th, reproduces almost *in extenso* the article of the *Spectator* on Thought-reading, and founds on it some "editorial gossip" of a not particularly edifying character. The gist of what Mr. Proctor has to say is similar to the contention of the Rev. H. H. Higgins in the *Journal of Science*, which I noticed last week. The phenomena under observation he believes to be akin to those called mesmeric. "There is nothing supernatural about them, though much that is mysterious, in the same sense that (for example) gravity is mysterious (but in infinitely less degree)." We are favoured with some unimpressive details of Mr. Proctor's own experience with Zamoiski, whom I remember at Oxford as a powerful mesmeriser. He used to exhibit his powers at the Universities—Mr. Proctor saw him at Cambridge—and was popular with the undergraduates. I do not sufficiently remember his performances to criticise them at this distance of time. But he did nothing, I believe, more curious than I have since seen, and nothing that was so antecedently impossible as necessarily to be relegated to the domain of trickery.

Mr. Proctor thinks otherwise. He says:—

"A man named Zamoiski came to Cambridge, who professed to possess marvellous mesmeric powers. He really had a very fair amount of that particular mind-influencing power which we may conveniently call mesmerism (as a name not suggesting any theory as to the nature of the power). But he promised all manner of performances, far outside of anything he or any man could do without the aid of confederates. He appeared on the platform, went through a number of performances, some interesting and curious, but by no means miraculous, on college men of various standing, others which would have been marvellous indeed if they had been genuine. But they were performed on certain boys who were *no doubt* paid for their parts in the display."

That "no doubt" is exquisite. We get there the truly scientific attitude. Yet Mr. Proctor can write thus:—

"One cannot but be amused at the tone of jeering superiority with which the psychical problems involved in such questions as thought-reading and thought-finding are dismissed by folk who are only not stupidly credulous because they are stupidly incredulous. With such persons there is no middle path; they either refuse to consider evidence at all, or they swallow everything they are told. In either case it is the same

defect in the unscientific mind which does the mischief. A man of this class believes or disbelieves—he does not inquire. Take such a subject as mesmerism, for example:—'Mesmerism! my good sir,' he will say; 'mesmerism is utter humbug; nothing in it but lies and trickery;' or, it may be (just according to the way in which he has taken up the matter), he will talk equal nonsense on the other side, and tell you that mesmerism is the most marvellous power in existence."

The truth is—and it is amusing that Mr. Proctor does not know in what a glass house he lives while he is pelting his scientific and unscientific friends,—the truth is that, to assent to the truth and reality of some of Zamoiski's experiments on the ground that he, Mr. Proctor, can square them with his preconceived ideas of what may and may not be, tho while he rejects others *a priori* as "no doubt" tricks, because he could not understand the principle, is utterly unscientific and absurd. And this is no less true because Mr. Proctor thinks he "had begun, even at that time, to have scientific tastes," and has since devoted long years and abundant energy to writing about science in various ways, and on many aspects of it. Nor is it less curious because Mr. Proctor can write thus: "Of Mr. Bishop, personally, I may say, *vili tantum* . . . but, the cool assumption that because the power claimed by Mr. Bishop is beyond their slow minds, dullards are free to treat him as if he were a proved swindler, would be discredit to them in the extreme, if it were not that, presumably, they know no better." This is delicious!

Colonel Olcott is pursuing his beneficent course of healing disease. The *Theosophist* of June contains a letter, signed by a native medical practitioner, and dated from Bhaugalore, which attests the reality of ten cures effected in one day in his presence and that of other observers. Some of them are not of the kind that I have always sought for as good evidence, though they are, doubtless, real enough and beneficent enough to the patients who were cured. But two are important and striking. In the first a native auctioneer was cured of deafness. "This," says the medical recorder, "was a most surprising case; within a few minutes the patient was made to hear words spoken in an ordinary tone at a distance of eighteen feet, though a few minutes before he could not hear at the shortest distance without an elevation of the speaker's voice."

The other case is that of the "medical practitioner" himself. He thus details his cure of blindness in the left eye:—

"My closest friends could not have suspected this infirmity, for there was no apparent difference between the two eyes, yet from boyhood one of them has been useless to me. The disease was *Hypermetropia*, and Drs. Cayley and Macnamara, the famous oculists of Calcutta, were of opinion, after examination, that it was congenital and certainly incurable. But to-day, after a few minutes of simple mesmeric treatment—by breathings through a small silver tube, Colonel Olcott has restored my sight. He has made me close the right eye, and with my hitherto useless left one, read ordinary print! My feelings may be better imagined than described.—LADLI MOHUN GHOSH, Medical Practitioner."

These cures Colonel Olcott claims to effect by the healing virtue that is in him. This power he ascribes to the effect of a pure and simple life which he has led ever since he began to work for those who impelled him to found

the Theosophical Society, and whom we are to identify with the Mahatmas, the Brothers of Tibet, of whom Mr. Sinnett has lately given us some glimpses. If this be so, we have come at last to the answer to the question, *cui bono?* No one can read Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism" without intellectual satisfaction. No one can doubt that Colonel Olcott's work, under the direction of these mysterious beings, is one that Christian and Buddhist alike must recognise as one of pure beneficence.

The activity and energy displayed by Colonel Olcott are phenomenal. Niveran Babu, who, at his own cost and without the smallest remuneration, devoted three months to acting as private secretary to the President on his late tour, has compiled some statistics which are very impressive. It seems that between February 23rd and May 19th of this year, 2,812 patients "of both sexes, all ages, conditions of social life, and sects," were "successfully treated" in twenty different places. As two or three days only were spent in a place, the patients flocked in from the surrounding country, and were soon again dispersed. It is, therefore, impossible to tell what proportion of these cases were actually cured. But if pain were even temporarily alleviated, that is much, even if the patient's imagination largely helped his belief. Those who deal with human ailments know well that their science is often powerless in presence of what they cannot refer to definite causes, but which they label hysteria, or some such term that explains nothing. So what the *cures* were none can tell, but Niveran Babu, who had three months' opportunity of judging, bears warm testimony to the remarkable success of Colonel Olcott's work.

The concluding portion of this testimony—never written in the language of enthusiastic exaggeration, but calm, logical, and clear—is of a nature that may excuse quotation. It is well that we should know what powers we have in us, so that we may learn to use them.

"Not the least striking, and, from the scientific point of view, important features of these cures is the fact that on the tour Colonel Olcott has eaten nothing but vegetable food, and of that what we Hindus would call a very small quantity. His usual daily allowance (for three meals—at 7 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m.) has been 6 to 8 potatoes, 8oz. green vegetables, 2oz. maccaroni, 1oz. vermicelli, 6 slices bread and butter, and 3 cups tea or coffee. He never touches beer, wine, or spirits in any form. He retired ordinarily at 11 or midnight, and rose at about 6 a.m.; did not sleep in the day time; and always had a cold bath in the Hindu fashion [pouring water from a pot over the body.—*Ed.*] Never in tubs. Our tour—that is, not counting the Colonel's voyage to and fro by sea between Madras and Calcutta, 2,000 miles—was something over 2,000 miles, and was made by rail, steamboat, budge-row (canal-boat), horse-garry, elephants, horses, palankin, &c., and was completed in 57 days; the travel being sometimes by night, sometimes by day, and the average stop at each place two clear days besides fractions. The President delivered 27 lectures, organised 12 new branches of the Theosophical Society, visited 13 old ones, and held daily discussions on philosophy and science with hundreds of the ablest men in Bengal and Behar. Add to this that he is 51 years of age and throughout has enjoyed robust health, and our countrymen as well as Europeans can have some idea of the activity and endurance of a temperate white man even in our tropical climate, in the hottest season of the year."

I have said that these cures are wrought by the inherent power of the healer without external aid. This, however, requires modification. Niveran Babu, speaking of the immense amount of work done in the hottest season of the year, adds:—

"One would have to go, like myself, with the Colonel day by day and from place to place, to realise the marvellous exhibition he has made of reserved psychic power. As you know, he has always said that his own vital strength, overtaxed as it is constantly by his current official work, would not stand such a drain without help, and that he has been constantly helped by

his Guru, with whose permission he began the work. It will please all true Theosophists to learn that Colonel Olcott's *Parmaguru* [Teacher's Teacher.—*Ed.*] was actually seen twice clairvoyantly within one week by one of the blind patients, the latter gentleman giving so accurate a description of this exalted personage—about whom he had never previously even heard one word from anybody—that He was instantly recognisable."

It would seem, therefore, that as the Spiritualist believes that he has behind him his unembodied "guide, philosopher, and friend," whose aid he cannot measure, and whose power he cannot limit, so the Theosophist has what is much the same, save that the Guru is a Teacher yet embodied, but of extreme psychic power developed to the *n*th.

M. A. (Oxon.)

A PRIVATE SEANCE WITH MR. HUSK.

I wish to record a remarkable series of phenomena which took place under test conditions—*i.e.* all hands, including those of the medium, being locked together during the phenomena, which occurred in the dark. The medium was Mr. Husk, who sat with the circle, and besides him there were ten present, including my wife and myself.

Two minutes after the light was put out the fairy bells were touched by spirit-hands, places arranged by responses from them, and one of the company offered a short prayer. The fairy bells were then taken up and carried all over the room, playing most beautifully. On coming again upon the table in front of me, still playing, I was stroked by a small spirit-hand repeatedly. Then my coat-sleeve was pulled persistently, until I was impressed that I was to sing, which I did, the instrument accompanying me through a song perfectly. Another spirit then played on the piano, which had been left open outside the circle in one corner of the room, against which some of the chair-backs rested. The two instruments were played together, the piano by a master hand. We had a good deal of music between the two instruments—sometimes the fairy bells being placed on the top of the heads of various sitters whilst playing. It is impossible to describe the beauty of tone, soft and loud alternately, which the spirit flashed from the strings. Mr. Husk is himself a musical man, but both his hands were held all the time. Soon after there were five or six spirits in the room at one time—talking to various members of the circle. One mischievous little child-spirit came to me, took everything out of my side coat pocket, including spectacle-case, which I begged her not to break. Immediately she opened the case, and her little hands—warm and pleasant to the touch—put the spectacles on my face: not enough, she took out my eye-glasses and fixed them on my nose in front of the spectacles! At my request she took them off and placed the spectacles in my hand, which she then patted playfully. She next amused herself by bringing me various things—a brooch, a collaret, &c., from other sitters.

Next the spirit of John King materialised, and shewed himself by means of the luminous slate. He took great pains to go to each one of the circle. On coming to me he said in his loud bass voice, "Can you see me?" and adjusting the slate over his head, and under it, and sideways, I saw his features completely and distinctly. He then took my hand (linked as it was to the lady next me), and lifted it high up, saying "Rise," when he lifted me on tip-toe. This he did also to my wife; but, in her case, taking her hand away from the next one, remarking, "He would keep the circle intact!" He shook hands also with each in the circle. When he had taken great pains to shew himself to all, he said: "I am now going through the table; watch me." Down went his form, which was materialised only to the bust, through the table, leaving the slate on the top whence he disappeared. He still remained for some time longer. Soon after the spirit called "Irresistible" found a glass jug with water in it, and a tumbler on the mantel-piece, when he asked if anyone would like some water.

My wife said she should, if only for the sake of taking it from him; and the gentleman next to me said, "I should very much." The spirit brought the jug and tumbler in front of us, poured out a glassful of water, holding the jug and glass above the table, and gave it to the lips of each, one after another, and most drank thus. There was no hesitation even in the total darkness in coming direct to the mouth, and I felt his hand against my forehead as he lifted and emptied the glass completely. This was a very beautiful test in many ways.

Soon we heard a fine bass voice, intoning in a foreign language, which was, it appeared, the spirit of a Greek priest who often comes towards the end of a séance to close with a *Greek* prayer.

Soon after the spirit of "Irresistible" went to the piano, and, after playing the introduction to Calcott's "Last Man," touched Mr. Husk on the head (so he said) when Mr. Husk sang the song in a fine bass voice—the voice being different from any which had been speaking, though not altogether unlike John King's.

During these two hours then we had had seven spirits speaking and materialising (for two or three I have not referred to); we had been fanned by the invisibles when the heat was oppressive, and scents had been put to our faces; we had been swept by the drapery of John King, and seen and heard him distinctly for about an hour; and during the whole time as we sat in the dark the condition of linking hands was *absolutely maintained*.

The influence was genial and pleasant, and we seemed to be able to get whatever we asked for; *e.g.*, the luminous slate was on one occasion left under our eyes on the table, and as it was dazzling to the sight we asked for it to be covered. Immediately "Irresistible" said, "I'll do that," and fetched from behind us several paper-covered French books which he spread over the slate and thus obscured the light; the water I have referred to and the music over our heads when asked for. Such phenomena, however, can only be obtained in a private harmonious circle, such as this was.

A Séance at Home with Miss Wood.

Miss Wood, who has been my visitor for a short time, was good enough to consent to sit as medium for our own family circle last Sunday evening. Besides our own circle there were only two friends; but we numbered twelve, including Miss Wood.

We commenced, as usual, with reading and prayer. After this we sang, "Give, said the little stream," during which Miss Wood was entranced by her familiar little spirit, "Pocha." I may interpose, and say that "Pocha" has become quite at home with us, and has frequently shewn her presence in various ways. She has carried things from one room to another; has lifted the table at meal times; has suddenly entranced Miss Wood, and made her write letters and do things of which she has been totally ignorant afterwards; but these belong to "*Pocha's*" secrets!

Miss Wood *entranced* is a totally different being from herself *awake and reserved*, and "*Pocha's*" vivacity on these occasions is frequently very amusing, while her mischievous looks, as seen by clairvoyant members of our family, are an interesting index to what we blind ones cannot see. But it would take a small volume to record "*Pocha's*" biography at Blackheath! To return to our séance-room—one recently fitted up for the purpose, "*Pocha*," as usual, talked for about an hour, which I wished over, although she assured us she was not wasting time, but the spirits were busy in the cabinet materialising—as, indeed, they were. The medium was, after this, taken into the cabinet, and we sat in light sufficient to see one another and the cabinet clearly. We heard some altercation going on as to who was to come out, which was decided in favour first of "*Pocha*." Beside Miss

Wood now entranced, was also one of our own number, the one nearest to the cabinet, but three or four feet distant. Out came little "*Pocha*," a vivacious little sprite about three feet high, known to a good many. She brought out of the cabinet with her the fairy bells—an instrument two feet in length and seven or eight inches wide, weighing 2½ lbs. This she placed on the chair where Miss Wood had been sitting, and we distinctly saw her little dark hands fingering the strings as a child would to amuse itself. She then went up to my wife who was sitting four or five feet from the cabinet, took her hand, and as my wife leaned downwards she put her tiny arms round her neck and kissed her. She then crossed over the room and took my hand, then my daughter's, and my daughter-in-law's hands, fondled them a bit, and retired to the cabinet. Again the curtains opened, and out came a tall female form with less power than "*Pocha*," nor was she able to speak as "*Pocha*" had done. But she was known to our clairvoyants, who saw her through the white drapery in which she was enveloped: and it was interesting to us as the promised form of our departed daughter who for years had promised to come out among us. Gaining power, she slowly walked up towards her mother and gave her her hand, but had not sufficient power to embrace her as she evidently tried to do. She then walked to the chair on which the fairy bells were resting, took them up and walked to me with them, leaving them in my hands. I took her hand gently, but it, although fully materialised, lacked the firm touch of little "*Pocha's*," and seemed too ethereal to be pressed. We were all delighted, however, thus to see her for the first time, but not prepared for all that was to follow. On her retiring, another spirit came out, who looked towards his father, but lacked the power to reach him at the furthest part of the room. He was known to our clairvoyants, and indicated his identity by bowing his head as his name was given.

Those who have read "*Heaven Opened*," will know that some years ago we lost three little ones, one after another; lost to sight only, for we have had repeated indications of their nearness. And now the three sweet little spirits, one after another, came out, materialised for the first time. How can I describe the delicate little forms of infants radiant in light? It was indeed a Sabbath evening of holy communion, and to us the place was holy as these forms of light walked among us. But I fancy I hear some one, more critical than sympathetic, saying: Yes, but where was Miss Wood? I reply: Hitherto she was in the cabinet, sometimes talking while the spirits were moving about, and at other times breathing so as to be heard by those nearest the cabinet, to three clairvoyants present seen distinctly with the spirit forms. But we are not all clairvoyants! No; so for those the following phase occurred.

Miss Wood was now brought *out* of the cabinet; still entranced, and seated in view of all; in front, outside, all saw her, while the curtains, now slightly opened, disclosed the spirit light. Some papers had been pinned upon the curtains, for more readily noting their movements. A hand now, seen by some only, took out the pins and threw the papers on to the floor, this latter seen by all. Now as the curtain was opened all saw the light and those on one side the *form* of a spirit, very tall. "*Pocha*" said, "There's another spirit coming out with a baby," and there it was. But a storm broke over us and broke also the conditions.

My daughter-in-law, next to me, lady-like, was scared by the peals of thunder overhead. The invisibles, I presume, determined to do their best, entranced *her* now, but in vain; the tall form seen could not come out, and our last baby form is still nursed in the spirit-land. Not long ago I heard from a pulpit the bewailing recorded by the poet:—

"Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

The touch we have often felt; the voices of some we have often heard. And yet the question is still asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" *Some do.* Is it scientific to conclude from that that *all do*?

It is the mission of Spiritualism to establish this fact, and it is gradually being accomplished.

But I know there are many hungering and thirsting after such phenomena as I have described, and which now mingle with the daily life of many. It is only in *family* life such pure phenomena can be secured; but with a medium like Mr. Husk, who is now sitting weekly with members of the Central Association of Spiritualists, even visitors, if true and honest, can see enough to confirm what is now so often recorded, as will also be the case with our friends at the Antipodes who are looking forward to the arrival of Miss Wood. The conditions for such manifestations are so subtle that I doubt if scientists will discover their existence satisfactorily for many a long day, while those on whom the light has shone can rest and be thankful. No so-called exposures touch their serenity. They *could* explain even *them*, but *not* to the fools who expose!

MORELL THEOBALD.

July 12th, 1883.

MR. IRVING BISHOP AND SPIRITUALISM.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In your issue for February 17th, I took the liberty of criticising a certain performance given by Mr. Bishop at Liverpool, in which he was supported by the Rev. J. H. Skewes (a violent opponent of Spiritualism), and many other local gentlemen of repute. Mr. Bishop pretended to have accepted a challenge that had been made him by a certain Mr. Ladyman for the sum of £10, the terms being that he (Bishop) should find a pin that had been hidden by the challenged in a certain part of the city. And he was reported to have successfully won the wager. The local Press was unanimous in declaring it to be a death-blow to Spiritualism, and seemed to enjoy the reputation Mr. Bishop was earning for himself as a "thought-reader." The evidence was so weak that I wrote in your columns as follows:—

"I could not help feeling that, considering the advantages Bishop was to derive from the experiment, there is another and very simple explanation than that of the pin having been found by 'thought-reading.' Indeed, the explanation is so obvious that no one will be mystified as to what it is. But assuming it to have been a genuine exhibition of Bishop's mental power, I shall be pleased to make the following offer:— I will place in the hands of the Psychical Society the sum of £10, and that Society shall choose a committee of six of its members, to mark and hide a pin in a similar manner to that adopted by Mr. Ladyman. Bishop shall allow himself the like conditions of being blindfolded and a copper wire; and if he, under these circumstances, will guide any one of the six gentlemen to the spot where the pin is hidden, I will forfeit the sum above-named, and will publish the result in the newspapers. Should the Psychical Society and Mr. Bishop consent to this, and the latter succeed, he will at once see the importance it will give him in having been successful with a committee of scientific gentlemen, whose testimony no one will doubt, besides having clearly demonstrated that *his* power of thought-reading has stood the calm and deliberate test of a body of men who have already satisfied themselves of the existence of such a power."

To this challenge Mr. Bishop made no reply. Nor indeed did I expect any, as I felt certain that his powers could not stand the test of a crucial investigation.

I am glad, therefore, to be able to call the attention of your readers to an article which appeared in *Truth* of June 21st, by which Mr. Bishop's system of "thought-reading" is completely exposed; and I quote the following from *Truth* as proving that my criticism was not unwarranted:—

"At Liverpool there is a certain Whiteley, an owner of a waxwork exhibition. Bishop having quarrelled with Uffier (his

partner at Manchester and elsewhere), entered into a partnership with Whiteley, I suppose on the same terms as he had done with the former. The first object, of course, was to attract attention to his entertainment. It was therefore announced that a gentleman had bet Bishop £10 that he would not find a pin concealed within a certain distance of the Adelphi Hotel. The experiment was to take place at mid-day; Bishop was to have a bandage round his eyes, and then, as a further precaution, a black bag was to be passed over his head (the bag is an old trick—no sooner is the bag put on, than the performer is able to push up the bandage without detection), and he was to be attached by a wire to the wrist of a local dentist of the name of Ladyman. The experiment was 'successful.' Bishop ran through the street, walked into an hotel, went out on the balcony, and found the pin there. A few days later on, two men called on me. One gave the name of Whiteley, the waxwork man, and the other that of Blunt, a conjurer at Liverpool. They said that they had seen in *Truth* that Mr. Bishop's pretensions had been ridiculed, and that they were prepared to produce evidence to shew how he had tricked the public at Liverpool. I did not pay any great attention, but told them that when they gave me the evidence I would look into it. I heard no more of them, but as they had told me that either they were going, or had gone (I forget which), to see Mr. Maskelyne about the matter, I thought that I would call upon that gentleman and ask him whether they had ever been to him. Mr. Maskelyne said that they had, and that they had related the whole circumstances in regard to the Liverpool transactions to him. Whiteley had told him that the trick of the pin at Liverpool had been arranged beforehand; that although the man who made the bet with Bishop had lost it, and consequently ought to have paid the £10 to the charity, in reality Bishop and his friends had paid it. Mr. Maskelyne shewed me a letter to him from this Whiteley, in which he says, 'So far as I am personally concerned, I am willing and prepared to make a public statement as to the fact of having myself paid a share of the bet.' I asked where Whiteley was now? Mr. Maskelyne replied that he had lately met him, and that he had learnt that he had made up his differences with Bishop, and was again either his partner or his *impresario*. Another fact in regard to Mr. Bishop's Liverpool experiences is, that the 'subject' there was not a person either of repute or independence. At the *séance*, a man stepped forward and, producing a note, which he said Bishop could never have seen, asked him to read it. This Bishop did. The man was one Corner, a clerk in a Liverpool bank. It can be proved that just before the meeting he had been with Bishop, in his private room."

If the writer's allegations are true, a clear case is made out against Bishop's pretence to possess the faculty of reading thoughts; and his reluctance to place himself under conditions that preclude fraud and collusion is, without doubt, most prejudicial to his claim.

In view of the large sums that have been offered him should he succeed in reading the number of a bank-note, it would almost be ridiculous to further call his attention to my challenge, but it will hold good until such time as Bishop may care to accept it.

I am surprised that Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, who is usually so clear in his observance of facts, should state in your columns that he could account for Bishop's cabinet performance at St. James's Hall in no other manner than by spiritual aid. Such admissions are not only damaging to the cause, but lead the public to believe that there can be no difference between the trickery of the professional conjurer and the phenomena observed in the presence of a medium. For Mr. Wedgwood's information I beg to say that the trick—for it is nothing else—is an old one, and was resorted to by Annie Eva Fay when in England, and more recently in America, when I had an opportunity of discovering how it was done; and I shall be happy to inform Mr. Wedgwood how he can perform the same feats himself after a little practice, although for want of practice I could not hope to do so with the same agility as the exposed exposé, Mr. Washington Irving Bishop.—Yours faithfully,

Onslow-gardens, S.W.

W. E.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Much is unavoidably crowded out this week.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In three recent numbers of "LIGHT" we have had three eulogistic reviews from the thoughtful and metaphysical pen of "C. C. M.," and perhaps some of your readers may not object to a criticism of Mr. Sinnett's book from a European and arithmetical standpoint.

In the first place it has seemed to me that the title of the book is a misnomer.

By the term Esoteric is generally meant the sacred innermost, and thus Esoteric Christianity means the innermost secret of that soul which is *One* in spirit with the Christ as the Logos or operative wisdom of God. And as God thus is the cause and centre of all things, a system like Buddhism, which denies the existence of a Creator or spiritual First Cause, cannot, in the true, that is the Theistic sense, be esoteric.

A mere secret is not esoteric, and one might as truly speak of an esoteric police, or esoteric drugs, as of an esoteric cosmogony; and as Mr. Sinnett's book is almost entirely a theory of the evolution of man out of matter, and a supposed history of man's growth in various planets, it is no more entitled to the term esoteric than are the theories of Andrew Jackson Davis or those of "The Vestiges of Creation."

Mr. Sinnett's book is given as the secret teachings of the Occult Brothers through their representative, Koot Hoomi; and it is stated that their secrets are stupendous, and are now for the first time in the history of the human race, given to the world by the author.

Moreover, it is intimated that the revelation is infallible, and that as it is only by receiving infallible truth that the soul can be saved, we run a great risk if we reject the teaching now so generously given to us; and, indeed, one is reminded of the words of the Athanasian Creed when it informs us that, "Except ye thus believe without doubt ye shall perish everlastingly," with this extra terror, that whereas the Pope of Rome who thus threatens us is a man visible in the flesh, the secret Popes who now threaten us are invisible Esoteric Brothers.

Regarding this Koot Hoomi, it is a very remarkable and unsatisfactory fact that Mr. Sinnett, although in correspondence with him for years, has yet never been permitted to see him.

The excuse is that his magnetism is so refined that he could not safely descend into the plains of India, and run the risk of infection from the low magnetism of ordinary mortals.

If this be a fact then he cannot truly be an adept—that is, as is claimed, one who can control the forces of Nature—for if he could, then he could easily surround himself by a curtain of invisible but impenetrable magnetic aura.

Even a common mesmerist can make himself so positive that he not only associates with the lowest human beings, but while he expels the evil magnetism of their diseases he himself lives safely in the midst of it.

How comes it, then, that Koot Hoomi is so feeble, and why does he not resemble Jesus, who associated with lepers and maniacs, and expelled their demons by the word of His power?

But if Koot Hoomi cannot safely descend to the plains, why does he not invite Mr. Sinnett to visit him in the hills, and after purging him with fruit and baths and fumigations, and being "ever careful that he did not come between the wind and his nobility," hold from his tripod sweet and psychic converse with him, and indeed why not, if need be, isolate himself from the sinner of the West by means of a glass case?

But although Koot Hoomi has not shewn himself to Mr. Sinnett in the flesh, he has sent him three portraits, one by Madame Blavatsky, and two taken by a kind of spiritual or occult photography.

These portraits the devotees have been permitted to look on, but not to touch, but I as one altogether born of the devil have not been permitted to behold them.

This, I think, is a mistake, for just as some second-class saints have been made by gazing on halfpenny prints of the Mother of God, so who can say that if my good friend had permitted my sceptical eyes to look on the Divine face of Koot Hoomi I might not forthwith have been converted into an Esoteric Buddhist?

I dwell at the outset on this Oriental practice of secrecy, because although I believe many of those we are in communication with in the East are noble beings, yet I know that Secrecy and Cunning are ever twin sisters, and hence it has always appeared to me childish and effeminate in any Western or Eastern society pretending by secret words and signs to enshrine great truths behind a veil, which is only useful as a concealment of ignorance and nakedness; and as secrecy is so often a sign of weakness, I will venture to assert that if these Occult Brothers came out of their caves and mixed with mankind we should find them merely attenuated ascetics, inferior in matters of science, wisdom, and knowledge to the higher minds of our Western civilisation.

But as to this grand secret regarding man and the universe now for the first time in the history of the human race revealed by the Occult Brothers through Koot Hoomi, it is briefly as follows:—

1. "There is no God personal or impersonal,"* and "no Creator, because no physical effect can arise but from a physical cause," and thus man, body, soul, and spirit, is an evolution from matter.

2. There are seven planets through which man passes by successive re-incarnations in the progress of his evolution.

These seven planets have each evolved seven races, and these seven races each seven sub-races.

Thus we have 7 planets \times 7 races \times 7 sub-races, that is $7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$ stages of existence, and as each man and woman has been twice incarnated in each stage we have $343 \times 2 = 686$ as the number of re-incarnations man has had in the seven planets, and as I understand, this process has been performed seven times in the "spiral" evolution of the planets. We thus have $686 \times 7 = 4,802$ as the number of existences a human soul has in its progress towards a final Nirvana.

3. Three of these seven planets are the Earth, Mars and Mercury, the four others are of so refined a material as to be invisible.

4. At all his 4,802 deaths man passes into a paradise of happiness and rest, "a world of effects," the average life there being probably 8,000 years before each re-incarnation.

Thus the life of man in this world of effects which is called Devachan, is $4,802 \times 8,000 = 38,416,000$ years.

This seems a very long time, but in a conversation I had on the subject, I was informed that although the Brothers were shy as to giving exact quotations in figures, it was yet understood that the probable duration of a finished soul on the planets was more like 70,000,000 of years.

5. The life in Devachan is one of happiness, but of a dream-like nature, during which the inhabitants do little or no work either for themselves or others.

6. The ultimate destination of the soul is Nirvana, where all the past lives of 70,000,000 years become as one remembrance—the soul being in unity with the infinite but yet a distinct individuality.

7. All do not reach Nirvana, for while some can find into it a short cut by occult lines, others, even after 70,000,000 years, are too wicked to go there, and these are cast into the "dust bin" of our system, the moon, where they drag out a miserable existence and rapidly disintegrate and perish for ever.

This is a brief epitome of Esoteric Buddhism as I have learned it from the book and from private instructions, and I find the revelation is received by three orders of mind in three very different ways.

First. I find some who "read the revelation with breathless attention, and receive it in wonder and awe."

Second. I find those who say, "The author of this cosmogony, whoever he may be, is evidently as mad as a hatter."

While a third order of mind says: "We have great suspicion of all schemes made, cut and dry, by the multiplication of sevens, and it seems to us that Koot Hoomi is trying to impose on Sinnett 'an awful cram.'"

For myself I restrain my sentiments, and only beg to be permitted to question the statements, philosophically and arithmetically.

First, then, we are told there is no God and no Creator, for all things were evolved out of matter, the body, soul, and spirit of man being but three stages of matter in evolution. And we are further told that there is no Creator "because no physical effect can arise but from a physical cause."

(Continued on page 333.)

* *Theosophist*, May, 1882, p. 6 (supplement).

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SATURDAY, JULY 21st, 1883.

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE BHAGAVAT GITA.

An Address by the Rev. S. E. BENGOUGH, M.A. at Cavendish Rooms, on Sunday, July 15th, 1883.

"The foundations of the earth are out of course," said the prophet; signifying, no doubt, by that striking image that the social and religious condition of his country was in a thoroughly disorganised state, going to pieces, and falling into confusion, as a city might do under the influence of an earthquake. This prophetic language is eminently fitted to describe our own age and condition, and it becomes more so every day. The foundations of our earth are out of course. It is no use to deny, or shut our eyes to, a fact which is patent to every one of ordinary intelligence who is not blinded by prejudice or use and wont. There is no single tradition of the past which commands universal or even general reverence. There is no moral or religious axiom of 100 years ago which is not called in question by some of our most honoured and deepest thinkers.

Such a state of things is, in many respects, a very unhappy one. Individuals and nations must have some truths, some firm convictions to build their life upon. And, now-a-days, half our time is spent in arriving at the comfortable assurance that all which our grandfathers believed was a delusion and snare; and then, when we have begun to see our way to a few practical relative truths, we have to die, or, as we Spiritualists think, go into another state of existence. To those who may be troubled with any such reflections as these, allow me to suggest a source of consolation. After all, the doubts which have been cast upon old authoritative notions have been caused, in most cases, by scientific discoveries, and increased clearness of vision in almost every province of inquiry. And to one of these discoveries I would refer as a consolation for the shortness of our individual lives on earth. I mean the fact—which becomes more certain every day—that man has been upon the earth some hundreds of thousands of years. And if our own personal existence is short, our inherited faculties, and even some fragments of history—taking that word in its widest sense—go back to a quite indefinite past. It is true, indeed, that what is commonly called history is but of yesterday. Of the enormous period during which man has been upon this planet we have only records of 5,000 or 6,000 years, and those consist of the legendary story or the skeleton annals of half-a-dozen countries on the shores of the Mediterranean—countries that in an ordinary map of the world may be covered with three or four fingers. And this, forsooth, is universal history. Universal, I suppose, as to time and space in relation to our globe. The appellation is, really, too absurd.

Indian Literature.

China, Egypt, India, at the earliest period of recorded history, had already attained a highly developed state of civilisation—on which we ourselves have made but slight advance. And of the countless ages preceding that epoch we know almost nothing—only a few archaeological facts concerning mound and pyramid builders, lake-dwellers, and so forth. About the time referred to there already existed in India some religious books—the four Vedas, or words, written in a beautiful dialect, that has been for centuries a dead language. These Vedas, with the Upanishads, Puranas, and two prodigious epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabahrata, form alone a voluminous literature, bespeaking intellectual capacity equal perhaps to that of any era that succeeded. On these sacred writings is based the most ancient ecclesiastical system of India, represented by Brahminism, of which the long pre-Christian Buddhism was an offshoot.

The Mahabahrata seems to have been written after the first three Vedas and prior to the fourth. It is a gigantic production, and is said to contain 220,000 lines. It is divided into eighteen books, and in about the centre stands the Bhagavat Gita.

The Bhagavat Gita is generally allowed to be the deepest and most interesting portion of the Vedic literature. It is allegorical to begin with, and susceptible of more than one interpretation; but it is quite certain that it states and professes to solve a great variety of metaphysical and moral problems, and I think I am justified in describing it as the oldest psychological treatise in existence. In the miserable chaos of religious and philosophical scepticism in which the world is weltering at present, it may have a tranquilising effect on some minds to go back to this ancient document, and breathe for a while that serene atmosphere of thought that brought with it peace, and strength, and purity to our Aryan ancestors 3,000 years ago.

Bhagavat Gita.

This poem has a dramatic form throughout, but there is scarcely any action, and it consists almost entirely of a dialogue between two interlocutors. In the first scene two armies are facing each other ready to commence a battle, which is to determine the question of sovereignty. The armies are composed of descendants of one ancestor through two brothers named Dhretarashtira and Pandu. Pandu was the younger brother, and had obtained the right of sovereignty on account of the incapacity of his elder brother, who was blind. The younger brother, however, resigned, and after the lapse of years his descendants, the Pandus, contended with the Kurus, the descendants of the elder brother, for sovereignty: finally, obtained the victory and acquired possession of the kingdom. This episode has its parallel in the Hebrew story of Esau and Jacob; the posterity of the latter—the younger of the two brothers—becoming the heroes of the after part of the drama.

Now for the interpretation. By the two families, Kurus and Pandus, of one tribe, are to be understood the various forces of passion and intelligence in the one tribe of mankind—or, if you please, the individual man. The microcosm man, just as the larger world, is for ever the battle-field of vice and deceit against truth and virtue. Man is born undeveloped. Passion—like the elder brother, Dhretarashtira, and Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage—is spiritually blind. Vice and deceit obstruct the gates of intelligence. The moral principle also is held in a state of siege. The theatre of this drama, then, is none other than the soul of man—the spiritual kingdom that is within us, the scene of such awful conflicts of contending powers. But my audience need not fear that they will have paraded before them a lifeless train of abstract virtues and vices, like the *dramatis personae* of the old Morality Plays. Religious idealism has seldom soared higher than it does in this poem, and for equal beauty of moral feeling we should have to go to Thomas-a-Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. But there is, moreover, here a depth of theosophical speculation which makes one giddy to contemplate.

So much for the general character of the poem. Let us look into it closer. The whole work has been divided into three sections. The first is purely practical; the second, theological; and the third, metaphysical. There are three speakers, Sanjaya, a messenger—who simply introduces the narrative, like the chorus in a play—Arjuna, and Krishna. As is well known, Krishna was supposed to be the eighth incarnation of Kishna, who is the second in order of the Hindoo Trinity. Arjuna represents embodied humanity. Shortly after the opening, Sanjaya says:—Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhartarashtiras arrayed for battle, and that the flying of arrows had commenced,

he raised his bow, and addressed these words to Krishna : "Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One, between the two armies, that I may examine these men, and see with whom I have to fight." And Krishna, being thus addressed by Arjuna, drew up that best of chariots.

Surely it is remarkable that the second person of the Hindoo Trinity should be acting here as Arjuna's charioteer. As the action proceeds we find that he assumes the part of revealer of all mysteries, and is himself revealed as the central life of all creation. It should be noted that Arjuna is addressed by three different titles : Son of Kunti, Son of Pritha, and son of Bhárata. These refer respectively to the animal, the human, and the divine principle in man ; and they apparently answer to the terms : Son of Mary, Son of Man, and Son of God, as applied to Jesus the Christ.

The first scene is entitled Arjuna's Despondency ; and this despondency leads to all the dialogues that follow. Arjuna is perplexed and distressed to see in the ranks of those opposed to him numbers of his blood-relations and others whom he respects. He knows not how to act.

"Alas !" he says, "we have determined to commit a great crime ; since for the desire of sovereignty we are prepared to slay our kin. Better were it for me if the Dhartarashas would slay me harmless and unresisting in the fight." This is Krishna's answer : "Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom. Know this, that that by which all this universe is created is indestructible, and these finite bodies belong to an eternal, indestructible and infinite Spirit. Therefore, fight, O Bhárata ! The spirit is not slain when the body is killed. As a man abandons worn out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn out bodies. The soul is eternal and capable of going everywhere. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. The soul in every creature's body is always invulnerable. And considering thine own duty" (as a kshatrya), "thou are not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a kshatrya than lawful war. And if thou wilt not join in this lawful fight, thou abandonest thine own duty and glory, and contractest a crime. And to a noble man infamy is worse than death."

Spiritual Principles.

Such is the practical exoteric teaching of the earlier portion of this drama. It comprises the following principles :

1. The spiritual and eternal origin of all phenomena.
2. The duty of faithful, calm submission to the unknown and the inevitable, and the brave fulfilment of relative obligations.
3. The pursuit of tranquillity of soul by the attainment of spiritual truth.
4. The disregard of all selfish considerations or hope of reward here or hereafter.

The succeeding portion of the poem consists chiefly of religious and philosophical illustrations of these fundamental principles.

The method prescribed for attaining to spiritual truth and perfection may be termed the doctrine and discipline of the Yogis. It is probable that for thousands of years this sect of ascetics has had its representatives in India. Two years ago there appeared in the *Theosophist* an interesting account of the different stages through which an initiate in this order passes. It is reported that at an early period of his experience the Yogis' limbs are benumbed. Then follows a sense of utter exhaustion. Afterwards he becomes "master of the vision." He sees into men's hearts, he hears the most distant voices. Next he feels himself to be so subtle that he can transport himself where he will, and like the Devas, see all without being seen. Finally, he becomes the Universal and indivisible Word, he is the Creator, the Eternal, exempt from change ; and become perfect repose, he distributes repose to the world.

The spiritual principles rather than the practical precepts of Yoginism are given in the Bhagavat Gita.

Krishna says to Arjuna : "The devotee who, freed from sin, proves constant in his vocation, enjoys eternal happiness, and is conjoined to the Supreme. He sees that all existent things are centred in the Life Divine. For Me he sees in all that is, and all created things in Me. He worships Me as present in all things that are, and even while on earth he dwells in Me."

Such words prepare us to enter on the more distinctly religious portion of this wonderful poem. And our time is so limited that we will pass at once to the heart of it, to a canto which might be entitled "A Beatific Vision, or the Transfiguration of Krishna."

Arjuna thus addresses Krishna : "In loving kindness great to me thou hast in words imparted much concerning that which is the inmost principle of Life in all the worlds and spheres. But now, O Thou who art the first of forms in human shape divine, I am most wishful to behold in clearer light Thy higher form."

Krishna makes answer, and then Sanjaya, the narrator, continues :—

"Now when the Lord had finished speaking to Arjuna, forthwith the Mighty One revealed His glorious countenance and form, which shone with radiant light, crowned with a brilliant diadem, apparelled with celestial robes. The splendour of that glorious One was such as if a sudden blaze of light should issue from a thousand of meridian suns at once. And thus to Pandu's son the God of gods His presence did reveal. It seemed as if the universe itself was comprehended in that one majestic form. And thereupon the wealth-despiser, stretching forth his hands, the palms conjoined, with reverence most profound bowed low his head, and spake these words :

"O Mighty One, within that form Divine,
In which Thou dost present Thyself to me,
I see a countless crowd of angel-forms,
And myriad shapes of life.
I see Brahma upon his lotus throne
With the seven ancient ones.

"O mighty Lord of all the universe,
Thou art the sole and self-existent One,
And Thou art worthy to be praised and loved.
Thou art the central and exhaustless Fount
From whom are born all worlds that move in space.
Both sun and moon reflect as mirrors bright
The light that issues from those lustrous eyes.

"O Thou, who art the senses' conqueror,
All worlds rejoice with joy exceeding great
When they receive what flows from Thy abode.
Thou art the great Creator of the earth,
And everything that lives and is thereon !
Thou art the Generator of the air, the stars, the fire ;
Hail ! hail to Thee ; a thousand times all hail !

"And now, O Mansion of the universe,
Appear to me again in other guise.
The same I saw before, with triple crown,
And staff, and discus held in both Thy hands."

(*The change in the Divine manifestation takes place, and ARJUNA proceeds.*)

"O Thou, to Whom the prayers of men ascend,
Now that I see Thee in this placid form,
In human shape Divine, I am composed,
And to my former state again return."

I should say that I have followed Mr. William Oxley's translation of this passage as given in his "Philosophy of Spirit," a work to which I am greatly indebted. But I have toned down much of the imagery in this vision, as in its entirety it is too orientally magniloquent for English taste. What I have retained expresses many grand ideas. Krishna, in his human form, is represented as the object of worship to all mankind. In his symbolical transfiguration he becomes the embodiment of all the vital energies of creation. He is described as the originator of all worlds, the stars of heaven, and our sun among the rest.

Both sun and moon, it is said, reflect as mirrors bright the light that issues from those lustrous eyes.

Almost all historic religions are, as is generally known, traceable to sun worship. But there is more than sun worship here. The sun himself is but the reflection of the glory of deity.

The philosophical portion of this poem is a sort of didactic inference from what precedes. It essays to unfold the nature of life, of consciousness, and the inmost principle—the soul, which is described as having "hands and feet, with faces, heads, and eyes in every part, and sits the central power in all. Endowed with vast intelligence, it comprehends the universe."

It is afterwards said :—

The soul, that inmost principle within all forms of life, is called the guide, preceptor, witnesser, sustainer, and the mighty God. And he who comprehend these three—the soul, which is the inmost principle ; the spirit, which enshrouds the soul ; and body, with its qualities, whatever path in life he takes, no more regeneration needs.

We are told that three principles are active in embodied men—brightness, impulse, and darkness.

The fruits of brightness are called purity and holiness, those of impulse are anxiety, and those of darkness ignorance. If,

when the hour of dissolution comes, the principle of brightness is matured, the spirit will ascend to spheres where dwell the pure and perfect ones. And should it leave the outer frame when impulse is predominant, it joins the company of those who delight in active work. But if the frame should be dissolved when darkness is predominant, the spirit goes to spheres where dwell the earth-bound ones.

My nature, pursues Krishna, is approached and found when these three principles are made subservient. Then the spirit is released from future birth and death, old age and pain, and feeds on heavenly and angelic food.

Arjuna asks: "What are the signs, O mighty One, by which this conquest can be known? What course of life doth such a one pursue who would overcome these?" Krishna replies: "When brightness, impulse, darkness act in such a one, O Pandu's son, he hates them not; nor longs again for them when they have disappeared. He is neither agitated nor wavers, because he knows these principles can only act upon his most external form. He is contented in himself, and is the same in ease and pain. He values neither lands nor gold nor jewels, which are nought to him. His bearing is the same to all, be they his friends or enemies. In all he undertakes he is free from thoughts of self-aggrandisement. These are the signs which mark the one who has overcome these qualities. And he is made conformable to me and shares in my prerogative. I am the heaven of heavens, ambrosia, incorruptible, eternal, law, and order—bliss that is intense and aye endures."

Mr. Oxley remarks—I think very justly—that the concluding sentence gives the key to this profound drama. Even Krishna, or "the Holy One," is but a personification of the powers of the human soul. He is a representation of the states which a full regeneration opens, or, in plain words, the consciousness of life through all the three degrees, celestial, spiritual, and natural. Anyone who can apply this description to himself or herself will know who and what Krishna, and Christ, and Osiris really are—not historical persons of a bygone age, but life principles within ourselves.

Indian Philosophy and Judaism.

Now that I have laid before my audience the leading features of this venerable psychological treatise, I must venture to say how I think it may be utilised at present. Of course it cannot be adopted in its entirety as a guide to us. We live in a different age; our atmosphere of thought, our social, climatic, and ethnological conditions are very unlike those of the author of the Bhagavat Gita and his contemporaries. Yet what may be called the Christianlike tone of this drama is very remarkable. It is true that we have there no ghastly dogmas about men being under the curse of an angry Creator, and so on. But we have in Krishna a personification, as a Divine humanity, of the central universal life. Something like that we meet with, too, in St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles; but in the Sanscrit drama we have more psychology proper, and less of religious theosophy. There is a more philosophical, scientific spirit in the Indian than in the Jewish mode of looking at the universe. Looking at the universe, did I say? When did the Jew or the Christianised Jew ever do this? His universe was a crystalline vault that moved round him every twenty-four hours, with the sun fixed there to give him light by day, and the stars and the moon by night.

The Jewish sacred books, no doubt, in their fundamental elements rival in antiquity the Vedas themselves. They, too, contain the oldest symbolism in existence, and, here and there, a spiritual sublimity that has rarely been surpassed. But if we do not recognise that those books are allegorical, mystical books, the literal sense of which is often contradictory, grossly sensual, and misleading, we sink below the level of hair-splitting Jewish Rabbis. An unreasoning acceptance of a fancied Divine and verbal inspiration is not a condition of child-like simplicity—that has its beauty—but one of mental dotage, which is pitiable, only pitiable, whether exhibited by some poor Salvationist ranting at the street-corner or by an Archbishop of Canterbury. We owe much to the Jewish nation, and their history has been such that they can well afford to treat with contempt the derisive criticism of the prejudiced and ignorant. The Jew has his distinctive virtues, and individuals of his tribe have attained to intellectual eminence. But that is no reason why we of Teutonic race, with 2,000 years of development since the Jewish nation reached its highest altitude, should be content to sit, like open-mouthed children, at the feet of Syrian devotees and visionaries, or astute, semi-enlightened Jewish scribes.

The Jewish Yoke.

We are Jew-ridden on our Stock Exchange, and that is enough in a commercial country like ours. That is the Jew's proper sphere. But in the name of all that is just and true, I say let us shake off the Jewish yoke from our philosophy and religion. Let us no longer be Jew-ridden in our temples, whether it be the grandest of all temples, our own souls, or the star-studded vault of heaven, or some less imposing structure, from that great sepulchral cathedral of St. Paul's downwards.

In achieving this happy emancipation, which is approaching every day, we have not only many "vested interests" to contend against: we have an enemy nearer home, in our own narrow, English cast of mind, and in the inherited prejudices and superstitions of a thousand years, which have become bone of our bone, and almost part of our intellectual nature. We should not be so Jew-ridden as we are, if there were not in our national character something of the Jewish type, enriched and ennobled it may be, but Judaic still. Of course I don't refer to the nonsensical theory about a blood-relationship between Jews and Englishmen; I mean a purely ethical kinship. Our English pluck, so distinctively a national characteristic, answers to the proverbial pertinacity of the Jew. The Jew rules to-day half the money-markets of Europe; and English commercial genius has made some call us a nation of shopkeepers. Our formal Pharasaic Sabbath-keeping, and this wearisome Parliamentary oath business, is all Jewish. There is nothing Christian or rational about it. In a word, our affinity with the Jew—at once our intellectual weakness and our moral strength—lies in the excess of our personality, or rather our personal consciousness.

We English are each a little island in our little selves. Our religion is for the most part English morality intensified, not spiritualised. The God of England, when it is not gold, is a national deity. "O Lord our God arise! Scatter our enemies. Confound their politics!" (In the Transvaal and elsewhere.) What a deity that would be that backed up English politics! But the worst of it is, we carry all this into our theories of the other world. We would perpetuate there our coarse moralities—our skin-deep domestic relationships. Our sweet personality is so dear to us that sooner than lose any fragment of it, we are content to import half the unreality and twaddle of this world into the next. It may be that for some indefinite period the transient relationships of blood or moral affinity continue to affect us after that mysterious change called death. But surely there has been in the theories of many religious thinkers, Spiritualists especially, a disposition to attach too much importance to that merely moral, societary, inherited personality which pertains to us as pilgrims through this troublesome world. What I would urge is that the spiritual individuality of a man is something which lies below the surface, something to which his outward moral character, which is visible to the world, and may be inscribed upon his tombstone, is but the matrix, and a most imperfect index.

"We are spirits clad in veils,
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communion fails
To withdraw the shadowy screen."

A Spiritualist's Difficulties.

It seems to me that our knowledge of others and their knowledge of us, here in this gross artificial surface state of existence, cannot be perpetuated—except in rare cases—in the next state of being. There may indeed be, in exceptional instances, such depth of affection and sympathy between different individualities as shall survive the disintegration of death itself, but I do think that Spiritualists are disposed to generalise about such things too hastily and too confidently.

I have been a Spiritualist twenty years, and remain one to-day. I have read a small library of books on the subject, and have indirectly learned very much by the study of it. I confess, however, that I do not seem to know much more of the future life now than I did at the beginning, or much more than may be gathered from that Bhagavat Gita of 3,000 years ago. I said that I do not know, but I am very thankful for the suggestions of possibilities which have come to me from behind the veil, the food for imaginative feeling and speculative thought.

Addressing myself especially to Spiritualists I would ask if their experience too, fairly faced and considered, has not been discouraging in this respect. Of course, if we choose to pin our faith or confine our attention to one particular class of seers, or mediums, or forms of manifestations, we may succeed in draw-

ing up a tolerably consistent theory as to the spiritual conditions of the other life. But if we compare the varying statements of twenty seers, of as many countries and religious creeds, the impression left upon our mind is likely to be very confusing. Even in the most reliable cases the subjectivity of the medium and the character of the surrounding spiritual atmosphere appear to be modifying elements almost impossible to eliminate.

Swedenborg was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest of spiritual seers, but no one who is not the narrowest of New Church men will deny that the famous Swedish mystic unconsciously Swedenborgised a large proportion of his memorable relations, and what is true of Swedenborg is certainly true of much smaller men. Hundreds of mediums on the Continent, in France, Italy, and Spain, have endorsed the re-incarnation doctrines of Allan Kardec. And how many Catholic, Shaker, Mormon, or Indian mystics have made revelations confirming their respective creeds! What conclusions shall we draw from such an endless variety of conflicting revelations? Must we not feel, first of all, that we have to deal with a most complex and perplexing subject? Not only so; but no amount of purity of intent, self-sacrifice and extreme devotion, to the highest ends is a sure protection against illusion. Take, for example, the circumstances which attended the production a year ago of that voluminous mass of absurdity called "Oathspee; or, The New Bible." It is a book which, beyond all question, came directly from spiritual sources wholly independent of the volition or normal intelligence of the medium. This man was subjected during its production to a most severe and saintlike ordeal. But what unpurged and cultivated mind could read that book without ineffable disgust and tedium!

Practical Conclusion.

Perhaps I may differ in opinion on many points from most of those whom I have the honour of addressing. And pray, friends, do not think that I speak dogmatically, or fancy my own judgment infallible. I have said already that I feel we are dealing with a very difficult subject, on which it is far more easy to point to rocks ahead than to indicate the right course to follow. For many years it has been my conviction that the crying want of our time, not only in dealing with Spiritualism but with everything—education, politics, religion, sociology—in everything, I say, our crying want is a science of human nature. The study of psychology, normal and abnormal, may perhaps do more than anything else to throw light upon such a science. But then our investigations should always aspire to something of scientific method and spirit. We should be satisfied with no doctrine which does not possess the stamp of universal order. This intellectual spirit is the "hall-mark," so to speak, which we are bound to look for and to honour. Professor Huxley once said, "If the facts of the Spiritualist are facts I have no interest in them." No doubt he meant that the facts were so abnormal that they could not be related with others, and take their place in the scientific commonwealth; and therefore had no worth to his methodic mind. I think Professor Huxley was very ill-advised in saying that, but I can understand and can respect his feeling.

In conclusion, allow me to sum up in a few words the gist of this address. It is this—that the most important truth which spiritualistic phenomena appear to me to teach is, not something concerning our condition hereafter, but that now, in our garb of flesh, we are essentially spirits with transcendent spiritual powers, of which mere scientists know nothing, and—*quid* scientists—can know nothing, for they belong to quite a different plane of existence from that on which scientists work. I believe that these spiritual powers, normal as well as abnormal, are our glorious privilege and distinction as human beings. Conclusive evidence has been placed within our reach that we are related to a spiritual universe in one sense at least, as being real and actual, higher than the heavens and lower than the hells of our greatest poets. Our reason and imagination can give us intuitive consciousness of this tremendous verity. Spiritualistic phenomena thrust it home to our very senses.

Revelations of our spiritual surroundings shew us that we can, if we choose, live now in Heaven or in Hell; that is to say, related to, in sympathy with, and inspired by, a substantial, though ideal, world of harmony, truth, and happiness, or discord, falsehood, and misery. If we are wise, we shall act accordingly.

The sun of popularity sometimes shines upon a flower which prematurely opens its buds and discloses all its glowing beauties, but expires amidst the chilling frost of night.

Correspondence.—(Continued from page 329).

On this statement being made, I asked if the motive power possessed by the human will was material, and I was answered, "Yes, the will is only transcendental matter in motion!"

But I would ask, "Is self evolution possible or conceivable? For how is it possible that a lower can rise to a higher—except there be a pre-existing higher to rise to? For instance, how can the hod-man ascend to the top of the house without a pre-existing ladder? or the balloon ascend to the clouds except there be pre-existing strata of air on which, step by step, to ascend? And by what conceivable power could matter ascend in the scale except it ascended by, or to, a something other than itself? or how could the soul come from that matter which has no soul? or be born in matter except God breathed into matter? or how could it ascend except there was a higher than itself—a God who drew it upwards?" To all this it was replied, "These are difficulties, but not beyond occult wisdom and knowledge to solve!"

Then, again, that man has existed for, say, thirty or seventy millions of years, and yet has not an atom of remembrance of all this, is, to me, a statement the refutation of which does not require a moment's reflection, and no conceivable quantity of esoteric talk or number of Esoteric Brothers could possibly convince me that it was true.

Then, as to the moon being the "dust bin," as I was told, into which are cast all the souls of the incorrigibly wicked, the statement would be received as a joke were it not that I was solemnly informed that it was a *fact*, and perhaps it may be admitted that the moon is as good a place as any other for incorrigible Buddhistic and other lunatics; provided it is found large enough: although it is certainly uncomfortable to find the place so near our earth.

But to return to our arithmetic. If, as we are told, all souls are re-incarnations, and no new souls are created, there being a fixed number of souls, as there is a fixed amount of force in the universe, then I wish to know where the original souls came from before re-incarnations began, and if it is replied they were evolved out of matter, then I would ask why it is impossible for this process to operate now? But as we find, the population of this globe is continually increasing, there having been a time when probably there were only 100 human beings on the earth; if so, whence have come the 1,500 millions now here? If to this question it is replied they have come from other planets, then I would suggest that those other planets must be rapidly getting empty.

But the greatest arithmetical difficulty remains; for if souls on an average dwell in Devachan 8,000 years after each death, and before each re-incarnation, then as the average duration of man on earth is only about fifty years, 1,600 souls must enter Devachan for every one soul returning thence to a planet, and, if so, in a very few years, all the inhabitants of all the planets must have disappeared.

Although if we admit an unlimited period, during which Devachan must have accumulated an incalculable number of souls, there would thus be a sufficient nursery for all the re-incarnations; but still an ever-increasing number of souls in Devachan, and an ever-decreasing number on the planets, and this difficulty is, I understand, attempted to be met by the statement that some of the planets are empty.

Concerning these planets, we are told that the Earth, Mars, and Mercury are three of them, the other four being invisible owing to their rarity of texture.

On this statement two things strike us—first, that the two grandest planets should have no connection with man, viz., Saturn and Jupiter; second, that there are four invisible planets.

Concerning these four invisible planets we must be permitted to express a doubt, until their existence is proved, because however refined their texture may be it can scarcely exceed that of the tails of comets, of which some one has said that, if condensed, their matter might be put into a moderate-sized box.

Lastly, we are told that there are millions of planetary spirits who are so powerful that they could dissolve and reconstruct a planet.

If so, is it inconceivable that there may be one supreme spirit over all those millions, and that he may be in the place of the personal God of this planet—not as the creator of the planets, but as created by the planets—and thus an exemplification of how the Divine law has been in these days turned upside down, and now reads: "Parents, obey your children"?

And so it appears that Christianity has been tried and is found wanting, that it has become effete, and must pass away and give place to this sublime Esoteric Buddhism.

True, it is admitted there are a few who teach an Esoteric Christianity almost as good as this Esoteric Buddhism; but "C. C. M." says that "the interior of Christianity is to be reached, if at all, not by, but in spite of, the authorised teaching."

If by authorised teaching he means that of Church dogmas, his assertion is not entirely without foundation. But the Christian recognises no infallible authority save that of the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, and in these records, I maintain, and in these only, are to be found all which is perfect in morals and in religion.

"C. C. M." seems to believe that the doctrine of good works is a characteristic exclusively of Buddhism as distinct from Chris-

tianity—apparently forgetting that not only the moral teaching, but the entire life of Jesus, as our example, was one of good works continually, and to a degree beyond that of all other beings who ever lived on this planet.

Buddhism teaches good works as the way to Nirvana, but Christ shews that good works are dead, except they be done in the love of God, and hence the difference in the grand result of Christianity as compared with Buddhism.

We are told that there are 500 millions of Buddhists. True. But of these, 400 millions are Chinese, a people steeped in an isolated selfishness and in the most stupid forms of superstition and sensuality, and governed by a code of laws enforced by the most fearful cruelties.

Again, of the Japanese, the second greatest Buddhist people, Miss Bird, who lived amongst them, tells us that although they have many good qualities, they are yet as a people devoid of all religion and all morality.

Buddhism as exemplified and taught by Gautama was a great reform on the manners of his age in India, but it has not given to the Western world one new idea of importance to man.

It has not during two thousand years produced one man of eminence or genius. It has produced no poets, no musicians, no men of science, and no practical philanthropists. It has not conferred one intellectual or physical benefit on mankind. It has entirely failed and become dead because it has ignored the one fountain of all life, the living God.

Unitarian Christians during the last two hundred years, by their steadfast refutation of all hard dogmatism in theology, and by their continual assertion that in a morality founded on the love of God and man consisted the good of Christianity, have had a great influence on the Church doctrines of the present day, as witnessed by Canon Farrar's book on "Eternal Hope" and its widespread acceptance.

But Unitarianism, although in part the doctrine of the morality of Jesus, is not essentially Christianity, because it has failed to comprehend the doctrine of the esoteric Christ.

That doctrine has always been exemplified in the lives of the Christian saints and is now beginning to be evolved more widely, and when known it will be seen not only to contain all which is truly philosophic in Buddhism, but to have as its essence that love of God, so entirely unknown to Buddhism, but without which the highest evolution is impossible, and before which all lower forms of morality and religion must inevitably wither and become extinct.

G. W., M. D.

"Nineteenth Century Miracles."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As I venture to hope that my projected work on "Nineteenth Century Miracles" may be considered as of some personal interest to every earnest Spiritualist, especially as it aims to be an exhaustive manual of reference, and a record of one of the most wonderful and momentous movements of human history, so I hope you will not deem it out of place if I ask of your courtesy to make an announcement which may promote the conditions upon which *alone* my work can go to press in England. I have concluded, for the benefit of that posterity to which I can confidently bequeath my present undertaking, to send down with the record, some of the worthy effigies of those who have faithfully laboured in the spiritual vineyard; in a word, I am endeavouring to procure a large number of such illustrations as will add tenfold value and interest to the volume in question. Permit me to add that although this course will greatly increase the expense of publication, no additional charge will be made to the subscribers, who will all receive illustrated copies on the terms announced in the advertisement, namely, 12s. 6d. per single copy, or £2 10s. for five copies. To non-subscribers after the publication, the price will be 15s. for illustrated copies and 12s. 6d. for plain ones. I hope this announcement may prove satisfactory to the kind friends who have already sent in promises of support, and induce others to hasten in following their example. Life is short, and time is passing rapidly. There are few of us who have no pressing need to *set their house in order*; I, at least, am one who have heard the call, and must obey.—Yours faithfully,

EMMA HARDINGE BRITEN.

The Limes, Humphrey-road,
Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51 AND 53, MORTIMER STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

We had the great pleasure on Sunday last, at these rooms, of listening to an address from Mr. Bengough, at once practical and scholarly, upon the spiritual lessons conveyed by some of the oldest of the Indian Scriptures, the general subject being specially illustrated by a critical examination of the plan and purpose of the Bhagavat-Gita.

As the full text of this discourse is published in another column we prefer to refer to that as really the only adequate form for securing a due appreciation of its comprehensive grasp, earnest purpose and literary skill.

The lecture was preceded by readings from the Bhagavat Gita, and from the Epistle to St. James, of the Christian Scriptures; and followed by the anthem, "Like as the hart."

A clairvoyant present affirmed the presence of a large number of Indian and Chinese spirit forms on the platform, and described them as gesticulating freely round and about Mr. Bengough.—S. B.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

On Sunday, July 1st, "T. C. E." delivered an Address at Weir's Court, in the course of which he said:—

We may well be patient with orthodox friends, with Positivists and Atheists, when we see a man so learned and liberal as Mr. John Morley, M.P., shewing such strength of ingrained prejudice, and such ignorance of the hidden springs of life which "shape our ends rough hew them as we may."

In his interesting book, "Voltaire and His Times," Mr. Morley writes of Rousseau in the following disparaging strain: "Rousseau at the very first step affirms! He, a philosopher, credits himself with succeeding at the very first in what philosophers have always reproached divines with doing. That is to say, in believing himself necessarily in the right, and repelling beforehand the objections of all gainsayers as irrelevant."

You will here observe that Mr. Morley is rather warm on Rousseau because the latter is on good terms with himself, "*affirms*" somewhat hastily, believes in his own philosophy, and makes statements not altogether acceptable to the author of "Voltaire and His Times."

Now let us turn over a few leaves of this interesting, but somewhat negligently written book, until we arrive at his criticism of Socrates. What has he to say of this ancient telephonic mind? a mind through which the stored up wisdom of past ages was transmitted to humanity without stint and without price. Remember that John Morley—honest John, I may say, for I believe him to be one of the foremost men in England—reprobates affirmation. He would have men *thinkers*, not dogmatists, and would, moreover, in his more lucid intervals, ask us to clothe ourselves in mantles of Christian charity, or, which is the same thing, in garbs of good-nature. He writes thus: "Returning now to the true Socrates, what next shall we say of the familiar spirit of which he was only, he would say, the pupil and interpreter? If he believed in it, what shall we think of his reason? If he did not believe in it, what shall we think of his sincerity?"

In other words, Mr. Morley, utterly blind to events happening under his very nose; oblivious to Biblical phenomena; uninfluenced by the writings of Cicero, Plutarch, and others; disregarding the high esteem that Plato and Zenophon had for their old master; putting on one side with irreverent haste and negligence the long-sustained and universal belief in the strength and skill of Socrates' reasoning powers, and in his innate independence of character and love of honesty, Mr. John Morley, a comparative youth at the time this passage was written, presumes to say that—Socrates was either a fool or a knave!

Now I ask you all to study the life and character of Socrates as portrayed by his pupils, Plato and Zenophon; then to the best of your abilities strive to make yourself acquainted with the capabilities of Mr. John Morley; then, free from bias, and with philosophic calmness, determine for yourselves whether Socrates was a fool, or Mr. Morley a dunce, for at one of these conclusions the facts of the case compel us to arrive.

For my part, I have never swerved from the belief (the belief of ages) that in Socrates we see the father of European philosophy, a mind, vast and pellucid as a lake, compared to which Mr. John Morley's is but a puddle by the wayside.

Mr. Morley would have added to his reputation as a philosopher if he had avoided the fault he reproves in Rousseau. Men of "light and leading" should be more careful. Their cue is taken by smaller men, who, unable of themselves to originate an idea, fall down and worship the idol that kings of literature set up, and preach sermons from texts that are utterly false, and unpardonably foolish.

We know that Socrates, Jesus, Paul, Fox, Wesley, and other great and inspired religious teachers, have uttered statements too unfamiliar, and too opposed to orthodox modes of thought, to be acceptable to ordinary minds, or rather, to men of only normal experiences. But it should be known and remembered that these great men were subjected to influences of a divinely spiritual character, and none were more conscious of this than they themselves. One and all recognised that they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance—as their Father directed them to speak. In other words, Divine afflatus fell upon them, surrounded, and sustained them, and under its influence they spake as man never spake before; they spake with unqualified fire and energy, and with just such affection as was peculiar to their natures. Is it to be wondered at that the consciousness of the mighty sustaining power about them gave to their souls a feeling of deepest humility, moving them to declare that of themselves they were nothing; they were but instruments, voices, or the Word, of the Infinite Spirit of Nature. How can we obtain wisdom from the viewless, inconceivable personality of Deity except it be through a finite soul, who is, for the time, His word or voice?

The excuse, then, we are willing to accept for Mr. Morley is his ignorance of the world's psychological experiences; and the same excuse may reasonably be urged for atheist and other writers, who ridicule inspiration, healing by laying on of hands, and other spiritual gifts.

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is it Conjuring?

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

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

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

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

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

(With which is Incorporated the British National Association of Spiritualists. Established 1873.)

38, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, W.C.

(Entrance in WOBURN STREET.)

THIS ASSOCIATION was formed for the purpose of uniting Spiritualists of every variety of opinion in an organised body, with a view of promoting the investigation of the facts of Spiritualism, and of aiding students and inquirers in their researches by providing them with the best means of investigation.

The Association is governed by a President, Vice-Presidents, and a Council of thirty Members elected annually. The Reference and Lending Libraries contain a large collection of the best works on Spiritualism and occult subjects. Spiritualist and other newspapers and periodicals from all parts of the world are regularly supplied for the Reading Room, to which Members have access daily.

The Secretary, or his representative, is in attendance to receive visitors, and answer enquiries; on Saturdays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; on other days from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Sundays the Rooms are closed. Spiritualists and others visiting the Metropolis are cordially invited to visit the Association and inspect the various objects of interest on view in the Reading Room and Library. Information is cheerfully afforded to inquirers on all questions affecting Spiritualism.

Discussion Meetings are held fortnightly during the winter months. Admission free to Members and Subscribers, who can introduce one or more friends to each meeting. Programmes can be obtained on application during the winter season.

Soirées, at which all friends are welcome, are held at intervals during the season. An admission fee is charged, including refreshments.

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