

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER LOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.—Paul.

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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.]

THE METAPHYSICAL SOCIETY.

By "M.A. (OXON.)"

The August number of the *Nineteenth Century* contains an interesting account of a typical meeting of the once famous "Metaphysical Society," contributed by Mr. R. H. Hutton, editor of the *Spectator*. In a prefatory note Mr. Knowles gives an account of the formation of the Society, of which he acted as honorary secretary. In the autumn of 1868 the Poet Laureate and the Savilian Professor of Astronomy (Rev. Charles Pritchard) were Mr. Knowles' guests. A good deal of talk on speculative subjects led to the idea of forming a Theological Society for the frank and free discussion of such subjects. Mr. Knowles promised to form such a society, and found ready co-operation from such men as Deans Stanley and Alford, Archbishop Manning, Dr. Martineau, Dr. Ward (of the *Dublin Review*), Mr. Hutton (of the *Spectator*), on the one hand; and Professors Huxley and Tyndall, Mr. Froude, Mr. Walter Bagehot, and Sir John Lubbock on the other. The original name was wisely abandoned for that of "The Metaphysical Society," under which title the Society became famous. It was at various times joined by men of world-wide intellectual celebrity. In its list of members are included the names of Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Argyll, Archbishop Thomson, Bishop Thirlwall, Bishop Magee, Lord Selbourne, Canon Barry, Dean Church, Rev. Mark Pattison, Professors Henry Sidgwick, Clifford, Seeley, Sylvester, St. George Mivart, and Lushington; Messrs. Frederick Harrison, Frederick Pollock, W. R. Greg, James Hinton, George Grove, Leslie Stephen, Fitzjames Stephen, John Morley, Grant Duff, Robert Lowe; Sir Alexander Grant, Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Froude, Dr. Maurice, Father Dalgairns, Dr. W. B. Carpenter, Rev. Dr. Mozley, and many others hardly less eminent.

This constellation of intellect, gathered from all sources, the one requisite for inclusion within it being an earnest thoughtfulness and intellectual capacity to deal with problems on which divergent views have been held, continued to shed its light—"light without heat," as Tennyson put it—on the dark places of thought for nearly twelve years, meeting once a month. The subjects discussed were of the most varied character. "The Theory of a Soul," "What is Death?" "Has a Frog a Soul?" "What is Matter?" "The Personality of God," "The Arguments for a Future Life," "The Soul before and after Death," "On the Words Nature, Natural, and Supernatural," "The Nature and Authority of Miracle," "Matter and Force," were among the subjects considered. The Society "finally came to an end, because, after twelve years of debating, there seemed little to be said which had not already been repeated more

than once." It is much to be regretted that such an idea prevailed. There is room now, there always was room, and there always will be room for such a body of thinkers. I can conceive no time when they would not find a place for their disquisitions, short of that far-off Millennium when all perplexities shall cease, and all problems find a solution in the sunlight of perfect knowledge. We are a long way yet from that beatified condition. Moreover, since the Metaphysical Society died, fresh problems have arisen which clamour for discussion, and to-day there is a place and a work for such a society which many would be glad to see filled. It is also much to be regretted that no records of the papers and discussions of the Society exist. "They were absolutely confidential and unreported," and so are lost to us, to our great sorrow.

Mr. Hutton does not set himself to report any special meeting, but only to give "a reminiscence of the sort of debate that used to go on." The subject of this typical discussion was, "Can Experience prove the Uniformity of Nature?" Dr. Ward opened it in a paper, and Professor Huxley, Father Dalgairns, Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Bagehot (editor of the *Economist*), Mr. Fitzjames Stephen (now Mr. Justice Stephen) Archbishop (now Cardinal) Manning, and Dr. Martineau are represented as contributing a most interesting discussion.

In the course of the paper, Mr. Hutton gives some graphic word-pictures of the eminent men who surrounded him. We see Professor Huxley with "rich and resonant voice flashing out a sceptical defence of the use of the Bible in Board schools;" Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, with his deep bass voice, criticising the Claimant's adroit use of his committal for perjury; and Professor Tyndall, "with eloquent Irish voice, descanting on a proposal for a prayer-gauge," which had lately been made at the instance of an eminent surgeon in the *Contemporary Review*. Here is James Hinton with his "wistful and sanguine, I had almost said hectic, idealism," and there "the ascetic Archbishop of Westminster, every nerve in his face expressive of some vivid feeling." Dr. Ward, "one of our most unique members, his mind, to his own apprehension at least, all strong lights and dark shadows. . . . A more candid man I never knew. He never ignored a difficulty, and never attempted to express an indistinct idea. His metaphysics were as sharp cut as crystals. He never seemed to see the half-lights of a question at all. There was no penumbra in his mind." Father Dalgairns, "one of Dr. Newman's immediate followers, who left the English Church and entered the Oratory of St. Philip Neri with him, a man of singular sweetness and openness of character, with something of a French type of playfulness in his expression." "Then we heard a deep-toned, musical voice which dwelt with slow emphasis on the most important words of each sentence, and which gave a singular force to the irony with which the speaker's expressions of belief were freely mingled. It was Mr. Ruskin's." And so the sketches go on: "Fitzjames Stephen remarking in the mighty bass that always exerted a sort of physical authority over us," and the "Archbishop of Westminster looking upon Mr. Stephen with a benign smile," as he administered to him a dose of St. Thomas Aquinas; and, as the Archbishop ceased, Dr. Martineau—"we had now got into a region where no less weighty a thinker would be adequate

to the occasion—with a singularly perfect elocution, giving to all his consonants that distinct sound which is so rare in conversational speech." All the various personalities stand forth clear and distinct before us.

As to the debate itself, I am not about to present any summary of it. But some incidental points are interesting to the readers of this journal. Dr. Ward, we are told, "thought we might as well expect the uniformity of nature to be disproved by the efforts of Spiritualists to turn a table as the flood of latitudinarian thought to be arrested by Mr. Burgon's and Dean Goulburn's attempt to exclude the Dean of Westminster (Stanley) from the list of Select Preachers at Oxford." This question of the uniformity of nature crops up perpetually through the discussion, and always with a certain laxity of thought and expression. For the various speakers seem habitually to ignore the fact that we are but slenderly acquainted with the laws of nature, and that what seems to us on a given occasion to be "contrary to the known laws of nature" is possibly contrary only to such of those laws as we are at present acquainted with. Mr. Ruskin is the only speaker who seems to have realised this. "Assuming," he says, "the demonstrable uniformity of the laws or customs of nature which are known to us, it remains to me a difficult question what measure of interference with such law or custom we might logically hold miraculous, and what, on the contrary, we should treat only as proof of the existence of some other law hitherto undiscovered." And then he refers to the attested case in Paris of "a peasant girl, under certain conditions of morbid excitement, being able to move objects at some distance from her without touching them." Spiritualists know very well by repeated and most accurate observation that such power of moving objects without contact is a fact, as demonstrable and as fully demonstrated as other facts "in accordance with the known laws of nature" which scientific opinion accepts. His difficulty is the old and familiar one that men of science either scornfully refuse to investigate them at all, or give them but a superficial and timid attention chiefly for the purpose of founding upon their scanty observation some untenable but plausible theory. Witness the general refusal of men of science to investigate the phenomena of Spiritualism at all, and the theories which the scientific members of the Society for Psychical Research have considered sufficient to account for automatic writing and kindred phenomena. "The scientific man," says Professor Huxley in this discussion, "justly fears that if he investigates them [miracles] thoroughly, he shall wound many amiable men's hearts [*i.e.*, by reporting against their beliefs], and that, if he does not wound amiable men's hearts, *he shall compromise his own character as a man of science.*" That is the frankest confession I know of pure selfish vanity on the part of the man of science, and of bigoted intolerance on the part of his *confrères*.

"You must overcome," said the Archbishop of Westminster in the same debate, speaking of the Lourdes miracles so-called, "that violent prejudice in your minds which prevents you from vouchsafing even a glance at the evidence we have to offer you." Most excellent Archbishop! His words are veritable words of wisdom. But alas! they have little effect on the eminent men of "violent prejudice" to whom they were spoken. For when he implored them to "look into the evidence of the most astonishing cure of varicose veins which took place only last year in the South of France—a malady of thirty years' standing, and of steady progress throughout that time, attested on the positive evidence of French physicians who had themselves repeatedly seen and prescribed for the patient," he only elicited from Dr. Martineau the uninformative and inadequate remark that "such preternatural occurrences are usually mixed up with superstitions of all kinds, and so great a variety of hysterical emotions that I for one should

despair of any good result from investigating minutely these curious conquests effected by pretentious physical marvels over the gaping intellectual credulity of moral coldness and disbelief." Ha! ha! So it seems that superstition and hysterical emotion can cure "in a single night," with the aid of a little water, a disease of thirty years' standing, which is certainly not dependent on imagination. By all means let superstition and hysteria flourish and abound amongst us to the confusion of disease and death!

Mr. Bagehot was of opinion that "it is impossible to say what the uniformity of nature means. We cannot exhaust the number of interfering causes which may break that uniformity." That is true: and it needs especially to be borne in mind by those who deal with the phenomena that engage the attention of the Spiritualist. The influence of mind on matter, the phenomena of human consciousness, the inherent powers of the human spirit, are but little understood. The interferences that may come from varied conditions of observation, or from the irresponsible will of the unseen beings with whom we have to do, are at present unknown quantities. We are exploring a new country, dealing with invisible beings of whom we know very little. There is no room for dogmatism. To use again a serviceable phrase, we are but children playing by the fringe of the great ocean, beyond which lies the land to which we are surely going. It is storm-tossed and wild one day, and we know enough to be able to say that a gale has lashed its surface. But on another day it is placid, and no ripple stirs its glassy calm, till suddenly a swell sets into shore, and the little waves roll in with no apparent cause. We know not why this sudden disturbance, but had we known more, had our horizon been wider, we should have seen a vessel passing by beyond our limited vision, and should have known that its wash was the unknown cause of the mysterious disturbance. We know so little that we should be modest. But what with the immature dabbler who knows everything, and has at his beck and call all the great ones of all the ages for his own private use and emolument; what with the purblind scientist who knows much about his own private burrow and little about anything else, and least of all about himself; and what with the omniscient theologian, foolishlest of all, and most conceited, therefore, it is monstrous hard for poor Truth to get any fair treatment.

SPIRITUALISTIC circles have been prohibited in Silesia. Recent irregularities in them are said to be some justification for this interference.

"TREASURE Digging in Consequence of Psychical Illusion and Hallucination," is an article by Herr Wittig, of much interest for psychologists, in *Psychische Studien* for July.

AN important work by E. von Hartmann—the great philosophical author—on "Spiritism" has been published. The author recommends an unprejudiced and exact investigation of the phenomena, and points out their immense importance for psychiatry, psychology, physiology, &c. He takes up arms against prejudice on all sides, disclaiming any partisanship, and seeking only the progress of knowledge.

Psychische Studien for July has, among its "Brief Notices" an interesting note on the origin of the symbol "R," by which medical prescriptions are still commenced. Though commonly supposed merely to signify the Latin word "Recipe" (take) it is said to be really a survival of astrology, and to stand for the symbol of Jupiter, to which this letter has some resemblance. Ashmole, however, explained it as "Responsum Raphaelis," a contemporary physician, Lee, professing to receive nearly all his prescriptions from this angel. Ashmole collected them in a manuscript book. It is suggested that these recipes are those of somnambulant curative mediums, whose transcendental powers are always dramatically represented in their dream-consciousness and ascribed to higher personalities. [For a full exposition of this necessary tendency of the transcendental faculties emerging in consciousness, Du Prel's "Philosophie der Mystik" will be found sufficiently convincing.]

SOME ODD "FADS" AND FANCIES ; THEIR
RATIONALE AND EXPLANATION.

BY S. EADON, M.D.

II.

It will not be inappropriate to point out persons most likely to be sensitives. They will usually be those the tone of whose health has been lowered by their modes of life, as men of sedentary habits, clerks, needle-women who work long and sit much, the hardworking student, and all who infringe systematically, for a livelihood, the organic laws, and bring about a relaxed and irritable state of the system. Sensitives may be arranged into three classes: first, the healthy sensitive; second, the sickly sensitive; third, the diseased sensitive. These manifest various degrees of impressionability—the Baron sometimes finding that those in the best state of health often saw the magnetic light with the greatest clearness. Besides these, there are the naturally-born sensitives; the somnambules; the easily mesmerised; the highly nervous, and those quickly put under biological impression; not to mention others with a cast of insanity about them, or with a sable cloud of melancholy ever overhanging them. Of natural sensitives there will be found about one in every twenty-five persons; and, according to the calculations of Count de Treston—who made nearly 2,000 experiments, and kept records of 1,200—about one-fourth or one-fifth of the whole population is susceptible to dynamic influence. It may be as well, also, before following up the subject further, to state why the Viennese philosopher selected the word "OD" to express his idea of this new force. Seeing that "OD" was found everywhere, but concentrated nowhere, and that no special or separate sense for its perception had been bestowed, as light for the eye, or sound for the ear; and, as no odylic battery had been invented to collect it, or odometer to measure it, it was found a matter of no little difficulty to select or invent a term expressive of the nature of this new force. The word "OD" was at length adopted, and its etymology is thus accounted for:—*Va* in Sanscrit means "to go." *Vad-o* (*vad-ego*—*vad-vo*—*vad-o*) in Latin signifies "I go." *Vasa* in Old Norse "I go quickly, or haste away," and is found as *Wodan* in old German, and means the all-pervading; and after passing through various dialects, this word assumes the form of *Wuodin* or *Odin*, meaning "the all-pervading power," and which was finally personified into a German deity. Leaving out the postfix (in) there is left "OD" to indicate the name of a force which rushes through, and pervades universal nature, and which, in the ordinary conditions of humanity, has no special sense given for its perception.

From the experiments of Baron von Reichenbach with 162 sensitives, of all classes, of all ages, and of both sexes—professors, physicians, bankers, mechanics, Government officers, servants, noblemen, and even members of the Imperial family—it seems that the human body is enveloped in a delicately attenuated atmosphere, extending two or three inches from and around it; the right half of the body-atmosphere being of a bluish colour, the left half of a sort of orange-red. For the purposes of reciprocal influence, the odylic atmospheres of two persons need only touch at their circumferential edges without even interpenetrating each other in the slightest degree; but if one or both parties be inordinately impressionable an effect can be produced at the distance of inches, feet, and even of yards. Of course, body to body, as the *right* hand placed on the *left* shoulder, will give rise at once, or shortly, to a coolish agreeable sensation. This OD force streams from the finger ends, and if these blue dynamic fingers of the *right* hand stroke down the *left* shoulder of another person, gently and slowly to the elbow, a chain of innumerable cool points—in fact a sort of *cold stripe* will be felt, and this is called a *pass* by physicians of an advanced school of thought; and if a series of these "cool stripes" be scientifically made all

over the body, an agreeable coolness will be perceived, a feeling of rest and composure induced at once, sweet charming, and delightful. It matters not whether this chain of innumerable cool points be made with the hand, or a crystal, or a bar of iron, or with a bit of stick, the effect will be the same, since every substance in nature, whether atom or world, is impregnated with OD. It streams from the Milky Way—the lengthened pathway of our own universe—and is probably the connecting link of suns and of planets, of visible universes, and of all telescopic nebulae; in short, perhaps, of all forms of matter, scattered throughout infinities, boundless, eternal, incomprehensible. As a cosmic force, Reichenbach calls it OD; but being an element in the constitution of man, it has been called by many different names: by Von Helmont, Mesmer Deleuze, and others, it was called magnetism.* As a cosmic force OD or the Odylic force is the name now given to it; but, when thought of, in respect of man, *human etherium* would be, perhaps, as appropriate a name as any.

It is a strange thing—and yet a large developed self-esteem must be at the bottom of it—that people dare pass an opinion of either yea or nay on subjects to which they have never given a half-hour's serious thought or attention, and of which really and truly, they are mostly in profound ignorance; and yet society teems, thick as motes in a sun-beam, with people of this kind. These even are more excusable than another class—your clever or learned man, he who is distinguished in some domain of science or of literature. This kind of man will often condemn a new thought of which he knows nothing at all, from pride of place and position, and his opinion will frequently have great weight with people in virtue of the real knowledge which he possesses in another department of science. But this is absurd, and yet it is the way of many. It is only an independent mind here and there, that has the courage to exclaim with Horace: "*Nullius addictus jurare non verba magistri*" (I will not pin my faith on any man's sleeve). His ignorance is no more wisdom *per se* because of his knowledge on other subjects, than that of the veriest clod-pole. His opinion, in his own domain of study, is valuable as he understands the subject in all its ramifications and bearings, but on subjects of which he is ignorant, and to which he has paid no attention, his assertions are worthless. *Ipsæ dixit* of people of this class, when society gets better educated throughout its every grade, will be appreciated at their true and correct value. No reflex glory from his own special department of study will either cast a shadow of doubt on any new truth, or lessen other people's estimate of it. There are those, both learned and ignorant, who have never given psychological and dynamic studies a moment's reflection, and yet they have the effrontery to say, off-hand, that no influence can possibly come from the human fingers, [although it is on record that thousands have been sent into a recuperative condition and cured of diseases of every kind; the blind made to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and, what is more, and to boot besides, sensitives, by the hundred, in pitchy darkness, have seen the fiery brushes of the Stroking Fingers as the blue light from the right hand streamed forth and commingled with those of the orange-red of the left. The human body is constantly producing OD, which has its normal, or healthy, as well as its abnormal, and unhealthy conditions; and it is not beyond the domain of probability to say of this delicate and subtle agent, that perturbations and reversal currents may be the cause of insanity in all its varying aspects and, likewise, of all those other distressing phenomena which come under the designation of *nervous diseases*. The induction of a chain of an almost countless number of cooling points is something more than a "lamentable maze of lying and deceit and superstition." It has, without doubt, laid the foundation of thousands of splendid cures, as may be read in the pages of the *Zoist*, of which

the illustrious Dr. Elliotson was the bold, the dauntless, and the intrepid editor. "If any are sick let the elders be called together, put hands upon him, and let him be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord." But this must be no haphazard "touch," or "pass," or "cold stripe," but the star of science should shed its light, direct the process, and utilize the results. Blundering ought not to occur in any way, as the influence of OD on the sick is guided by fixed laws, and these must be known in order to draw out as much good as possible for the world of invalids from this extraordinary dynamic agent. May God have pity on the poor soul who, in mazy uncertainty, cannot obtain, or has not sense to look out for, dynamic help for his insanity, or to find means whereby to relieve the (to him) apparent mount-like accumulation of his nervous, and yet often laughed at, and pooh-poohed afflictions.

(To be continued.)

"JEAN PAUL AND PROFESSOR SOHELVER AS MAGNETISERS AT HEIDELBERG."

A recent number of *Psychische Studien* contains interesting particulars from the letters of Jean Paul of his personal experience in mesmerism. "I stand before the abyss of the spirit world!" he cried. On which Herr Wittig remarks: "But who in presence of all unexplained phenomena of life stands not before the same abyss, that is at the momentary frontier of his earthly being? Is not that which lies immediately beyond the frontier a possibly explicable *transcendental*, accessible to our earthly senses and faculties of comprehension, and after that the whole *transcendent* and 'Absolute,' or what is beyond all our experience, and is definitively cut off (*losgelöst*) from it?"

"Absolute" means "unattached" (*losgelöst*), and therefore no longer knowable.* But in the presence of inexplicable (unexplained) earthly phenomena, people always believe that they are at the summit of the whole or partial *transcendent*† and Absolute, to which the necessarily presupposed *Godhead* and *world of spirits* belong, and have begun to unveil it, whereas we never unveil and grasp anything else than the *transcendental*.

MR. W. EGLINTON is in Norfolk, and will not return to town until September 12th.

In consequence of the extreme pressure on our space this week many articles and communications stand over until our next issue. Reviews of "Healing by Faith," "The Missing Link of Modern Spiritualism," and "Karma" may be specially mentioned.

A LADY who is about to visit the Italian and Swiss Lakes would be pleased to meet Spiritualists resident in their neighbourhood. As she wishes to see something of the movement in Italy, Switzerland, and the South of France, she would not object to vary her plans for this purpose. Address, R. L., care of the Editor of "LIGHT."

MRS. M. E. WILLIAMS, the well-known medium, and editress of the *New York Beacon Light*, has arrived in London, and is now residing at 3, Upper Bedford-place, Russell-square, W. As she is visiting Europe for rest, she does not intend to give sances, but we are requested to announce that she will be at home on Mondays and Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., when she will be pleased to receive friends and Spiritualists.

FRIENDS and subscribers desiring to obtain American and foreign books on Spiritualism can do so on application to the manager of the Psychological Press, 16, Craven-street, Strand. Many of the works are kept in stock at the book-room, as well as a large new, and second-hand selection of the principal books published on the subject. This refers specially to the works published by Messrs. Colby and Rich of Boston, and the Religio Philosophical Publishing House, Chicago. Any book not in stock can be promptly ordered and delivered in accordance with an arrangement made with these firms.

* The translator may be permitted to point out the coincidence between this idea and that expressed in the article "Symneumata" (written before *Psychische Studien* came to hand), wherein it is remarked that the condition of spirit beyond all phenomenal, that is, "material" manifestation (in "Nirvana"), is the true "supernatural," in other words the "Absolute," beyond positive or possible *natural* experience, that is, beyond objective knowledge, and thus beyond science and even philosophy. So far Herbert Spencer is surely right.

† The distinction between these terms *transcendental* and *transcendent*, is that between what is beyond *normal* experience and what is beyond *possible* experience; between phenomena which in regard to their antecedents and conditions are beyond our present senses, and "things in themselves," which *never* can be sensibly apprehended. (Why "the world of spirits" should be treated as "transcendent," the translator is unable to understand, since the intelligence we call "spirits" need not be altogether disembodied, that is without phenomenal manifestation for suitable senses.)

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF A SCEPTIC RESIDENT IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

. . . . There is frightful delusion prevailing here which leads millions astray who appear sound and sensible on every other point. It is that messages are received continually from men and women living in the planet earth, and that their forms even are often seen in our spirit substance, and if the silly trash they give us be truly reported, the *contradictions* which abound in their "evidence" is proof to me and all sensible spirits that there is no earth planet at all, or any material substance, or else they do not come from a material planet, and are simply a band of vile impostors if they really are seen at all. I will just relate some of the answers which I hear are given to the simplest questions, and you will at once see for yourself.

Q.—What size is your sun?

Some—The size of an orange, and golden coloured, full of light!

Others—The size of a large plate, and very red!

Others—It is many times larger than the earth, and its body is dark!

Q.—What is the motion of your sun?

Some—It rises in the East and sets in the West daily!

Others—It never moves at all, but the earth goes round it and turns on its own axis daily!

Others—It has a progressive motion of its own in which the earth and other planets are included!

Q.—What is your earth like?

Some—It is an abode of misery and pain!

Others—It is a place of delight and pleasure!

Others—It is full of want, fraud, and oppression!

Others—It is full of plenty and endless enjoyment!

Q.—Can you tell us of the interior of your earth?

Some—It is hollow, with a thin crust, and is filled with a raging fire which consumes the hardest rocks!

Others—It is quite solid!

Others—It is hollow, having a very thin crust, and the interior is a delightful region lighted by a soft and never-waning light, and a climate like perpetual spring!

Q.—How are your cities lighted when the sun goes "down"?

Some—They are lighted with oil lamps.

Others—With gas made from coal!

Others—With electricity!

Q.—What colours are known to you on earth?

Some—Seven!

Others—Twelve!

Others—Two hundred!

Q.—Whom do you worship?

Some—One God!

Others—Three Gods!

Others—A thousand Gods!

To the question, "What is your system of religion?" the replies were so endless and bewildering that it would be a long task to set them down.

Q.—What is your marriage law?

Some—We have but one, that of one woman to one man; this is God's law!

Others—We know of one custom, several women to one man; this is God's law.

Others—We know but one custom, several men to one woman; this is the Divine law!

Such are some of the replies given by these impostors. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion (and you must see I am right) that these appearances from earth in spirit substance are utter delusions, impositions, or worse, and if they were real, then there is no earth, no sun, no material planet or thing, since all these testimonies about them are mutually antagonistic and contradictory beyond hope of reconciliation. It is all a system of lies and imposture, and it were well if the laws in the planet I left were in force here, and these liars and vagabonds put in prison, or still better, burnt in the fire. The other day I heard a professor who ought to know better giving a lecture in the Temple, and telling us we ought to receive these lying messages with calmness and respect, however contradictory they might appear, in the hope that by classification and investigation we might arrive at the truth. Thus he ventured to suggest that these varying replies were all *relatively* true according to the perception, knowledge, and position of the persons who gave them.

This just shows how the highest minds in the sphere have been attacked with this delusion, and where it may end I know not. Some complain of a similar state of things on their earth—if their earth exists at all I should advise them to stay in it, for here it is infinitely worse. These delusions are believed in by everyone, and taken as a matter of course, except by a few, who, with me, have but recently left their planets, and have not yet cast off all their senses.—Contributed by

FATHER JOSEPH.

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.]

American Camp Meetings.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Since my last I have paid a visit to the Spiritualist Camp Meeting at Onset Bay, and I think what I saw there may be interesting to your readers. Onset Bay is a charming little place, about fifty miles from Boston, and is rapidly developing into a place of considerable importance. There are quite a number of pretty houses and cottages, and several hotels, a fine temple, and a very delightful auditorium in a grove of beautiful trees. Sunday, the 12th July, was the opening day, and the exercises consisted of musical selections, vocal and instrumental, in the morning, followed by a very able lecture by Dr. F. L. H. Willis, who treated, in a lucid and logical manner, the various phenomena and truths of Modern Spiritualism. In the afternoon several fine impromptu poems were given through the mediumship of Miss Jennie Hogan, who in her turn was followed by the test medium, Mr. J. D. Stiles, who for the space of nearly an hour-and-a-half, under spirit control, gave test after test to the assembled crowd. Anything more remarkable than this gentleman's test mediumship it would be difficult to find. I am not exaggerating when I say that he gave the names and described the appearances of *hundreds* of spirits, giving full particulars as to names, business, ages, dates of passing away, &c., &c., and every name that he gave met a recognition from some one or other in the vast audience. I met quite a number of friends whose acquaintance I had made at Lake Pleasant in 1882, and I was everywhere cordially and kindly welcomed. Mr. Alborough was good enough to invite me to the evening séance of the Berry sisters, and I very gladly availed myself of his kind offer. I found a very large gathering there; indeed the rooms in the very pretty cottage tenanted by the Misses Berry were just as full as they could be without undue crowding. The circle was very harmonious, and the manifestations simply marvellous. The séance lasted about two hours, and with scarcely a moment's interruption spirit after spirit appeared before the curtain (indeed the first spirit appeared at the curtain before Miss Berry could have had time to reach her seat). I did not count the number of spirits that appeared, but I should say fifty, or pretty nearly that number; while the spirit that controlled Miss Berry stated that at least as many more were eager to come, and would have done so had the power sufficed. Four spirits manifested and spoke to me, and I had the satisfaction of recognising them all; first my brother-in-law, who passed away in 1872, and who was conspicuously tall (6ft. 4in.); next my mother, who gave me the spirit name she always uses, and who reminded me of her having already materialised at Mrs. Ross's (the account of which you will remember printing); and, lastly, my sister-in-law and her husband, who passed away in India within a month of each other nearly ten years ago, appeared arm-in-arm just as plainly and distinctly as they ever appeared in the earth-life; so distinct indeed were they that I recognised them the very moment they appeared although my seat was some way from the cabinet. There were several well-known mediums in the circle, viz., Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Folsom Butler, and others; and several controlling spirits, notably "Dewdrop," the bright little angel that controls Mrs. Fletcher and whom I have long wished to see; and "Wildflower," who controls Mrs. Butler, materialised and came out amongst the sitters, apparently with as much ease and nonchalance as though they were mortals in the circle. "Wildflower" disappeared behind the curtain, and a moment afterwards what looked like a white handkerchief appeared on the floor in the front of the circle. Several people reached forward to pick it up when, like a flash of lightning, what at first looked like a handkerchief suddenly became "Wildflower," as plain and tangible as any mortal, and as full of life and glee as possible. I may add that my little friend "Dewdrop" called to me to come near her, and she then whispered a most wonderful test in my ear, which would have given me quite enough to think of for the rest of the evening, apart from any other manifestations.

I had read a good deal about these materialising séances in the *Banner of Light*, but I can only say no description, however

vivid, can give anything like an idea of the marvellous facts that are presented at these circles. These facts are simply *stupendous*. The world may call fraud and may go on, to its eternal shame, persecuting and harassing its mediums, whom it should be the first duty of every intelligent Spiritualist to protect; still the work goes on and the *light* will not be kept back. I have seen a good deal of the movement since I came here, and I much regret having to say that in many instances the bitterest foes of Spiritualism are not those *outside*, but those *inside* the ranks, who seem to grow more narrow-minded instead of expanding, after getting some few experiences and glimpses behind the veil.

It is none of my business to act as censor, as I am only a chronicler of facts; still, as an intelligent observer, I cannot help seeing things that occur before me, and I incline to the opinion that there is too much desire upon the part of some to play "Pope" in this movement. Reference to the past history of the movement, however, shows pretty clearly that "the intelligent operators at the other end of the line" know their business a good deal better than the would-be "Popes" on this side, and so far as my experience and observation go, I find that the *role* of Pope is speedily followed by downfall and utter oblivion. Spiritualism, which is universal, cannot be made to run in party lines, and will continue its course despite all obstacles. I am getting pretty tired of hearing mediums abused, and it seems to me that if there is anything wrong about the mediums the most sensible thing the Spiritualists could do would be to surround the mediums with better conditions.

The fraternity of the White Cross, which has its headquarters in this city, is doing its work very quietly and unostentatiously, but none the less surely, and unless I am greatly mistaken, some movement for the better protection of mediums and for giving them more harmonious surroundings will have its inception ere long from this centre.—Yours faithfully,

Boston, 16th July, 1885.

J. G. MEUGENS.

BUENOS AYRES.—A correspondent writes: "We are here in hot debate with the Press, which is publishing articles against Spiritism in the names of religion and science. A writer in the *Sud-America* regards Spiritism as a kind of mental alcoholism. Against him our *Constancia* has taken up the cudgels."—*Le Spiritisme*.

THE *Religio-Philosophical Journal* criticises the Theosophy preached by Madame Blavatsky; it holds that "not only is the explanation of facts by the theory of the Occultists erroneous, but that the facts themselves are exaggerated, and sometimes imagined, when Spiritist truths are to be discredited." To us the *Theosophico-Buddhistic Materialist-pseudo-spiritist* edifice looks like a house of cards, having neither fact, reason, logic, nor tradition for a basis.—*Le Spiritisme*.

ZURICH.—M. Lengenfeld is giving an exhibition here of what he calls "Thought-reading." Among his audiences there have been University professors. He has found hidden objects; he has drawn on the black-board a geometrical figure which one of the professors said was in his mind; he drew the course of a military march imagined by an officer present; and he wrote the name of a deceased friend who was in the mind of Professor Kyms.—*Le Spiritisme*.

EXPOSURE OF A MEDIUM AT LEIPZIG.—A gross case of "materialisation" imposture has been detected at Leipzig. The medium was one Valesca Töpfer. The facts seem to have been absolutely conclusive of fraud, without the subsequent confession of the medium, who, while pleading guilty as regards the "materialisations," maintains the genuine character of her writing and speaking mediumship. The Leipzig journal which reports the case is, of course, jubilant. As usual, it is all over with Spiritualism!

VICTOR HUGO says, in the "Annales Politiques et Littéraires," "The butterfly is the caterpillar transformed; but it is still so much the caterpillar that every part of the creeping creature is, on examination, found in the winged creature; yet so complete is the transformation that, to appearance, it is a new creature. So, in our life beyond the grave, we shall not be bodiless spirits; such a term conveys no form to be imagined, nor to be reasoned upon. What could a life be without organs of life? What is a personality without form defining and fixing it? We shall probably have another body, radiant, divine, and, so to speak, a spiritual transformation of our earthly body."—*Le Spiritisme*.

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 THE EDITOR OF "LIGHT,"
 16, CRAVEN STREET,
 CHARING CROSS, S.W.

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Light :

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22ND, 1885.

THE

TRANSLATION OF DR. E. VON HARTMANN'S
 WORK ON "SPIRITISM."

The thanks of all Spiritualists, and, indeed, students of every branch of occult research, are due to Mr. C. C. Massey for his ready response to a request to undertake what is, at the best of times, a very laborious task. We refer to the translation for these columns of Dr. E. von Hartmann's *brochure* on "Spiritism." We have little doubt that long ere the completion of the task, the value of this addition to the literature of the subject will be manifest, and that Mr. Massey's generous labours will be duly appreciated. On more than one occasion Mr. Massey has contributed very largely to our store of knowledge in respect to the subjects with which we are specially concerned. This was notably the case with his able translation of Professor Zöllner's "Transcendental Physics," and we have little doubt that his present contribution will, though the last, not be the least valuable service he has rendered us. For ourselves, and in the name of our readers, we venture to assure Mr. Massey of our grateful appreciation of his labours. We have little to add to the introductory note which appears in another column. In the main it is what we should have written ourselves, and the position he takes up has many points of agreement with, and but few points of divergence from, that which we have, in common with many of our ablest contributors, always advocated. Spiritualism, as such, cannot fail to receive benefit from a critical analysis and the shedding of new light upon its facts, its theories, and its methods. Holding very strongly, as we do, that the spiritual theory is the legitimate outcome of the facts, *viewed as a whole*, we cannot fairly raise (nor should we in any circumstances wish to do so) the least objection to the closest scrutiny of the bases upon which we have founded our belief. We have insisted, over and over again, upon the fact that Spiritualism never has lost, nor do we believe it ever will lose, anything by free inquiry. Therefore, we feel sure there is no need for any apology for bringing Dr. Hartmann's views before the readers of "LIGHT."

It would not be fair to the author to discuss his arguments and theory piece-meal, and we have, therefore, decided to admit no discussion on his book until the completion of its publication in "LIGHT." When that occurs we hope our friends will thoroughly thresh out the matter.

A small edition will be issued in book form without alteration of, or addition to the original, except, perhaps, a note by the eminent author as a preface to the English edition.

And last, but not least, our hearty thanks are due to

Dr. von Hartmann for his ready and courteous consent to the translation of his work, and for which he has foregone the usual honorarium.

PRELIMINARY NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

The eminent German philosopher, Eduard von Hartmann, author of "The Philosophy of the Unconscious," having consented to the translation of his recent pamphlet on "Spiritism," in the first instance for the columns of "LIGHT," I have undertaken the task at the request of the editor. In accordance with conditions very reasonably imposed by the distinguished author, the translation will be a *complete* one, and will be unaccompanied by any comments, liberty of prior or subsequent independent criticism of course remaining. I therefore take this opportunity briefly to explain why I am thus instrumental in reproducing a work with the conclusions of which I myself only partially agree. As also (which is more important), the disagreement of a majority of the subscribers to "LIGHT" is likely to be far greater, I shall be glad if what I have now to say represents the views and motives of the editor as well as my own.

I look upon this pamphlet as the most formidable attack that "Spiritism" has had yet to encounter. It is so on the very ground that will recommend much of it to our sympathetic attention. Hitherto, every serious opponent who has professed an examination of the subject has treated it either with defective information or defective candour, or both. The refutation could be left to the ever-recurring facts and the ever-widening range of public acquaintance with them. Now for the first time, a man of commanding intellectual position has dealt fairly by us as an opponent. He has taken the trouble to get up the facts, if not quite thoroughly, at least to an extent that indisputably qualifies him for critical examination. And while formally declining an unreserved acceptance of the evidence, he has come to the conclusion that the existence in the human organism of more forces and capacities than exact science has investigated is sufficiently accredited by historical and contemporary testimony (p. 23). He even urges research by State-appointed and paid commissions. He repudiates, with all the authority of a philosopher and man of science, the supposition that the facts are *à priori* incredible or "contrary to the laws of nature." He exposes the irrelevance of "exposures," and blows to the winds the stupid parallel between mediums and conjurers. And if his application of the psychology of somnambulism to the phenomena results, in his view, in "ruling out" spirits altogether, on the other hand it contains information to the public which is highly important for the protection of mediums.

On these grounds alone the expediency of this translation might be sufficiently defended. This is a subject in which we have to proceed step by step with the public, and while the question of fact is still in dispute, Dr. von Hartmann is virtually our ally, and an ally of the most important influence.

Up to this point our agreement with the author will only be qualified by a doubt as to the utility of his proposed scientific commissions. In his view this proposal is essential, and it is expressly motivated by an aim with which, when analysed, we can partly sympathise, but which we must in part repudiate, not as contrary to our convictions, but as opposed, we believe, to the true scientific spirit. We go with him heartily in wishing that the light of a new psychological science should be let in upon these phenomena; we shall all admit that they have been very imperfectly understood, and that the consequence of this ignorance has been a great deal of deplorable folly and credulity. We are also quite ready to entertain any explanation of the facts, however completely subversive of the whole hypothesis of spirit agency, provided only that such explanation does not, like others that have from

time to time been offered, arbitrarily ignore or deny any fact simply because it is not covered by the theory. On the other hand, we find in the contemptuous denunciation of belief in spirits, as such belief, and not merely on the ground of ignorant misapplications, a defective guarantee for a perfectly unprejudiced examination. We see no difference in principle between the *à priori* negation, so well condemned by the author of this pamphlet, of facts, and the *à priori* negation of hypotheses which contain no logical contradiction. If the scientific commissions are to be appointed for the express purpose of eradicating Spiritism, and, as it were, with the instruction to eradicate it, they will be *ipso facto*, and scientifically, disqualified for the research. Negative preconceptions are as much to be avoided as positive ones. To one preliminary assumption only can we agree. Whatever the causes (as antecedents) of these phenomena, they are *natural and explicable, in accordance with laws of nature*, an assumption which by no means excludes the existence and operation of other *intelligent agencies* in nature than those directly perceptible by us, as objects of our present senses. The fallacy which relegates such agencies to "the supernatural," rests entirely on the assumption that material nature and its inhabitants are limited in range and constitution by the perceptive powers of any given stage of organic development. For an animal with less differentiated sense-organs than our own, much of *our nature* is non-existent. Has science learnt the lesson of evolution so ill as to commit the *naïve* error of considering existence, or nature, and present perceptibility as coincident?

Another point on which we are doubtful is the utility of the proposed commissions even for the verification of the facts. It is only necessary to refer to the account of the subjective conditions of their occurrence, given by von Hartmann himself, for the suggestion of this doubt. If the conditions *are* altogether, or mainly, subjective, the phenomena are little likely to be elicited by a mental attitude which, however intelligent and fair, would certainly not be in sympathy with that of the medium. Investigators have, it is true, succeeded without, or with only the appearance of such sympathy; but then they have not been already known by the medium to regard him as a physician regards an insane patient, or as a physiologist regards a living subject of "experiment" in his laboratory. Men of science may obtain, and have often obtained, as good results with mediums as the most emotional "Spiritist," but then they have not come with an official commission in their hands to expose the fallacy of the belief which is perhaps at the very root of the manifestations. I even believe that the phenomena I have myself witnessed have been less remarkable since I let it be known that I was not a believer in the agency of spirits of the dead in the physical manifestations. Certainly since then I have never had a "message" purporting to be thus derived.

But whatever deductions may be made from the value of the pamphlet on the above accounts, (as also, perhaps, on account of the prominence given to the very questionable hypothesis of the "implantation" of objective hallucinations from medium to circle) it contains much that we may profitably study for our own education. It is imperative that we should appreciate the possibilities, as well of physical extra-organic agency by the medium as of the somnambulant consciousness which may actuate it. Even granting the presence and action of spirits, mediumship must mean something, and the problem is what and how much it means. It is logically essential to exhaust the possibilities of the medium before we bring the spirits on the stage. Our first duty is to study such a standpoint as von Hartmann's, and the editor of this journal is doing well and wisely, in my opinion, in bringing it, at whatever sacrifice of space, most fully before his readers.

It may be that we shall find that the eminent author has not yet covered the whole ground. I believe that is so. With the largest allowance for the operation of nerve force and somnambulant functions of will and intelligence, there remains much evidence to which the explanations in this pamphlet are inadequate.

I refer, of course, to well-attested cases in which detailed and subsequently corroborated information has been given of deceased individuals of whom neither medium nor circle had ever before heard. Suppositions of old impressions received and retained without external consciousness may be pressed a great deal too far in the interests of a theory. Beyond a certain point they become highly improbable. Nor can evidence apparently outside the range of mediumistic phenomena, or of the intervention of a somnambulant consciousness, such as apparitions, hauntings, &c., be overlooked.

From the standpoint of von Hartmann's philosophy, the agency of spirits is an inadmissible hypothesis, and personal immortality is a delusion. The issue of psychological philosophy is now between his school and that of Du Prel and Hellenbach. Should the two latter prevail, for the "proof palpable" of immortality, to which "Spiritists" appeal, we shall have a proof psychological, which seems to me far better. Our belief will still be founded on facts, and that is the great claim which Modern Spiritism makes to public attention. But they will be facts better understood, related, and generalised.

And for many, no doubt, the "proof palpable" will easily survive this pamphlet. But no one who has not first read and understood the pamphlet has a right to say that the proof has survived. The author reproaches Spiritists with indifference to everything but the "interest of the heart" in these phenomena. We in England at least will prove to him that "the interest of the heart" is compatible with a resolution to be sound in the understanding, and with an intellectual appreciation of his argument.

C. C. MASSEY.

SPIRITISM.

BY EDUARD VON HARTMANN.

I. THE GENERAL STATE OF THE QUESTION.

The word "Spiritism" is of French production, the English, and generally the Germans, having retained the term "Spiritualism;" but it seems advisable to confine the latter to the metaphysical position opposed to Materialism, and not confounding it with the explanation of mediumistic phenomena by the co-operation of spirits, to designate that explanation by the recent term "Spiritism." The preponderating tendency in Spiritism is the American-English, which does not accept Re-incarnation, but mainly proceeds upon the Christian belief in immortality. In France the direction given by Allan Kardec prevails, namely, the inclination to the Indian belief that the soul has to re-incarnate itself in new bodies till it has realised its divine aspiration for perfection. In Germany, Hellenbach's transcendental individualism has a circle of adherents who teach the possibility, but not quite the necessity, of Re-incarnation, and are chiefly distinguished from French Spiritism by attaching just as little importance to the utterances of mediums as that school attaches much.

The number of Spiritist journals is considerable; *Psychische Studien* exchanges with fifty of them, and in Germany alone there are five. Most of them are uncritical and superstitiously credulous to a really incredible degree, the worst of all in this respect being the American reports, their value being further reduced by the fact that it is just in America that the humbug and swindles of professional mediums have reached their climax. Among German Spiritist journals the monthly *Psychische Studien* (Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1874-1885) occu-

pies an exceptional position, the conductor, Dr. Wittig, representing with energy and critical acumen Cox's theory of psychic force and the hallucination hypothesis against the spirit hypothesis, especially in the last three years. It is characteristic of the whole movement that this attempt to secure a hearing for the voice of reason, and to raise his journal to a scientific level, can only be carried out in conflict with the chief of the paper and the majority of the staff,* and that its first result has been the springing up of several competitive papers. For as most of the subscribers to Spiritist journals have no scientific interest whatever in the explanation of the phenomena, but only the interest of the heart in the confirmation of their belief in immortality by means of them, the deprivation of this hope is at once the cessation of their whole interest in the matter.

Whoever will concern himself with the literature of the Spiritists must take up the position of a physician of the insane, who obtains from his patients the exactest description possible of their delusions; and he who has no patience to enter and become familiar with the circle of ideas and the typical modes of expression of this mental aberration will never fathom its psychological causes.

That a somnambule represents under an image, and as far as possible personifies, the ideas (*Vorstellungen*) of his middle-brain, is a psychological necessity over which as a somnambule he has no power. That a masked (*larvirter*) somnambule ascribes the intelligent manifestations of his somnambule consciousness, which his ordinary consciousness does not recognise as his "own," to foreign, invisible, personified intelligences, is not less psychologically necessary. Now if, further, those activities by which the, to him, unconscious intelligence of his masked somnambule consciousness mediates its manifestations, are produced by involuntary and unconscious impulse of his middle-brain (be it on the muscles of the limbs or vocal organs, or upon a still unknown nerve-force of mechanical agency), it is inevitable that he should deny these activities to be his own, and should look on them as immediate activities of those personified intelligences. And if with these processes is connected the faculty which the somnambule has of producing combined hallucinations of several sense-organs in the souls of sensitive persons present, the latter will be easily disposed, on account of the "palpability" of these combined hallucinations of sight, hearing, feeling, and touch, to take them for objective realities. And if, finally, the agreement of these implanted hallucinations is proved by several witnesses, the reality of the phenomena seems to them, as to the somnambule influencing them, scarcely to admit of further doubt.

All these intuitive fallacies have the same conformity to psychological law as deceptions of the senses. Abstract reflection may completely see through a deception of sense, without the latter ceasing to reproduce itself for perception as often as the conditions of its origination recur. For part of the mediumistic phenomena, especially the transfer of hallucination to third persons, undisturbed belief in the reality of the dream-personifications appears to be an almost indispensable condition in the somnambule evoking them, and to be at least favourable for effectuation in the witnesses. This explains why spectators encounter more developed phenomena with the growth of their spiritistic faith, and how an *intolerant* scepticism, which disdains to conform, even in appearance, to the ideas of the medium, must have a paralysing action on the latter's productive power.

From these preliminary remarks it will be already seen that in the phenomenal province on which Spiritism rests we have to do with essentially different conditions of research than in experiments with inorganic substances or

organic bodies. A small part only of mediumistic phenomena is purely physical in its action, and even this part is connected in its origin with psychical conditions, with the disposition, confidence, and untroubled comfort of the medium. Now it is quite unwarranted for men of science to decline the examination of these phenomena because they are connected with conditions the re-establishment of which is not always in the power of the investigator.

If the flea of the mole, or the intestinal worm of the cricket is to be examined, moles and crickets must first be caught for the fleas and worms to be found. If particular forms of insanity are to be examined, the madhouses where such patients are to be found must be visited. If electric roaches or eels are to be examined, they must be obtained from their resorts. Just in the same way, if we would study abnormal phenomena of human nature we must seek out abnormally disposed natures or get them to come to us. Even the experiments of the laboratory are often so dependent on complicated conditions that the investigator cannot answer for success in every case; but this does not impair the demonstrative force of successful cases. If the electric roach is exhausted by the journey or is sick, the experiments with it must be just as unsatisfactory as those with a medium who is unwell; and if the dampness of the atmosphere exceeds a certain degree, experiments with an electrical friction machine will miscarry just as much as those with a medium. All this, however, cannot possibly prevent the investigation of abnormal phenomena.

Worse than the dependence on mediums and their disposition is the contest with intentional deception, which is certainly spared in the investigation with electric roaches. Here, however, we are reminded of the provinces of mental and nervous disease, hysteria and somnambulism, where the physician and the theorist have likewise to deal with the subtlest attempts at deception, without their scientific zeal being arrested on that account. A somnambule receives from his phantasmic personages directions which he punctually obeys, in the good faith that they are acting through him, and in his waking state swears with a good conscience that he knows nothing of those actions, holding them immediate performances of those figures of his phantasy. Similarly a medium in the somnambule state can play the part of a spirit and do things of which afterwards, when awake, he knows nothing, and which from the reports of the witnesses he must take for immediate spirit actions.

Whoever has been closely concerned with hysterical patients, without being their dupe, knows how finely and intricately good faith and deceit are entwined in them. Now all such mediums as are not merely magnetisers but also open or masked somnambules, are without exception individuals with a certain disorganisation of the nervous system; that is, the lower and middle nerve centres are too independent of the highest, reflex-prohibiting centre of independent self-control; they are, in other words, just as much as non-mediumistic somnambules, and notwithstanding frequent appearance of bodily health, hysterical;* and their actions, whether in open or in masked somnambulism, are thus under the most favourable conditions imaginable for unconscious or half-conscious deceit. They are firmly convinced that the spirits help them, but are yet conscious that they are in some way indispensable to the spirits as a co-operating condition, that is, that the spirits can only act with their help. Is it a great step from this to the endeavour, on their own side, to help the spirits, so that the boundary between wholly voluntary, half-voluntary, and voluntary co-operation gets obliterated? Can generally the conception of "full accountability" be applied to a mental condition in which the organic-psychical collective energy is split between waking consciousness and somnam-

* It is necessary to explain that though *Psychische Studien* is described on the title page as "edited and superintended" (*herausgegeben und redigirt*) by Alex. von Aksakow, and Dr. Wittig describes himself as "editorial secretary" (*Sekretär der Redaktion*), the supremacy of the former seems merely nominal, the latter seems to be the responsible conductor of the paper.—TR.

* That hysteria is not merely a female disease, has been considered established in France for twenty years, and in Germany has lately been placed beyond doubt by Mendel.

bulic consciousness, leaving for the first only a proportion, greater or less, of the normal intensity?

It must, I think, be of singular occurrence for a completely normal man to have the notion of coming out as a medium. The best qualified would evidently be conjurers, but these prefer to carry on their art before a larger circle of spectators, while to mediums are allotted the small profits of a narrow circle. One has heard, indeed, of many mediums who have become conjurers, but never of a conjurer who has become a medium. It may, therefore, be assumed that no one enters the career of a medium who has not accidentally discovered in himself abnormal properties and forces. Somewhat of these properties and forces may indeed belong to every one, but in so slight a degree that nothing special is to be done with them. In England 3 per cent. ; in America, where the air is dryer, even 5 per cent. of people (*der Menschen*) are mediums to an extent worth cultivation. With women the development of these abnormal dispositions is more frequent than with men, with lean, nervous constitutions more frequent than with the stout, with young persons more frequent than with older ones, before puberty more frequent than afterwards.

The medium at self-discovery is usually as much astonished by the phenomena as are those about him ; it requires long exercise so far to obtain control over his middle nerve centres as to be able voluntarily to place himself in the condition adapted to elicit the phenomena. As this exercise progresses, the phenomena increase in variety and strength, and his notoriety extends ; by-and-bye he receives invitations to other towns and countries, with guarantee of compensation. If before he has been stimulated by vanity, now pecuniary interest is added ; he neglects his ordinary calling and becomes a professional medium. It is disagreeable to him to accept money for unsuccessful sittings, and yet he must have money to live ; he begins to help the spirits that so his customers may be satisfied.

The professional medium is paid for each sitting ; the more sittings, the more money. But every sitting is a tension to the nervous system, and makes the medium more nervous, more hysterical, more powerless. As long as youth's store of force holds out, the thing prospers ; then the exhausted mediumistic force abates considerably, and phenomena are rarer and weaker. But notoriety pursues him, and he has more invitations than he can accept ; he sees before him money which he cannot earn. Now is the temptation to help the spirits urgent. Scarcely any professional medium is spared this diminishing phase of his mediumship, and it needs great strength of character again to take up the abandoned ordinary occupation after long erratic life. Many mediums prefer to become anti-Spiritists, and to entertain the public with the tricks by which they formerly helped the spirits, earning thereby, as a rule, much more than by genuine mediumship. Thereby also particular mediumistic performances, which can be produced in larger circles (*e.g.*, thought-reading by contact and by the involuntary muscular movements of the directive person) are further carried on, and the anti-Spiritism is only used to conciliate the requisite confidence ; the conjuring goes on at the same time, and the public is far more certainly duped by these anti-Spiritists than by the Spiritist mediums. Many mediums arrive at length at complete derangement of body and mind, become infirm or melancholy, and end in insanity or suicide. This is the case, not only with American mediums, but also with the Indian, although the latter can never make the thing pecuniarily profitable, and are far less tempted to exhaust their power by too frequent exercise ; but the Indian mediums aim at just that derangement of mind and body which our medicine fears, and see in the gradual decay and dying away before death the most desirable goal.

Between a conjurer and a medium an important distinction is perceivable. The conjurer is independent of his

health, of atmospheric conditions, of the dispositions towards him of those present, of the number of spectators, and light ; on the other hand, he is dependent on the locality, on appliances, on the distance and position of the spectators, and in most performances on the preparations he has been able to make. He is seldom without confederates, and he has not to reckon with nervous exhaustion from the representation ; he is dependent on certain conditions, but if these are not disturbed he is as good as sure of success. All this is otherwise with the medium.

The medium comes alone, without assistants and without apparatus, into a place which is strange and not accessible to him before the sitting. The Indian fakir appears naked, with only a rag round his loins ; every sensible medium—and none others should be experimented with—willingly allows himself to be searched from head to foot before and after the sitting, and does not refuse to exchange, under inspection, the clothes he has brought on him for others newly provided of particular cut and colour. Every article he needs is received from the host, so that any preparation before the sitting is excluded. During the sitting the medium is immediately under the eyes of the spectators and in contact with them ; but as he is influenced by their ideas and feelings, a malevolent, hostile, or frivolous disposition disturbs his psychical activity, and that equally whether he is conscious of the reason of this disturbance or not. Since each brings different thoughts, feelings, and influences, the disturbing influences are multiplied with the numbers of the spectators ; mediumistic representations in the presence of more than three are antecedently to be suspected, and are usually only successful when among the spectators are mediums, who unconsciously reinforce the principal medium, and thus compensate for the disturbing influences.

The nervous relaxation and exhaustion of the medium is proportional to the abundance and strength of the results produced, but may, of course, be feigned or hypocritically exaggerated. Success is entirely uncertain, and if the medium is to be kept from all temptation to imposition, it must before all things be made clear to him that one is aware of this uncertainty of success, and will be in no way disappointed or impatient, though even many sittings should be without result. It is also to be recommended not to pay mediums for each sitting, but to arrange with them a fixed sum per month, or for a series of sittings, with free quarters, because with the fee for each sitting there is a powerful motive to deceptions.

Not less obstructive to mediumistic effects than damp air and evil disposition of the spectators, is the glaring light, which the conjurer prefers, so that it should not be thought that he was making things too easy for himself by darkness. Most mediums must first discover and develop their powers by dark sittings, till they are so far strengthened and inured as to be able to bear a moderate light. Only distinguished mediums succeed with full light ; certain results, as for instance the levitation (*Emporfliegen*) of the medium, and the implantation of hallucinations in the spectators, seem under all circumstances to endure only a subdued light. As certainly as the different forms of the electric glimmer can only be observed in the dark chamber, so certainly also the phosphorescent lights, which are very common attendant phenomena of dark sittings, can only be witnessed in the dark. It is, therefore, impracticable to reject dark sittings altogether. Yet they should be confined to the study of these phenomena, and no value should be attributed to anything else occurring in them. Sleeves, boots, and cap of the medium, as perhaps other objects in the room, should be marked with self-luminous colours. Still better is the distribution of a number of weak electric lamps in the room, such as are now used for ornamentation. Even weak mediums

can bear faint lights of a phosphorescent character, while stronger light (perhaps by its relation to electrical induction) has a disturbing effect.

All other investigations must and can be undertaken with subdued or bright light, then, what with the visibility of the medium's whole person and visitation and change of clothes before and after the sitting, there will be sufficient control to make sure against conjuring tricks. Altogether to be rejected is every binding of the medium, as a direct challenge to intentional and unintentional deception, and because conjurers in the loosing and retying of knots, and in slipping out and in of loops and fastenings are incredibly expert, so that only a conjurer can be competent to judge of the sufficiency of the fastenings. Besides which, fastening is a kind of supposed security which is painful to the medium, and, therefore, is unworthy, and almost every medium seeks to get free from the bonds as soon as he has fallen into the hypnotic or somnambulant state, and knows himself to be safe from the eyes of the spectators. Whoever relies on bonds, and neglects other control, may always be sure that he is deceived, and all reports of sittings of this kind are at once to be rejected as worthless.

Whoever holds his five senses to be insufficient, with the precautions supposed, to distinguish conjuring from involuntary phenomena, thereby declares the human organs of sense to be unadapted for the establishment of facts generally, and must equally renounce every judicial proof by witnesses and every scientific research. If a skilled conjurer can be introduced as a fourth at every sitting, that is certainly to be recommended, such an one having a professional interest to expose any conjuring, so that mediums may not compromise the vocation of the conjurer. It is notorious that the two best conjurers of Germany and France, Bellachini and Houdin, have given their testimony in favour of the mediums observed by them; other conjurers, on the other hand (Hermann for instance), have asserted their ability to reproduce artificially the same phenomena as those of mediums.

Examining the latter assertions more closely, and running through the anonymous "Confessions of a Medium," Cumberland's "Visitor from the Beyond," or similar revelations, it is at once seen that conjuring requires conditions and presuppositions which are not allowed to the medium. For example, for the writing at a distance one has only to take care that the medium gets the slate in his hand either not at all, or only at the last moment, to prevent a previous preparation, and need only make sure of the hand-holding, or of the secure closure of the slate, to make a direct writing by the finger of the medium impossible. As innumerable reports speak of an audible writing inside well fastened slates held by third persons or lying free upon the table; while some observers assert that they have seen the writing movement of the fragment of pencil on the slate held half under the table, and others even that they have perceived a self-erected pencil writing on paper;* it being also asserted that the writing is suspended when the chain of hands is broken, and is resumed when it is rejoined; further, that words or sentences, dictated for the first time by one of the circle to the medium after the slate has been fastened up or while the writing is proceeding, have been written within the securely closed slate; and also that in this way intelligent answers in the closed slate are obtained to written questions unknown to the medium (*Ps. Sl. xi. 552*); the like phenomena being proved by hundreds of observers, not only with Slade, but also with Monk, Eglinton, and different private mediums: now we may, indeed, doubt the credibility of all these witnesses, but certainly not doubt because under *essentially different* conditions similar

effects can be attained by conjuring. However, the perusal of such exposures is to be recommended to every one taking part in these experiments, so that he may assure himself against the kinds of deception described.*

As with conjuring, so with the so-called "exposures" of supposed spirit forms; it is only by a misunderstanding that both are adduced against the facts alleged by so many witnesses. When a supposed apparition is seized, and only the medium is disclosed, an "exposure" has happened for those who imagined that the "apparition" was something else than the medium. But he who has already said that this result is in such cases the probable one, because scarcely five per cent. of the so-called "apparitions" are completely freed (*abgelöst*) from the medium, can no longer speak of "exposure" when the predicted result occurs. He who, rightly or wrongly, expects a phenomenon A, and obtains a phenomenon B, must as an exact investigator first of all examine B, and not play the bully (*pochen*) because B is not A, and in scorn of this result ignore B. He who in such cases is content to laugh at the medium, awakened by a rude shock from his somnambulant state, and not yet master of his senses, instead of immediately passing to the inquiry by what means the before inspected medium has brought about the altered aspect of the "apparition," shows by this conduct that he has no more interest in genuine investigation than have the believers in spirits, but has something quite different in view. Reading the narratives (naturally loosely reported by the newspapers) of "exposures," we soon perceive that the "exposers" have usually shown themselves still less qualified than the believers for experimentation, and are scarcely surprised that every such "exposure" has given a strong impetus to Spiritism.

Conscious and intentional deceptions by the medium can be guarded against, and their unconscious deceptions are among the subjects for investigation. So that it is not because a professional medium is to be regarded as a person more or less addicted to deception, that we need be so cowardly as to abjure all research with one, though it is also quite right that private mediums should be preferred. It is a logical fallacy to infer from the fact that a medium has cheated in one case, under certain conditions, that he has been always merely cheating under most different conditions; the conditions of every case have to be examined and one indubitable instance cannot be neutralised by a hundred negative ones. Now since private individuals have neither the requisite circumspection and practice in experimentation, nor the requisite authority with the public, it is most necessary that physicists, physiologists, and psychiatrists of distinction and official position, assisted by conjurers, should be commissioned to enter on this phenomenal province, and to institute long series of experiments with different mediums.

The public has by this time the right to know how the matter stands, and, not being itself in a position to form a judgment, it is dependent on the judgment of the office-bearers of science. The latter refuse to burn their fingers with these things, either because, in their conviction of the infallibility of science up to the present, they consider themselves qualified to decree *à priori* what is possible and what impossible, or merely because they have no desire to exchange the special departments of research with which they are familiar for another. Therefore the Governments must step in, and provide means for research in this department, since it is not to be expected of individuals that they should defray the cost of long series of sittings. Every

* Certainly the best of them are the anonymous "Confessions of a Medium" (by Chapman. London: Griffith and Farran. 1882.), whereas Cumberland's "Besucher aus dem Jenseits" ("Visitor from the Other Side") Breslau: Schottlander, 1884), is a poor and repulively affected imitation of the former. There is a German extract from the "Confessions" in Fritz Schultze's "Die Grundgedanken des Spiritismus" ("The Fundamental Ideas of Spiritism.") Leipzig: Gunther, 1885. When a former medium takes to Anti-Spiritism, it follows that he denies his possibly former mediumistic power, and explains all his effects as mere conjuring.

* *Psychische Studien*, IV., pp. 468, 545. Owen, "Das Streitige Land," ("The Debateable Land") translated by Wittig, I., 139.

prudent man must decline, as Baron Hellenbach did in his time, to deliver a confident judgment on the phenomena until he has had at least a hundred sittings with different mediums; but that could only be done by rich people with leisure, whose judgment, after sacrifice of their money and time, would have weight for no one but themselves. The existing materials are decidedly insufficient to pronounce the question ripe for *sentence*, but they are quite sufficient to pronounce it one *demanding investigation*. It is the duty of every Government to arrest needless mental confusion and excitement among its citizens, if that can be obviated by means so simple as the appointment of a scientific commission.

Spiritism is at present threatening to become a public calamity, to which every Government has to direct its attention; but it is not to be eradicated by prohibiting public discussion, as has been attempted in Russia. The superstitious belief in spirits is spreading epidemically, and opens to impostors new ways and means for the exploitation of credulity. All forms of mediæval superstition which were believed to be dead are awaking from their graves, and threaten a renewal of their mischief. These proceedings are already exciting anxiety in the guardians of religion; the representatives of a finer morality see their efforts overgrown by the re-inforced transcendent Egoism of a sensuously coarse form of belief in immortality. The champions of enlightenment know not what other position to take towards these aberrations than roundly to deny the facts underlying them, and to declare them to be mere fraud and swindling; from which nothing results but that their honesty is called in question by the Spiritists, and that the belief is screwed up to the point of fanaticism by *à priori* contradiction. In fact, it is doubtful on which side is to be found most superficiality, want of discernment, prejudice, credulity, and incapacity for distinguishing between observed facts and attendant suppositions, whether among the Spiritists, who in every accidental fall of an umbrella see the manifestation of a spirit hand, or among the enlighteners, who declare everything to be impossible which does not fit into their narrow picture of the world. It is high time that an end should be put to this state of confusion by official scientific investigation of the phenomena in question, so that the nature of the forces manifested in them should at length be made intelligible, and cease to be conducive to the grossest superstitions.

Having never been myself at a sitting, I am not in a position to form a judgment on the reality of the phenomena; this much only can I say, that were everything reported true, certainly new forces, hitherto uninvestigated, in man must be admitted, but that this notwithstanding there can be no sort of talk of an overthrow of laws of nature, or of an abandonment of the sphere of the natural. If, for example, a medium rises to the ceiling in a recumbent attitude, that does not prove for me that the law of gravity has been supernaturally suspended in him, but that he must be charged with some force whose repulsion to the earth is stronger than the attraction of gravitation; just as this is the case with the small elder-pith figures under the electric bell. He only, therefore, who claims knowledge of the whole range of natural forces, can have the audacity to determine what is possible or impossible, before experience and observation; but such a claim implying a complete misconception of the limitations of our knowledge, these apodictic predictions only disgrace the judgment of the men of science who allow themselves to be so far carried away.

(To be continued.)

A LADY desires to meet Spiritualists resident in Torquay or its neighbourhood. Address S. H., care of the Editor of "LIGHT."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—The Editor of "LIGHT" cannot, save in exceptional cases, undertake to answer correspondence through the post. All inquiries reaching this office not later than Wednesday morning, will, as far as practicable, be answered in the ensuing number of "LIGHT."

"VERA."—Will appear shortly. Can you send us the copies of *The Lady* to which you refer?

MRS. MALTBY.—The extreme pressure on our space this week has necessitated the curtailment of your notice. The important facts have, however, been given.

S. H. (Enfield, Paignton, South Devon).—There are several Spiritualists residing in Torquay, but we are not at liberty to give names without consent. Perhaps the paragraph in this issue will induce some of them to communicate with you. Will you send us a brief account of the occurrences you mention?

E. W. WALLIS.—Your request as to "LIGHT" has been attended to. We are sorry the paper does not commend itself to the Glasgow folk because of the lack of reports of the meetings of country societies. Our experience has been that such news almost always degenerates into a statement that So-and-so delivered "an oration" to "large and appreciative audiences," that his matter and style could only be described by at least a dozen adjectives, and so forth. We too regret the absence of "Notes by the Way," but the ill-health of the esteemed writer has been a matter beyond our control. "M.A. (Oxon.)," hopes to commence these contributions at the latest by the beginning of 1886—perhaps before.

AN inquirer into Spiritualism living forty-five miles from London, wishes to meet with a good physical medium to sit with a private circle for six weeks. Reference permitted to Editor of "LIGHT," as to *bona fides* of inquirer. Write, stating qualification, terms, &c., to B. Z., care of Editor of "LIGHT," 16, Craven-street, Charing Cross, London, S.W.

BERLIN.—A translation into German of Mr. J. S. Farmer's "New Basis of Belief in Immortality," by Count Schonfeldt, is announced. This will be a counterblow to the pamphlet misrepresenting Spiritualism published in German in Cumberland's name, but not written by him.—*Le Spiritisme*.

AMERICA.—The *Independent Tribune*, Waco, invites readers' attention to the fact that Spiritualism has endured a quarter of a century, and infers, therefore, that there must be reality in it. It dwells upon the circumstance that those who have made a serious study of so-called Spiritual phenomena have concluded that they are caused by invisible agents. It concludes with a quotation from some Spiritualist writer: "Spiritualism offers a faith based upon reason and experience; it leads to a contented mind in this present life, and dissipates morbid dread of the future."—*Le Spiritisme*.

AUSTRIA.—The Baroness Adelpa Von Vay, an ardent Spiritualist, has started a good work for the poor school children of Gobonitz. Four hundred of them come into the town daily from the neighbouring districts. To give these children a mid-day meal, which they could not otherwise have, the Baroness has established a free kitchen. To help in meeting expenses she sells one of her books, *Dem Zephyr abgelaucht*, a collection of tales, at the price of two florins. Those of our readers who know German ought to buy it. They would have a good book and promote a good work.—*Le Spiritisme*.

CONCERT AT CAVENDISH ROOMS.—We have been asked to insert the following:—"I take the first opportunity of sincerely thanking those ladies and gentlemen who so kindly tendered their services at the Cavendish Rooms concert on Wednesday of last week, thereby contributing so largely to the success and enjoyment of the evening. I have also to thank the kind donors of the following sums towards the expenses: Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, £1 1s.; Mr. Morell Theobald, 10s. 6d.; "M.A. (Oxon.)," 10s.; Mrs. Stanhope Speer, 10s.; Mr. Arthur Maltby, 10s. 6d.; Mr. Ernest A. Tietkens, 5s.; Miss Smith, 5s.; Mr. Glendinning, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Treadwell, 2s.; a friend at Cavendish Rooms, 1s.—(Mrs.) A. F. MALTBY, 41, Shirland-road, Maida Vale, W."

La Vie Posthume (Life beyond the Grave) is a new monthly magazine (50 cent.) published at Marseilles. In its second number—chiefly of articles explanatory of the Spiritist doctrine—is a criticism by Madame George, the editor, upon a leader on Spiritism, appearing in a Marseilles paper, *Le Citoyen*, the writer of which agrees as to the reality of the Spiritist phenomena, but assigns them to the devil's agency. Madame George, in her paper, says that at a private séance recently there happened to be a lady visitor in full mourning. After communications to others present, a spirit addressed four lines of verse to her. They were given through the usual movements of the table, with the peculiarity that the last letter of the last word was the first dictated, and the first letter of the first word the last. The verses were to this effect: "The flesh alone is mortal; the spirit dies not, but ever progresses. He who dies is like the swallow who quits a sky become sad and drear, to fly to a sunnier clime." Madame George hopes the *Citoyen* will agree that if the devil dictated the lines he is becoming poetical and sympathetic.

WHAT CONJURERS SAY ABOUT PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

Mediums, who are the instruments of an external agency, have, more than once, been confronted with conjurers who deceive by sleight of hand; and in the same manner that no man of science who has thoroughly and fairly investigated the phenomena has failed to become convinced of their reality, so no conjurer who has been confronted with the same facts has been able to explain their occurrence by prestidigitation. Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, Kellar, and others have already confessed their powerlessness to produce under the same conditions what occurs without human intervention in the presence of a medium.

Testimony of Robert Houdin.

The Marquis Endes de Mirville published during the lifetime of Houdin two letters from the latter, in his "Mémoire adressé à MM. les membres de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, sur un grand nombre de phénomènes merveilleux intéressant également la Religion, la Science, et les hommes du Monde," in which the conjurer confesses his inability to explain the phenomena he witnessed in the presence of Alexis, the clairvoyant. A circumstantial account is given of M. de Mirville's visit to Houdin for the purpose of engaging him in this investigation, of the latter's confidence in his own ability to detect the trick, and of what took place at the séance, the conditions of which were entirely under Houdin's control. This account extends over twelve pages, and its accuracy is confirmed by Houdin in the first of the documents now translated:—

"Although very far from accepting the eulogies which M. — is good enough to bestow upon me, and especially insisting that I am not at all committed to opinions, either in favour of magnetism or against it, I can, nevertheless, not refrain from declaring that the facts above reported are entirely correct (*sont de la plus complète exactitude*), and that, the more I reflect upon them, the more impossible I find it to rank them among those which belong to my art and profession.

"4th May, 1847.

ROBERT HOUDIN."

A fortnight later, M. de Mirville received another letter, in which the following, referring to another séance, occurs:—

"I have, therefore, returned from this séance as astonished as it is possible to be, and persuaded that it is utterly impossible that chance or skill could ever produce effects so wonderful (*tout à fait impossible que le hasard ou l'adresse puisse jamais produire des effets aussi merveilleux*).— I am, monsieur, &c.,

"May 16th, 1847.

(Signed), ROBERT HOUDIN."

Testimony of Harry Kellar.

Harry Kellar, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, in January, 1882, and on the 25th of that month he addressed a letter to the editor of the *Indian Daily News*, in which he said:—

"In your issue of the 13th January I stated that I should be glad of an opportunity of participating in a séance with a view of giving an unbiased opinion as to whether, in my capacity of a professional prestidigitator, I could give a natural explanation of effects said to be produced by spiritual aid.

"I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Eglinton, the Spiritualistic medium now in Calcutta, and of his host, Mr. J. Meugens, for affording me the opportunity I craved.

"It is needless to say I went as a sceptic, but I must own that I have come away utterly unable to explain, by any natural means, the phenomena that I witnessed on Tuesday evening. I will give a brief description of what took place."

After describing several successful experiments, Mr. Kellar proceeds:—

"In respect to the above manifestations, I can only say that I do not expect my account of them to gain general credence. Forty-eight hours before I should not have believed anyone who described such manifestations under similar circumstances. I still remain a sceptic as regards Spiritualism, but I repeat my inability to explain or account for what must have been an intelligent force that produced the writing on the slate, which, if my senses are to be relied on, was in no way the result of trickery or sleight of hand."

On the 30th of the same month Mr. Kellar addressed another letter to the *Indian Daily News*, reporting some experiences of another kind with Mr. Eglinton, and regarding which he said:—

"In conclusion, let me state that after a most stringent trial and strict scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form; nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled."

The Testimony of Professor Jacobs.

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:—

"Spite of the assertions, more or less trustworthy, of the French and English journalists, and spite of the foolish jealousies of ignorant conjurers, I feel it my duty to show up the bad faith of one party and the chicanery of the other. All that has been said or done adverse to these American mediums is absolutely untrustworthy. If we would rightly judge of a thing we must understand it, and neither the journalists nor the conjurers possessed the most elementary knowledge of the science that governs these phenomena. 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. If (as I have every reason to hope) the psychical studies, to which I am applying myself at this time, succeed, I shall be able to establish clearly, and that by public demonstration, the immense line of demarcation which separates mediumistic phenomena from conjuring proper, and then equivocation will be no longer possible, and persons will have to yield to evidence, or deny through predetermination to deny.

"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.' I authorise you, dear sir, to insert this letter in your next number, if agreeable to you," &c., &c.

Testimony of Samuel Bellachini.

Samuel Bellachini, Court Conjurer at Berlin, made the following declaration in December, 1877:—

"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; Butlerof, 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.

"Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI."

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 séances, 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 a 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 séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cold breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitchings 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.