

# Light:

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

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The remarks of my American correspondent, on whose letter I commented last week, respecting the need for the cultivation of a simple religious spirit in Spiritualism seem to me to be excellent. "The weakness of the reverent and devotional spirit—not to say the strength of the opposite sentiment—among the more openly pronounced advocates of Spiritualism has long been only too conspicuous. In the revolt from the old orthodoxy, well-nigh universal in our ranks, this was at first to be expected. But to many of us it seems to have had too long a run, and to have damaged the cause already greatly, and to promise to damage it to an incalculable degree if the tendency is not arrested. Surely as the people discover that there are no valuable spiritual and moral uses in what is offered them under the exalted name of Spiritualism, they will in a short time, and with the exception only of the worthless, have none of it. Its marvellous phenomena, and much of its teaching, will be accredited only to unworthy and crafty spirits: and not only all noble devotion to it, but all decent respect for it, will vanish. It will be but an accursed ministry. So that we cannot, I think, insist too strongly on infusing it with all that belongs to a sweet and pure religious life and is helpful to such a life; and on protecting it from all the insidious influences that stand ready to crowd in and debase it. Religious aspiration, religious affections, and religious principle appear to me to be most necessary to people generally for anything that can properly be called their ethical culture: and appropriate and attractive religious services, the best of hymns, prayers, and elevating instruction should accordingly be made a leading feature in our ordinary or regular assemblies. Spiritualism should keep a pure and undefiled religion to the front."

Though this may possibly seem a sweeping statement to some, I entertain little doubt that we suffer from the lack of this definite recognition of the element of religion in Spiritualism. I suspect that the non-recognition by many of us of the duties and responsibilities which lie upon us by virtue of our knowledge, and because we are members of the great body of Spiritualists, is largely attributable to this cause. Nor do I think that we shall ever attain to that state in which a man learns not only to bear his own burden but to share the burdens of others till this religious feeling is again active amongst us. At present it is too

often the reverse process that is in vogue. The burden is laid on any willing shoulders, and the bearer, lightened of his load of responsibility, kicks up his heels in irresponsible frivolity not always to the benefit or edification of his brethren. A lack of due recognition of the duties we owe one to another, and especially to the mediums who are the channels to us of the influence that reaches us from the world of spirit, is at the root in one form or another of much that we deplore. The revolt against orthodoxy does no doubt make it difficult to supply by any outward form a remedy for this defect. The confusion that still exists in so many minds between theology and religion increases the difficulty. And the strong disinclination that so many feel to fetter themselves in any way by an outward and formal profession of faith, to trammel by theological bonds the liberty in which they so rejoice, or to even seem to go back from enfranchisement of thought to the discarded dogmas of a hide-bound sectarianism—system of man's invention, devised for the dwarfing and stunting of his soul—all this increases the difficulties that lie in the way. The framing of a plan of public service for Spiritualists would be a ponderously difficult matter. It would seem indeed to be impossible to frame any Liturgy or Ritual that would be generally acceptable to the divergent minds that throng our ranks.

Nor does the experiment when made, as for instance in the Spiritual Temple situated in the most select and fashionable quarter of Boston, U.S.A., seem to be very successful. It is said at any rate very freely that that costly and elaborate experiment is to a great extent a failure. There is something enticing to the imagination in the temple with its Central Halls of worship, its séance-rooms never profaned by other use, its various offices of publication, of business, and the like. But, imagination apart, average common-sense steps in and tells us that we are not ready yet for such supreme efforts. Some much more humble work must first be done silently, and in the seclusion of our own hearts, by way of preparation for what sounds so well, but may conceivably never be realised at all, at least in our own day. This is the day of small things, and we shall advance the coming of the day when greater results may be hoped for by patient work of a very humble and practical character now. It is not the day of Spiritual Temples. But short of this may not a public religious service for Spiritualists, in accord with the tenets of their faith, divested of what in the rituals and liturgies of the Church and the sects is distasteful to them, embodying for a restless generation the faith that is its common property without dogmatic assertion or the enunciation of opinion on most questions—may not this be done with advantage? I conceive that it may; but I fear that the attempt will not be made because I see no one who can make it with any hope of success. So much would depend on the living voice which should give expression to this want, that this consideration alone is deterrent. The time has not yet come, nor the man. I know that my friend the late Epes Sargent was deeply impressed by the want of a religious service, and that he spent some of the closing days of his valuable life in the compilation of a volume designed to aid Spiritualists in keeping before them the religious idea, and giving it effect in public services. I believe the work was

not completed before the great change came upon him. It might be possible, perhaps, to utilise what has been done, and to complete for the benefit of Spiritualists what might be useful as a manual of private devotion, if not as an aid to public worship. Anything that Mr. Sargent put his hand to was invariably well done. I should be glad to think that his unfinished work would be made available for its intended use.

But I am by no means sure in my own mind that we should not hope that Spiritualism may leaven the churches rather than that Spiritualists should withdraw themselves and form a fresh sect, one more addition to the infinite number of private views on unimportant details of belief. It is, I know, a matter on which opinion varies, but it has always seemed to me preferable that a boy should get his religious training at home and his general education at school. That plan works best: for the administration wholesale of doses of religious teaching to a whole school is surely a very rough and ready substitute for the personal parental influence which deals with a child individually according to its needs. So, by analogy, it seems to me susceptible of argument that the individual Spiritualist may best nurture his religious instincts, if they are active within him, in attending that particular form of religious service that most suits him. Some of us have no very special fondness for the average religious service if conducted on a scale and in a manner to which alone a meeting of Spiritualists could hope to attain. We would rather worship dumbly in such a "great temple of silence and reconciliation" as Westminster Abbey. There, at least, the stately surroundings, the solemn beauty, the venerable associations, the strains of sweet music, and the grandeur of the whole scene may lift us up above this earth to a plane of contemplative devotion in which we may hope to be more fit to "hold an hour's communion" with the world of spirit. Some again hold strong views respecting matters on which Spiritualists at large differ. The personal devotion of the Catholic to the Blessed Virgin is replaced in many Protestants by an equally personal devotion to the Son of God. To many this article of faith, again, is not acceptable. The fabrication of a ritual which should gratify these two types, for instance, and should at the same time meet the wants of the numerous other beliefs that Spiritualism includes would result in a feeble, flaccid, colourless composition, distasteful to most, and thoroughly pleasing to none: an expurgated edition of Bible and Liturgy prepared to meet the views of countless fads and fancies.

For the present it seems to me that those Spiritualists who feel the necessity for public devotion—and it is not all who do feel that necessity, I may here remark—may most profitably indulge that craving in the religious body which most nearly approaches their mental and spiritual position. Any attempt to lay stress on theological dogmas, or on points of religious teaching on which opinion varies, will, in my judgment, end disastrously. We have no Athanasian Creed in Spiritualism on whose anathema we may fall back to enforce uniformity of faith. We never shall have any such instrument of religious coercion. Where any such binding power working for uniformity is absent, when people have satisfied themselves that a man's beliefs on moot questions are valuable only as expressions of more or less intelligent opinion—simply that and nothing more—the attempt to unfold and enforce dogmatic opinions as necessary to be believed is both futile and unwise: tending to discord and disunion in exact proportion to the effect produced on the minds of those who listen. Some will pass them by; some will be provoked to antagonism; some will be irritated; a few will accept. For these and other reasons it seems to me that Spiritualists may best exercise their religious instincts in existing churches, and defer to a more convenient season any attempt to establish a religious service of their own.

### MESMERISM IN ITS PRACTICAL ASPECTS.

[In view of the announcement recently made with reference to the Mesmeric Circles of the Research Section of the London Spiritualist Alliance, the following article may not be out of place. It is necessary, however, to mention that the paper appeared in "Pettitt's Earlie English Almanack" for the current year, and was entitled "A Discourse of Mesmerism, or the Principles and Practice of Animal Magnetism, as exemplified in the Phenomena of Willing, in Thought-reading, of Clairvoyance or Second-sight," and is from the pen of Mr. Heron Allan, one of the members of the Society for Psychical Research.]

#### III.

(Concluded from page 160.)

A subject in the hypnotic or mesmeric sleep may be made to imagine that a coin is burning hot or freezing cold, brandy may be given him to drink and he will imagine it is water, or water may be given him telling him it is brandy, and in a short time it will thoroughly inebriate him. One of the most interesting experiments is that of making one arm insensible to pain; this may be done as follows:—Raise the hand and let it fall dead by its own weight as stated above, then holding it out by supporting it with the left hand make several passes along it, willing strongly that it should become callous to any sensation. In a few moments it will become quite rigid, and though in the normal state a man cannot hold out one arm at right angles for more than a certain stated time, a mesmerised patient whose arm has thus been, as it were, paralysed can keep it extended in this manner for any period. The arm being thus hypnotised, give the hand a sharp rap on the knuckles; the subject will not betray any uneasiness thereat; if he does, continue the passes and repeat the experiment till he no longer flinches at the blow. You may then stick pins into or through the hand and arm without the subject being aware of what is going on. It is in this way that Dr. Esdaile rendered his patients insensible to the operating knife or the actual cautery. In all these experiments the effects are produced instantaneously and are removed equally instantaneously by the simple word of the mesmerist, but the latter must always speak firmly and authoritatively, concentrating his whole mind upon the business in hand and willing strongly that his command shall be obeyed. If you find that the effect is not immediately produced or that a sudden command seems to disturb the patient, prepare him for it by telling him what you are going to do; thus, for instance, say to him:—"I am going to give you a dog to nurse," and after a moment or two give him a book, saying, "Here it is"; or say:—"I am going to put a hot penny into your hand," and then give him any coin, which he will immediately drop with every expression of pain. I make it a rule never to wake a subject suddenly: when I wish to do so I say, "I am going to wake you," or "Would you like to wake up?" then, after a pause, "Now then—wake up!" and make a couple of rapid upward passes, blowing at the same time across the top of the subject's head. I may say that I have never failed to wake a subject *instantly* by these means, but even if they do not wake at once, *for goodness sake* don't be alarmed and lose your head; it is merely a natural inclination to sleep on which must be gratified, a gratification which will be most beneficial to the subject. If however you particularly wish to awaken the subject, proceed as follows:—place the tips of the thumbs side by side upon the centre of the forehead just between the eyebrows, and rub briskly outwards towards the temples, ending by fanning or blowing upon the top of the head. As a rule you should never leave a patient asleep; see him thoroughly awakened before you go away; but should it be *necessary* to leave him to sleep it off, give particular instructions that he is not to be interfered with, or on any account touched by any other person. I

once saw the most distressing symptoms developed in a subject by the ignorant stupidity of a doctor who was called in and who insisted on feeling the pulse, raising the eyelids, and finally trying to wake the patient after the mesmerist had gone away. These ill-effects result from cross-mesmerism. When I find a thoroughly sympathetic subject with whom I wish to experiment repeatedly with a view to developing the higher phenomena, I make him promise whilst he is asleep never to let any one else mesmerise him, a promise which, though the subject may forget having actually made, when he wakes up, will always be rigorously kept by him. An interesting form of experiment is that of making a subject promise things whilst asleep, and watching him perform them whilst he is awake; indeed he may be made to promise to wake in half-an-hour or at any other distance of time and he is sure to wake almost at the moment he has promised to do so. He may be made to promise whilst he is asleep to go to a certain place at a certain time and deliver a certain message, and when that time arrives he will be irresistibly impelled to fulfil his promise; or he may promise to pursue a certain course of action until further notice and he will infallibly do so if the promise be properly exacted; in this manner dipsomaniacs and kleptomaniacs have been entirely cured of their evil propensities, and the performance of duties has been enforced upon persons whose natural strength of mind is not of a high order. Another phase of this branch of the phenomena is the eliciting from the subject directions how to proceed in his particular case so as to produce the most beneficial results; in this manner I have often discovered what system of magnetisation is the best for a particular subject, and patients who have been mesmerised for purposes of cure often give to their magnetisers the most valuable directions as to how to proceed in their particular cases, frequently predicting the exact times when crises, alterations, and eventual recoveries will supervene.

"Sometimes," says Captain James,\* "slow breathing, or placing the hand on the forehead, will deepen the sleep, but the beginner should, as a rule, avoid concentrating the mesmeric force on the head or region of the heart, and confine himself as much as possible to the passes *aux grands courants* as the French writers term them, *i.e.*, the long slow passes from the head to the feet. Should the above described signs of mesmeric coma not declare themselves at the end of twenty or thirty minutes, the mesmeriser should ask the patient whether he felt any peculiar sensations during the process, and if so whether they were more apparent during the passes, or when the fingers were pointed at the eyes. By these inquiries he will soon learn the best method of mesmerising applicable to each particular case, and he should not be disheartened if he does not succeed in producing marked effects at the first, or even after many sances. Pain may be removed and diseases cured or greatly alleviated without the production of sleep, and many patients succumb at length who have for many weeks been apparently unaffected and proof against all the resources of these mesmerisers."

There are cases in which the processes of mesmerism may cause a palpitation of the heart; when this occurs the heart should be stilled by placing the hand or breathing on the cardiac region, and the beginner should then immediately de-mesmerise the subject. Ordinary convulsive or cataleptic symptoms may generally be immediately allayed by breathing upon the nape of the neck, or, better still, by long-steady passes from the head to the very tips of the fingers and toes; slow breathing upon any part is best effected by placing a folded handkerchief on the region and breathing through it.

The phenomena of mesmerism are infinite, and the habitual mesmerist will frequently meet with what must appear to him to be strange anomalies, as for instance the

facts that some patients may be pulled about by anyone whilst in the mesmeric sleep whilst others cannot bear to be touched by anyone save the mesmerist; some will converse with anyone whilst others can only communicate with the operator; a hypnotised subject will often be deaf to the loudest noises whilst he can hear the softest whisper of the magnetiser. Sometimes, in spite of all persuasion to the contrary, a subject will persist in cherishing the most absurd delusion, often he will call things by their wrong names, but it will be observed that he always gives the same thing the same wrong name. Some subjects will let their skins be touched by a red-hot wire, but cannot bear a pinch or a rap on the knuckles.

It is not now my intention to pursue the subject into the regions of the highest phenomena, clairvoyance, phreno-mesmerism, ecstasies, and trance; for descriptions of these developments of hypnotism I must refer you to the works of Dr. Gregory and Captain James which I have quoted above. I have carried this discourse as far as I think it expedient within the limits of a letter; only this I beg that you will bear in mind, there is no danger in mesmerism if only the conditions I have particularly emphasised are strictly observed; practice will make perfect and you will find that every time you mesmerise a patient the operation will occupy a shorter time.

#### THE SPIRITUAL PRESS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

##### *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter* (Leipzig.)

A German translation of "M. A. (Oxon.'s)" "Spirit Teachings" is appearing in the columns of the *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter*, under the title of "Mittheilungen aus dem Jenseits." *Apropos* of an article in another column, the editor (Dr. Cyriax) says: "Beautiful thoughts about the true meaning of prayer will be found by our readers in the 'Spirit Teachings' of Imperator. Often in our helplessness have we turned to our guardian spirits, and help and consolation have never been denied."

EDISON A MEDIUM.—Rev. A. L. Hatch, Congregational minister, of 59, Liberty-street, New York, furnishes the following statement to the *New York World*:—"You know he (Mr. Edison) is a medium, and his great invention of the quadruplex telegraph instrument was revealed to him in a trance state. He sat one day, and, passing into that condition, seized some paper lying before him and wrote until he had filled several sheets with closely-written notes. Then, waking up and rubbing his eyes, he said he thought he had been asleep, until his attention was called to the paper, which he had not read through before he broke out with his usual expletives, and said he had got the idea he had been struggling for so long."

In the "Life of Congreve," by Charles Wilson, the following is recorded concerning the poet Dryden:—"The poet, being conversant with astrology, calculated the nativity of his son Charles at his birth. As the result, he concluded that his son's life would be seriously endangered, if not lost, on his eighth birthday; that, if he lived, the same danger would recur on his twenty-third birthday; and that, if he survived this, it would again present itself on the thirty-third or thirty-fourth anniversary of his birth. On his eighth birthday the child, notwithstanding every precaution to prevent accident to him, was nearly killed by the fall of a wall. On his twenty-third birthday he was seized with giddiness and fell from an old tower belonging to the Vatican at Rome, and in his thirty-third year he was drowned at Windsor while swimming across the Thames."

MODERN Spiritualism to conquer the world will have to enlist the interest and awaken the devotion of the careful man of science. Never was there a subject beset with so many difficulties, surrounded with so many irresistible charms, and which opens so many avenues for the ignorant to grow more superstitious and the wicked to impose upon credulity. A man cannot plunge into the study of astronomy without a knowledge of mathematics. A geologist must know something about fauna and anatomy. It is in the science of Spiritualism alone where we find any man, whatever his fitness, at work. He comes without any previous study. The ardent Spiritualist cries, "Come to our sance, pay your dollar, and go away with the evidence that your spirit friends live." That is about on a par with the cry of the captain of the Salvation troop, "Come to the fountain of grace and get salvation." The one cry is as absurd as the other. Both are of the order of the showman.—J. CLEGG WRIGHT.

\* John James. "Mesmerism, with Hints for Beginners" (London) 1884.

## 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.]

## "The Verification of Spirit Messages," Again.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In renewing my subscription to your esteemed journal, permit me to express my deep regret that its columns were made (in the issue for February 27th last) the vehicle for communicating to the public the ill-considered, sweeping imputations of "C. C. M." upon the mediums of America in general, and upon the conductors of the *Banner of Light* and the medium in their employ in particular. It certainly betrays a strange spirit of accusation for a person who is three thousand miles away, and has never (at least of late years) been in this country, to speak of it as "a country swarming with 'bogus' mediums, many of them presumably in mutual private communication" for the purpose of concocting impostures to be played upon investigators in Spiritualism. Though very probably there are dishonest individuals among the many professional mediums in this country, as there are in all other professions in this and other lands, yet no such state of things as portrayed in the exaggerated language above quoted is heard of here, unless it be from the mouths of bigoted anti-Spiritualists, who are disposed to regard all mediumship as "bogus," and who are not competent witnesses on the subject; or, possibly, from a set of partisan (so-called) Spiritualists, who consider as "bogus" everything which does not conform to their narrow notions.

The only "evidence" adduced by "C. C. M." to sustain this wholesale imputation is that he was "shown a letter" alleged to be from an American medium, asking another who was in London for particulars about the family, &c., of an investigator who was expected to visit America—such particulars ("if" his "memory serves") to be used in séances; and yet he admits that he did not know the handwriting of the alleged author of the letter, while the medium to whom it was addressed "strenuously denied all knowledge" of it! Rather flimsy evidence, it would seem, on which to base a sweeping accusation against American mediums—and that, too, from one who is at the same time demanding more satisfactory evidence in "verification of spirit messages," and who strongly intimates that many Spiritualists "have not the faintest conception of what evidence means." Would it not have been well for him at least to have "verified" the handwriting of the author of that letter before offering it to the world as evidence in so grave a matter? It would seem that, like partisan advocates in general, he can readily believe what accords with his preconceived notions, and as readily dispute what makes against them.

As to the verification of the purported spirit messages published in the *Banner of Light*, or any other publication, I do not see but that is just as much the duty of "C. C. M." as of anybody else. How are they to be verified? 1st. By ascertaining the good faith of the conductors of that paper, and of the medium through whom the messages are transmitted—i.e., the fact that the messages are not in any degree concocted from information received from any external source, but are printed, as spoken, unpremeditated, through the lips of the medium, by intelligences claiming to be spirits who once inhabited mortal flesh. 2nd. By ascertaining if persons once lived in the localities stated, bearing the names and answering to the characteristics and details given in the messages. This is all the verification the case seems to admit of, and when both of these particulars are settled in the affirmative, strong presumptive evidence at least is obtained of the continued existence of human spirits and their ability to communicate to friends left behind—evidence which is ordinarily conclusive to the practical common-sense of mankind, and especially to those who recognise in the purported spirit some near and dear friend whose personality is indicated in the message by unmistakable signs which they alone are competent to perceive.

This evidence, however, rationally conclusive as it may be to personal friends, may be far from convincing to a critical sceptic, on the other side of the Atlantic, whose mind is full of surmises, and who has neglected to take the proper steps for obtaining either branch of the verification. And it is not likely to meet the requirements of Psychical Research committees, who insist on applying the methods of physical science in this field of inquiry; nor may it be expected to satisfy minds

befogged with speculations about "unconscious cerebration," or an "unconscious secondary self" gifted with seeming omniscience, &c., &c. It should be remembered that the "messages" in question are not given for the purpose of satisfying these "scientific" and querulous doubters. If they were, doubtless measures would be taken to more fully meet their demands. On the contrary, the main object seems to be to afford those who have passed from mortal sight opportunity to return with words of affection and comfort to loved ones left behind. Of this opportunity thousands apparently have availed themselves, in numerous cases affording such evidence of their personal identity as has been fully convincing and satisfactory to those most concerned. Of the sufficiency of this evidence, outsiders, strangers—especially those residing in a far-off land—are plainly not competent judges.

I assume that "C. C. M." has taken no steps to verify the genuineness of these messages in the only way in which it can be verified, for the reasons, first, that he makes no claim to have done so; and, secondly, because, from my own knowledge, I am confident that no one can do so, in any proper way, without becoming satisfied of the entire good faith in this matter both of the conductors of the *Banner* and of the medium employed by them, and consequently being convinced of the supermundane origin of the communications. In my judgment then—and I appeal to the judgment of all right-thinking men and women the world over—this wholly gratuitous imputation upon the integrity of these prominent workers in Spiritualism, in the absence of any effort to ascertain the facts, is utterly indefensible and inexcusable. Especially flagrant is the implication so far as it refers to the medium, Miss Shelhamer. She is a modest, shrinking sensitive, against whose purity, spirituality, and sterling integrity I have yet to hear the first breath of aspersion from anyone who knows her, and whose abundant productions as a medium show her to be a channel of the most elevating spiritual truths. To insinuate, without provocation and without inquiry, that this instrument of the angels may be the active agent in a gigantic and diabolical conspiracy, for years pursued, to impose upon the world in some of its most sacred interests, is surely unbecoming a man—not to say a professed philosopher and lover of spiritual truth. It is little short of a cruel outrage, inconsiderate though it may have been.

Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Editor. I find no fault with "C. C. M.," or any other person, for having doubts on the subject in question, until those doubts are removed by conclusive evidence. But it seems to me that common courtesy, not to say justice, should dictate the abstention from parading those doubts before the public, when their expression involves implications so serious against others, until proper measures have been taken to ascertain the facts. Had this been done in this case, I am confident the doubts would have been dispelled.

I hope, Mr. Editor, that the day is not far distant when the prominent advocates of Spiritualism in all lands will come to a better understanding of each other, and to a more courteous and fraternal feeling, whatever their minor differences. I am aware that bad examples—very bad examples—in this respect, have been set in this country, where Spiritualism is supposed to have made the greatest progress. Unfortunately *spirituality* has not kept pace with it. I hope the bad examples referred to are not to be imitated across the water. And I trust that the efforts of the Spiritual Alliance of your city, under the capable lead of its broad-minded president, "M.A. (Oxon.)," will, through his projected confederation of Spiritualist Societies throughout the world, be able in time to accomplish much in the direction of mutual understanding, and eventually of practical brotherhood.—Yours truly,

Arlington, Mass., U.S.A.

A. E. NEWTON.

## Professor Huxley on the "Evolution of Theology."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have been surprised to see no notice taken in your columns of the article by Professor Huxley on the "Evolution of Theology," in the March number of the *Nineteenth Century Review*. This article contains the strongest independent testimony in support of spiritual inspiration, and coming from such an authority, I expected to see this testimony appropriated with avidity in your journal.

An array of illustrations of what Professor Huxley calls "divination" are produced from the Old Testament, showing that prophets, priests, wise men or women were all "seers"; that

the Israelites were ancestor worshippers, and carried images of their ancestors in their tents; that the ghosts of such ancestors were supposed to act as patrons of families, and could be evoked and consulted.

Professor Huxley goes on to show that similar ancestor worship exists at the present day in Polynesia, and quotes a description of the ceremonies during which the ghost of an ancestor was stated to have taken possession of the priest, in some island of Polynesia.

I have not the article by me, nor have I time to give fuller particulars, but I am satisfied that your readers would find the article of the greatest interest.

It is curious that Professor Huxley goes all the way to Polynesia to find illustrations of the "ghosts" of ancestors descending to inspire and speak through the "seer," and seems to be ignorant of the fact that the very same thing goes on around him in London. But it is no doubt more scientifically orthodox to quote the accounts of a traveller who is said to be careful and worthy of credence than to give a description of a modern Spiritual séance.—Yours faithfully,

20, Parliament Hill, Hampstead. OSWALD MURRAY.  
31st March, 1886.

#### Spiritualism and the Public.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Spiritualism is a subject in which I take a large amount of interest, for I think there can be no subject of greater significance than that of the question of a future life. It seems to me to be the predominant question for mankind until it is settled one way or the other. There are, I believe, some people who profess to regard the subject with indifference, and others who are capable of contemplating the prospect of annihilation even with complacency. To myself, such a state of mind is incomprehensible. I can understand how a person suffering great agony of mind or body might welcome death, even as annihilation; but how a person in the enjoyment of the pleasures and delights of existence, even intermixed with grief and vexation and those troubles to which man is said to be "born as the sparks fly upwards," can regard the question of a future life with indifference, I cannot understand. To me the idea of annihilation of the soul, or eternal death, seems about the most horrible and repulsive idea which can enter into the mind of man. That the universe should exist for ever, but the individual perish; that the grave should be victor after all, and man never survive the sting of death; that the ultimate result of evolution should be the production of a creature whose existence is, comparatively speaking, as ephemeral and evanescent as that of a butterfly, which lives for a few hours in the sunshine of a summer's day; that humanity should have an existence only conterminous with that of the earth itself,—all this seems to me incredible. I have been attracted to Spiritualism, not merely out of idle curiosity, but as having some bearing on this question of questions. The attitude assumed by the general public towards Spiritualism—or the more cultivated portion of the public, for I suppose the subject has hardly yet reached the lower social stratum—is, I think, unjust and unjustifiable. It appears to be the fashion to treat Spiritualism with scorn and contempt, and revile it in language which, if not quite as bad as the coarsest Billingsgate, is not very select, such as calling Spiritualists fools, idiots, rogues, and vagabonds. Professor Tyndall, I think, in his splendid Belfast lecture, has applied to Spiritualism a very opprobrious epithet—I forget the exact words. Most of the foremost journals appear to avoid all reference to Spiritualism, as if it were something unclean, and so despicable that the tone of the papers would be lowered by the discussion of it. To me, this attitude of contemptuous scorn, assumed by the more cultivated portion of the public towards Spiritualism, seems unworthy of people possessed with ideas of equity and justice, or imbued with the true spirit of philosophy. Admitting, as I believe the Spiritualists themselves do, that the supposed phenomena are sometimes, though rarely, intermixed with fraud, yet the fact that such a multitude of people are believers in Spiritualism should redeem the subject from contemptuous ostracism. For myself, I am neither a believer nor unbeliever in Spiritualism, as I have never had an opportunity of thoroughly investigating the subject, and have never attended a Spiritualist séance. I have read some Spiritualist literature, and of one thing, at least, I am convinced, that these people who have recounted their experience of Spiritual phenomena are speaking the truth, and have not the slightest doubt in their own minds of the genuine character of such phenomena. It is inconceiv-

able that people should tell an enormous number of lies, and practise an immense amount of deceit, from no apparent motive. Moreover, about most of the accounts of Spiritualistic phenomena there appears to be the ring of truth which may be detected by a person of tolerable sagacity, as may be the ring of a good shilling. Spiritualistic literature, as far as I have observed it, seems to be of a pure and lofty character, calculated rather to ennoble than degrade. What we want to arrive at is a knowledge of the truth, but truth is not to be had by ignoring evidence with pig-headed pertinacity. Spiritualistic phenomena must, for the most part, be acknowledged as genuine. The explanation of such phenomena is the subject for consideration. The question appears to be whether, as it seems Dr. von Hartmann holds, these phenomena are illusions or self-deception, the result of occult human force, or are manifestations of ultra-mundane intelligence. I should like to see a concise statement of the several classes of facts which can be adduced in support of the ultra-mundane theory. People may be welcome to start theories in explanation of Spiritualistic phenomena, but, of course, if such theories do not cover all the facts they are worthless. It is quite possible that a few simple facts may confound the most abstruse and pretentious theories; that the wisdom of man may be humbled and brought to nought by the wisdom of God; and things that are hidden from the wise and prudent be revealed to babes. Surely, considering the dimensions which the subject of Spiritualism has now attained, it is worthy of something better than the most unmitigated scorn and contempt. It is a subject which, while it should be subjected to the closest scrutiny, is more worthy of calm consideration than hasty condemnation.—I am, sir, yours, &c.,

Otago, December 8th, 1885.

COLONUS.

#### Clairvoyance.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Referring to the incident noticed in last week's Records under the head of Clairvoyance, permit me to mention that several conditions usually considered essential in a clairvoyant examination were waived on that occasion. The case is interesting as proving most emphatically the necessity of exercising the greatest care in dealing with what are used as clues to place a clairvoyant *en rapport* with the patient.

Such clues, which may be the handwriting, lock of hair, or something belonging to or worn by the patient, appear to retain for a time the magnetism of the individual and thus form a connecting link which a clairvoyant is able to follow. To preserve their identity they should, if possible, be kept separate from all foreign influences. When a medical diagnosis is required of a person unknown to myself or the clairvoyante, to prevent mistakes I invariably obtain from her, in the first place, a precise description of any prominent features or peculiarity, and should the description thus given be subsequently found to accord with what is known of the individual it would warrant us in concluding by analogy that if the account of the outward appearance is true the other particulars would also be true.

From what I can recollect of the circumstances, Mr. Dawson Rogers simply pulled an envelope or letter from among some other papers in his pocket and handed it to me. I am quite willing to admit that the previous conversation to which he refers may to some extent have contributed to the result, although not within the knowledge of the clairvoyante in her normal condition; yet to my mind it seems more reasonable to suppose that the letter in question had at some time come in contact with a letter from the other lady, absorbed her magnetism, and thus have thrown the clairvoyante upon the wrong scent. It is extremely satisfactory, however, to have such distinct testimony as to the correctness of the diagnosis from the lady who was really under examination.—I am, yours faithfully,

7, Duke-street, Grosvenor-square, W. W. R. PRICE.

April 5th, 1886.

THE LATEST PLANCHETTE.—In Akron, Ohio, is a new form of the old planchette, with which all Spiritualists are well acquainted. It consists of a rectangular board, which may be of any size, but was usually about two feet by eighteen inches, on which were placed all the letters of the alphabet. A little table with three legs on small rollers goes on the top of this board. Two persons sit down, with their finger tips on this table. One of them asks a question to which an answer is desired. Then they await the action of the little table, to which their fingers are glued, as it were. It is certainly curious how that table will fly round at times. As the legs point out different letters on the board sentences are formed, which constitute the answer of the question propounded. No one believes, until after experiment, what wonderful and strikingly pertinent answers are made.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
16, CRAVEN STREET,  
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## Light :

SATURDAY, APRIL 10TH, 1886.

### SPIRITUALISM.

By DR. CARL DU PREL.

Supplement to *Ueber Land und Meer*, No. 22, 1886.

TRANSLATED BY "V."

By the expression "Spiritualism" we are accustomed to define (not at all accurately, be it said by the way) a creed which has found many adherents in these latter days, but the first lines of which are only as yet beginning to be laid down, so that we can scarcely venture to say what form it will take with the process of time. We may describe the articles of belief of this creed as being firstly that of the immortality of mankind; secondly, the belief that the dead, the so-called spirits, become visible to us under certain conditions; and thirdly, that they can operate in a limited manner in our sphere.

It shows great ignorance when the opponents of Spiritualism speak of it as the last American humbug. Spiritualism is rather as old as humanity itself, and constitutes—not only as regards the belief in immortality, but in the form in which it now exists—a portion of the ancient Hindu philosophy, as well as of the Alexandrian philosophy of Jamblicus, Porphyry, Plotinus, &c., and in the Middle Ages was far more cultivated than it is at the present time, being called white magic among saintly men, while among magicians and witches it went by the name of black magic. In fact, as I will show later on, a great number of manifestations of precisely the same character may be ascribed to both witches and mediums.

The learned, who consider objects of natural science as their speciality, are inclined to see in Spiritualism nothing but imposture and superstition; those who, on the contrary, are disposed to place the study of history and philosophy above other limited knowledge, show themselves inclined to take quite a different view. It is therefore no simple accident that with the advent of Spiritualism, German philosophers should have declared themselves in favour of it, such as Fichte, Hoffmann, Ulrici, Perty, Hellenbach, and recently Eduard von Hartmann, who has expressed himself convinced of the reality of the phenomena, although he explains them from his own standpoint. (See Hartmann's "Spiritualism." Leipzig: Friedrich, 1885.) If, however, Spiritualism is founded upon fact, and is therefore an experimental science, it must be anticipated that inquirers into nature will pronounce themselves in its favour, if they can be sufficiently free from prejudice to occupy themselves with a subject in such bad odour. In prospect of this, the situation is sufficiently clear; those who have taken the trouble to examine into the facts of Spiritualism have decided in its favour; while those who have not taken this trouble are against it. In the first category, experimenters of the highest rank may be numbered. I only give the names best known when I mention those of Crookes, Wallace, Zöllner, Fechner and Weber, each of whom stands in the records of science as having rendered her undying services. Among the outside world it is likewise well known that those who have devoted some slight time and trouble to the inquiry have declared themselves in favour of the genuineness of the phenomena, while you may lay a wager that if you question the opponents they will confess that they have neither studied nor experimented in the matter. It is likewise well worthy of notice that among those who have once become convinced no one has ever been known to recant; at least

I know of none such. Among the well-known names as yet, there is no Julian the Apostate, which Roman Emperor—by the way—became an apostate through becoming acquainted with Spiritualism in Alexandria.

Under these circumstances a steady progress is being made; the number of opponents is lessening, that of adherents increases from day to day. Universal belief is, therefore, only a question of time, and we shall see once more a new truth, first numbered among senseless paradoxes, become recognised as a common-place fact.

Since a new truth, when it is supported by the facts of nature, is more capable of being proved such, in the fight for existence of ideas, than error, it might be looked upon as superfluous for me to come forward as an apostle of Spiritualism; if I dedicate a few words to this subject, in response to the cordial invitation of this journal,\* I do so on the consideration that it would be an injury to the cause of Spiritualism to allow it any longer to remain in the hands of the general public, and that much depends upon its being dealt with by the hand of science, in order that its undergrowth should be pruned away, which already conceals in considerable measure the germ of truth under an outer husk of superstition.

Spiritualistic phenomena are connected with the presence of a so-called medium. It would, however, be premature to say that the latter is the cause of the phenomena; it is much more likely that he contributes only the conditions, without this circumstance being yet clearly recognised. Every power of nature is subject to change, that is, it may be reversed in equally strong conditions of other powers; so also the force taken from the medium may be given in equivalent to other forces. The same with the phenomena of Spiritualism; they are partly of a physical nature—as rappings, appearances of lights, moving of heavy objects, &c.; partly psychological—as with trance and psychographic mediums; and partly Spiritualistic in the more exact sense—materialisations, that is, apparitions of so-called spirits, who in their turn can speak, write, or are capable of mechanical powers.

The objection made to the greater part of these phenomena is that they are unimportant, even indeed sometimes quite silly; and that the spirits do not conduct themselves in the manner that might be expected from serious and reasonable beings. It would, indeed, be a matter of rejoicing if these spirits, instead of coming like transitory phantoms, paid us visits in our drawing-rooms like other persons; if, instead of tilting tables, lifting chairs, rapping on the wall, or scratching on the table, they could describe the life in the other world to us, and open out to us new truths and revelations. It is only a question if the latter is possible. The supersensual world could not be an object of antagonism if it were intimately connected with the normal world as if by canals or telegraph wires. The connection between these two worlds of such totally different conditions is highly defective, and only the few connecting threads we know of can be made use of. We should, therefore, demand phenomenal occurrences from Spiritualism and not manifestations which are dependent upon natural laws. If, for example, I had no other way open to me of communicating with an inhabitant of Mars than that of rapping or of pushing his chair, I certainly should rap and move his chair. That inhabitant of Mars would, however, have the choice either of looking upon me as very limited in my spiritual capacity, or of considering the possibility of communication with his world as being of a limited nature. Darwinism teaches us that our material body is suitable to the world of sense, therefore evidently the body of a phantom is not adapted to our world, that is to say, it is limited in regard to its possibility of communication.

It cannot be denied that the spirits who manifest themselves, either by writing or by word of mouth, have as yet not greatly added to our stock of knowledge. Can we, however, expect them to know so much more than we do? Death, if we survive it, may indeed bring with it a change of our way of knowledge, of our forms of perception, but it can neither make us geniuses nor saints. Exactly as spirits are men who have died must they exhibit the same intellectual and moral deficiencies as we do ourselves. If it were otherwise, it would be in contradiction to the law of development. Spiritualists are, therefore, in error if they imagine to set up a new religious system founded upon the communications received from spirits. Spiritualistic communications often contradict one another; in one thing only are they in complete accord, that is, the belief in immortality. If, therefore, it is a question of the latest riddle of the world and of our being, I prefer to consult a three-dimensional man of genius rather than a four-dimensional spirit. Another thing which spirits are all agreed about is, that they all preach morality. This can certainly do us mortals no harm; but morality, when it is not supported by the facts of nature, dies away in the air and is taken little notice of. Therefore, at least in the first place, experimental research into the facts of Spiritualism is much more necessary than the collection of spiritual communications. The morality of the New Testament is

\* *Ueber Land und Meer*.

fully sufficient; but the belief in immortality, which was its support, has been lost by many, and so it is no longer followed. We must, therefore, give it a new support, and—as is demanded by our century—one which is proved by experimental means.

It is beyond doubt that Spiritualism will widen our powers of knowledge, but, in the first instance, only through our own work. Experimental research will advance us in physics and chemistry; psychology, which, in its present state of development, does not rise above the condition of physiological psychology, will receive a new impetus. Beyond this the only reasonable hope is that the immortality of mankind may be proved by experimental means. This alone, however, would be an immense advance, and would suffice to practically change for the better our whole social life, which is rotten at the very foundation, not only by making resignation easier on the part of the poor and wretched, but by an increase of love to their neighbours on the side of the more highly favoured.

The most important of all the phenomena of Spiritualism is, without doubt, that of materialisation, which, on this very account, meets with the greatest amount of opposition. Unscientific opponents assert that the apparitions of spirits are nothing but masquerades on the part of the medium; scientific adversaries, on the other hand, see in them subjective phantasies or hallucinations of the medium, which he transfers to the spectators. Unscientific opponents accuse all mediums of practising imposture for the sake of gain, but are easily confuted on this ground, as the theory of imposture is disproved in the case of private mediums. It is readily to be imagined why the latter keep themselves concealed at a time in which all mediums are regarded as impostors and all Spiritualists as dupes. But neither learned nor unlearned opponents seem to have the slightest idea that the number of private mediums who, as a rule, show their powers only in their own private family circles, and who, as I know, partly from what has been communicated to me, and partly from my own experience, produce the most wonderful results, is much greater than that of professional mediums.

It is equally easy to refute the theory that materialisations are due to hallucination. To be duped by imagination is a prerogative of mankind. Inorganic nature is free from this liability, and the photographic plate not subject to such a delusion. Since, therefore, materialised figures have on several occasions been photographed, among others by Crookes (see *Psychische Studien* 11, 19), they must be really objective. I do not deny the possibility of hallucinations at Spiritual séances; but it is quite impossible that photographed materialised forms can be a matter of simple hallucination. It is useless fighting against this conclusion, and were even the whole foundation of science to be overthrown on this account—which is by no means the case—then will be overthrown—and truly none too soon—only the materialistic views in vogue, thoroughly and once for all.

The theory of hallucination is disproved likewise by the fact that the spirit forms produce material and *lasting* effects. The most remarkable of these, and at the same time the one that points most directly to the fact of immortality, accompanied by a continuance of individual consciousness, is that of what is called direct writing, the greater part of which—in order to avoid the possibility of imposture—is obtained within a closed double slate. With reference to this, it is sufficient to say that within a double slate, securely fastened, either with sealing wax, cords, or any other device, besides being locked, suitable and pertinent answers are received to questions put by the experimenter, in languages spoken by him or the medium or which are unknown to either of them. For a fuller description of this manifestation the reader is referred to my "Problem for Conjurers." (Breslau: Schotländer, 1885.) In this pamphlet I have described in detail among others, an experiment, when in full light and under circumstances which precluded any possibility of imposture, within a closed book as well as inside two double slates, a connected and suitable answer of eighty-four lines was received through the medium, Eglinton, whose speciality this phenomenon of direct writing is. By exact descriptions of experiments such as these—of which unfortunately not many are recorded—anyone who reads them without, or even with preconceived opinions must obtain conviction, and he will only have the choice, on reading the above mentioned pamphlet, to own that he is convinced or to assert that I am an accomplice of Eglinton, from whom I suppose I get a certain profit. Although this essay has obtained a wide circulation, through its appearance in the journal *North and South*, it has only met from its opponents with that eloquent silence behind which embarrassment conceals itself. Only here and there do I hear it whispered that I am neither a specialist nor a professor of the University. This is indeed true; but what would avail the narrowing of my horizon by belonging to one of the old scientific departments, in view of one quite new, at least in our day. The specialist in Spiritualistic matters is only adapted to deal with Spiritualism; such an one I cannot profess to be, but still I know a great deal more about the subject than its opponents. The recognised high-

power of judgment of a professor may indeed be useful to *explain* Spiritualistic phenomena; but it is quite a superfluous luxury as long as it is only a question of conviction with regard to the *reality* of the phenomena.

When I see the medium's hands lying motionless, and at the same time hear writing going on within the closed slate, the reasoning power of a professor is not necessary to *comprehend* that the hands of the medium are not employed, but those of some other being. When I hold both the hands of the medium fast clasped in my own, while at the same time materialised hands are visible, there is no necessity for me to be an Aristotle, but the smallest modicum of reasoning powers suffices for me to draw the logical conclusion that a medium who only possesses two hands cannot show four; the two other hands must, therefore, belong to another being, and since they are movable, to a living being; for if hands are present, the remaining portion of the organism can only be invisible to our sight. I will, therefore, take the liberty of considering the experiment which I described in the above mentioned pamphlet as irrefutable, as long as the respected opponents are incapable of disproving it.

It is thus proved that the phantoms are real, that they are rational beings, and that they frequently bear a striking resemblance to our departed friends. How, then, shall we accurately define these facts? Shall we say that they are actually our dead come back? Theologians, versed in the history of culture and religion, do not deny the fact of Spiritualism, but recognise in it an old friend, spoken of by the ancient fathers of the Church; they look upon materialisations, however, as the work of demons, who take upon themselves the likeness of our departed friends. This is a matter for theologians to decide, though many among Spiritualists themselves are of opinion that the identity of the phantoms with the dead is not yet proved; but this, after the accounts I have received of facts happening with private mediums, I can only partly agree with. If we inquire into the question of materialisation in a philosophical manner, we come to the conclusion that the proof of identity cannot perhaps be arrived at so completely as could be desired. With this philosophical reflection I will leave the domain of facts, and it is free to the reader to accept them or not. I cannot, however, altogether let him off, and will not number him among those to whom every philosophical proposition gives a headache.

When I resolved to devote myself to the study of Spiritualism, not on account of my own experiences or of those of others which had been communicated to me, but because by a way, which my readers will find related in my essay on "The Inhabitants of the Planets," I found myself, greatly to my astonishment, on the border land of mysticism—it became evident to me that Spiritualism, studied by itself, would not be well understood, and that the key to it lay in somnambulism. And thus it happened that I first published the results of this last study in my "Philosophy of Mysticism." (Leipzig: Ernst Günther, 1885.) It is proved undoubtedly by somnambulism that—as Aristotle taught in his day—the soul is not only capable of thought, but is likewise organised; and further, that as a thinking being it is not identical with our normal consciousness, but is possessed of a great variety of powers; in other words, that our self-consciousness does not exhaust our whole being.

Therefore we may speak of a duality of our spiritual being, of a normal and a supernormal consciousness, the latter of which is only capable of manifesting itself in exceptional circumstances, as in the case of somnambulism. At the same time, this duality must be comprised in the same individuality. An example will make this clear. If I dream that I am being examined, and I am unable to answer the questions put by the teacher, which the next scholar, being asked, answers fluently, my own personality is thereby dramatically put on one side. The whole dream arises from myself, but my individuality is shared between three persons. This kind of dream is very common, and it proves that a plurality of persons may be comprised in one single subject. What in dreams is a psychological fact, may outside of them be a metaphysical one. It is possible, indeed there is no logical reason against the idea, that our individual being may be divided into a duality of persons, one of which is the earthly man. Against this, it cannot be conclusively objected that in our normal condition we know nothing of this dual nature, for our dream figures on their side know nothing of their identity in subject with the dreamer, and that they only form a number, as persons.

The distinction between the subject and the person in man has already been set forth by Kant. We learn to know it experimentally in somnambulism, though as a rule only in relation to spiritual capacity, as, for instance, in clairvoyance. Nothing, however, justifies us in asserting that our subject has only this spiritual side, and that we shall only survive as thinking spiritual beings. It is much more likely that, as the normal consciousness is connected with the organs of the body, the supernormal consciousness will likewise have its organism. It is a fact that spiritual phantoms show themselves in bodily form, only these bodies are composed

of other materials than the body, which is formed from organic cells. On this account the term "Spiritism" is a wrong one, for of spirits pure and simple we have no knowledge.

Somnambulism and Spiritualism therefore complete one another. One proves the fact of a consciousness independent of the organic body, the other that of the organism of the supernormal consciousness. The subject contained in man is thus proved, or at least shown capable of proof.

This proof is made still stronger by the fact, known from the earliest days, of the appearance of the double. I cannot here enter into a discussion on this subject (the reader will find an article about it in the first number of the *Sphinx*). Lord Byron relates that while he lay in a high fever in Patras (Greece), he was seen by several persons in London, and the fact became the subject of a wager. As in this instance, it always happens in cases where the double is seen, that the bodily man is in a state of unconsciousness; and according to the degree of this, his spiritual individuality is transferred to his double, sometimes only partially and sometimes entirely. We remark this difference likewise in Spiritualistic phantoms, which sometimes come forward, as though walking in their sleep, and at others are animated as if by the most distinct consciousness. We might conclude from this circumstance that these phantoms are not exactly that which survives in man after death, but only a kind of double, in which the assumption of individuality is of different degrees, and often as incomplete as in the case of the earthly double. If, therefore, the putting on of individuality is a deficient one, the proof of the identity of the phantom with the dead person can only be incompletely established. It can, in any case, only be complete in the same degree that the putting on of identity is, and this seems never to be quite perfect either with the double or with materialisations. Lord Byron's question as to where his own Ego was at that time is not so easy to answer.

Therefore two functions must be acknowledged to belong to a soul which has the power to project its double in bodily form, and to partly transfer its consciousness to it; those, namely, of thought and organism. Let us consider our earthly birth in this light. It is a function of the organising soul, which thus forms its double in organic cells on the earth, through a partial transference of its spiritual individuality into the latter; the supernormal consciousness, evinced in somnambulism, proves the possibility of an increase of this transference. So we, during our wanderings on earth, are only a portion of our being, to which we must ascribe, if not form, at least the power of assuming form. When man dies, this power of form must survive; the man himself does not die any more than the watchmaker does when the watch he has made is destroyed. Why, then, may not this power of form be made available as often as the necessary conditions are present? Birth, therefore, is also a materialisation, only differing from the others by its longer continuance, by the employment of durable materials, and by an increased assumption of individuality. It is, indeed, the most remarkable instance of materialisation known, and to wonder so little at our own being, while looking upon a spiritual phantom as something quite incomprehensible, is anything but philosophic. The existence of one human being is much more wonderful than that of a dozen ghosts.

The double birth and materialisation are therefore three facts, which belong to the same category.

I do not assert that this solution of the riddle of humanity is absolutely the correct one. But I do say, firstly, that it is a logical and imaginable representation, not to be gainsaid, and, secondly, that each of its component parts has been discovered by means of experimental facts. That a being, with reference to his consciousness, may exhibit a dual nature, is proved by dreams, and still more in the state of somnambulism; that the same thing may take place as regards his bodily form—as a real thing, not an illusion, as in dreams—is shown by the phenomenon of the double. Therefore the solution here brought forward of the riddle of humanity, rests upon two facts of experience, both without the domain of Spiritualism. I cannot myself, consequently, feel at all astonished that we find in Spiritualism a third fact, that of materialisation, which leads to the same solution. That the soul, by means of its power of taking a form, even after death, though perhaps only a transitory one, and composed of other materials, should sometimes use this power, is quite natural, and much more easy to understand than the fact of our birth, which, however, the greater part of mankind do not seem to think a matter of wonder at all.

Now if we acknowledge this to be a Spiritualistic phantom, not perhaps precisely that of the dead person, but the double of himself, formed by him so as to be perceptible to the senses, the disappearance of this phantom does not justify the assumption of the death of the spirit. Just as little, however, does the dissolution of our body into its component parts lead to the assumption of the death of our individual being. When death takes place, only the one portion of the subject which had been outwardly transposed, is re-united to the other, just as, in waking out of a dream, the

psychical essence of the dream figures, in which we had laid aside our identity, is again absorbed by us.

Though it may be necessary for Spiritualism to be purified from its different errors or outgrowths, it yet succeeds indubitably in proving the immortality of mankind, with continuance of individual consciousness, by experimental means. And this is in truth enough. The essential dogma of all religions, in respect of which all dogmatic distinctions are of no import whatever, is proved by its means; and the doctrine of materialism, which, acting in a practical way, threatens to poison the whole life of the people, will thus be put down once and for ever.

From this point of our view Spiritualism must certainly be received as a most welcome guest. That in it which is to be condemned will disappear in the course of time, when our men of science succeed in attaining the knowledge of their task. These latter—through living more in the study than in the world—have hitherto distinguished themselves less by the discovery of new phenomena than by the scientific inquiry into, and explanation of them, when they have at last been recognised, by which means only they can become a real possession to mankind.

The Spiritualistic movement can indeed be forwarded by scientific guidance, and this is really much to be wished; but it can no longer be kept back either by the condemnation of the ignorant, who deny everything that they cannot understand, or by that of those learned men who, with their rationalistic scissors, shear away in every direction to avoid the trouble of explanations.

Theologians look upon it as a miracle that the Christian religion, promulgated by twelve fishermen, should, after three centuries, through Constantine, have taken possession of the Roman capital. If this was a miracle, surely it must be looked upon as one that Spiritualism, taking its rise among ignorant and uncultured people, and in its most essential points running parallel with Christianity, though certainly its means of communication are far more favourable, should in the space of little more than thirty years count millions among its adherents. Therefore, we may boldly prophesy that before the present century is at an end Spiritualism will occupy a place among the seats of learning at the universities.

### THE DISSEMINATION FUND.

[This fund is intended to provide a centre for the dissemination of Spiritual literature, and also to meet the ever increasing demand for information, guidance, and assistance on the part of earnest inquirers into Spiritualism. To carry on the work effectively during 1886, at least £150 are required. The Report and Balance-sheet for 1885 were published in "LIGHT" for February 6th.]

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J. de Tracy ... ..	5	0	0
Gordon Sandeman (unpaid subscription, 1885) ... ..	5	0	0
"V." ... ..	2	2	0
F. G. S. ... ..	2	2	0
A. A. Watts ... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. Speer ... ..	1	1	0
S. S. C. ... ..	1	1	0
J. L. B. ... ..	1	1	0
J. H. Gledstones ... ..	1	0	0
J. M. T. ... ..	1	0	0
A. K. and E. M. ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Lewis ... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Atwood ... ..	1	0	0
E. G. D. ... ..	0	10	6
E. J. B. ... ..	0	10	0
A. Friend ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Stone ... ..	0	10	0
E. S. W. ... ..	0	10	0
J. C. ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Maltby ... ..	0	10	0
Mrs. Parrick ... ..	0	10	0
R. Dugdale ... ..	0	7	6
M. W. ... ..	0	5	0
A. E. M. ... ..	0	5	0

Remittances may be sent to John S. Farmer, 16, Craven-street, Strand.

*The Spiritual Messenger* is the name of a new paper published at Chicago, Illinois.

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## RECORDS OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

(Continued from page 162.)

[In this column will be given from time to time such accounts of psychical phenomena as seem to be worthy of permanent record. Beyond the general classification indicated, no attempt at tabulation will at present be made; that work will follow in due course. In furtherance of this object we shall be pleased to receive from our readers brief reports of phenomena subject to two conditions: (1) That a colourless statement of facts without comment is given, and (2) that communications are accompanied by the names and addresses of those concerned, not necessarily for publication, though we should naturally prefer to be at liberty to publish them.

Friends having had experience of phenomena will be doing us a service if they will report them to us, giving—

- (1) The names and addresses of the persons concerned.
- (2) The circumstances under which the phenomena took place.
- (3) A brief account of the occurrence.

Letters should be addressed to the Editor of "LIGHT," 16, Craven-street, Charing Cross.]

## M.—BELL RINGING.

A friend thinks my few experiences in Spiritualistic phenomena may be of interest to some of the readers of "LIGHT." Therefore I am glad to send them. I must say at the commencement I did not belong to any Spiritualist society, and knew very little indeed of the subject; as, although interested that way, I seldom came upon anybody who believed in it.

The first mysterious occurrence happened to me three winters ago (1882). I was living in a furnished house alone with my two children and two servants. My husband was abroad, and expected home the following spring. I do not remember the month, but in the mid-winter I took a cold which terminated in a severe attack of acute rheumatism in the region of the lungs. This confined me to my bed, and I could not move at all without the greatest pain. Indeed, I think it would have been impossible to get up. Having had several sleepless nights, one Sunday afternoon fatigue either overcame the pain caused by breathing or it lessened slightly; I fell into a short doze. On awaking I felt the most severe thirst. I had no idea of the time, but wondered if it was near the usual afternoon tea hour. About twenty minutes passed, and my thirst grew intense. I suddenly thought: "Oh, if I could only get up and cross the room to ring the bell, what would I not give?" Suddenly, a bell rang violently. The cook and my little boy ran up to my room breathless, she exclaiming:

Oh, missis, however could you manage to ring the bell. Oh, how sorry I am I did not bring you the tea before; I came once and you were sleeping." I told her I wanted the tea badly, but had not got up to ring the bell; indeed I could not do that. She said that the bell had rung loudly. I told her it must be one of the outside doors. She was sure not, but went to see, and no one was there. Of course nothing was thought of this. During the evening, I was alone, and happening to turn my eyes to the fire, saw it was nearly out. I thought anxiously: "If only some one would come and put coal on." Suddenly the bell pealed, and the housemaid ran up, also surprised and alarmed, saying I should not have got up. I assured her I had not, and she must go to the outside doors. She assured me she saw the bell ring, and it was my room bell. For several days the bell rang whenever I wanted attendance, and I ceased saying I had not rung it, not knowing how to account for it. A week later I came down to the drawing-room for the first time, and my brother-in-law and his wife came to spend the evening. They were each seated opposite the fire-side, and I sat in front, feeling very weak and languid. As they were chatting I noticed the fire had got low, and feeling alarmed that I might get worse if I got chilly, I had a half-formed wish that one of them would ring for coal, but being weakly I had not the energy to express it for a minute, when the bell suddenly rang. Upon the maid's arrival and inquiry, my brother-in-law said: "No one rang here; it must be the front door." She said, "Oh, no, sir, it's not." He ordered her to go and see. She came back saying, "No one rung the bell as usual, sir." He began arguing, and feeling quite in a difficulty, I told her to be quick and bring up the coal. The following afternoon was again Sunday. I was in the drawing-room, and after a doze, just as I was awaking, my bell pealed. Cook was in, and ran up. I made no remark, but ordered my tea. The girl had not been gone down five minutes ere she rushed up looking

very much scared. She said: "Oh, ma'am, come down this minute. There has been such a crash; I'm sure every pot in the cupboard is smashed." I managed to get downstairs, thinking perhaps a shelf of pots had fallen. To our surprise we looked everywhere, and nothing was altered in position or broken. The girl looked at me and said, "Something queer seems to have got hold of this house. I know, ma'am, that when your bell rings it's not you; it's not a bit your way of ringing, it's too loud. Jane and me is getting quite scared; we daren't stay if it goes on."

I said nothing, but went upstairs, feeling very perplexed, and somewhat alarmed, as in my lonely position I did not wish my servants to leave. I returned to my easy chair and began to think it over. I felt convinced some supernatural agency must be at work, and in my mind most earnestly wished it would not happen. My wish was granted while in that house, and as soon as my husband returned we left it.

A. L. PROCTER.

## ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

## SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON, THE PROVINCES, AND ABROAD.

LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, Regent Hotel, 31, Marylebone-road.—On Sunday, April 11th, at 7 p.m., Mr. J. S. Swatridge will lecture on "Man's Spiritual Possibilities."—F. W. READ, Secretary.

ST. GEORGE'S HALL.—Last Sunday afternoon, Mr. Gerald Massey delivered the second of a course of ten Sunday afternoon lectures on "Spiritualism," at St. George's Hall, Langham-place. The hall was well filled with a high-class audience. The subject of this lecture was "The Natural Origin of Spirits, Elemental, Celestial, and Human." At the outset Mr. Massey stated that he had the previous evening received a letter from a doctor stating that the subject of the lectures was so important that he thought after each address twenty or thirty minutes should be allowed for discussion or questions. He could only say that as he was there to propound his views and defend them if possible, he should be very glad to answer questions, but, unfortunately, he only had possession of the hall until five o'clock, and as his lecture would last until that time, he was unable to accede to the request. He should, however, be glad to answer any questions sent to him in writing. The lecturer then proceeded to comment upon the early history of the world and the miracles recorded in the Bible, and dealt exhaustively with numerous historical facts to show that there had been a belief in spirits for centuries, although at the same time his researches showed that nothing began ready made, not even the spirits. There was a clear distinction between the Spiritualism of to-day and the miracles of the past, because they were now dealing with what they knew to be facts. There were some persons who claimed all these matters as identical with the spirits of to-day. Such was not the case, Spiritualists must leave the mythological alone. The only good for them was what they knew to be facts, and they were facts which seemed incredible enough to the great bulk of persons.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS, Victoria Buildings.—Last Sunday Mr. H. E. Schneiderreit spoke on "The Mystery of Life, and on the Simplicity of Regaining Health"; the subject being well treated. His controls gave the usual examinations to the satisfaction of a good audience.—*Cor.*

PENZANCE.—The following account of the origin of this society will be of interest to many, and will, we think, encourage not a few to patient investigation. Mr. R. Quance, the secretary, writes: "We were only two in number when we commenced the investigation of Spiritualism in this town. We used to sit three evenings a week for two hours each evening. We sat thus at a small round table for twelve months without gaining a single tilt, but we stuck to it and persevered, and after sitting for another month or so we had slight motions of the table, and later on we received messages by that means. We thus far reaped reward for patience after a good deal of opposition and sneers from those who did not think as we did. We gradually gained a few upon our side. Our diligence in this matter becoming known, it was thought that there must be something in a subject that would keep two people together for twelve months, two hours at a time, and three times a week, at a small round table, getting nothing. Then again, the messages we ultimately received puzzled them, and so induced some to join and try for themselves. The consequence is that some of these seekers are themselves mediums. We are at present thirteen in number, but we are gaining ground fast. We opened a new room recently and decorated it. We get raps and table movements, but we do not sit at the table; we are at least two feet away from it, and in a good light can see the table sway to and fro, and hear raps all round the room. Answers are given by this means to the questions we put. We also get trance-speaking through one of our mediums, Mr. Hussen, and clairvoyant descriptions are given by Mrs. Hussen and Mrs. Reed.

ROCHDALE.—*Obituary.*—On Sunday morning, March 28th, Mr. Richard Walsh, the builder of the Public Hall, Blackburn, in which the Spiritualists hold their meetings, passed away after a long and painful illness. Mr. Walsh's death was announced at the afternoon and evening service, and the congregation were invited to attend the funeral on Thursday, April 1st, and walk in processional order to the grave. About 150 of the members and friends availed themselves of the opportunity. The streets all along the line of route to the cemetery were lined with people, and at the cemetery hundreds were assembled to witness the proceedings. The cemetery officials kept the mortuary chapel closed until the funeral arrived, when none were admitted until

all who had taken part in the procession had taken their places, after which the public were admitted until the chapel was crowded. The services commenced by Mr. Wolstenholme, the president of the Psychological Society, giving out the hymn, "Death is the fading of a cloud." At its conclusion he read a few verses of Scripture, and delivered a short address on the immortality of the soul, after which Mrs. Butterfield offered up prayer. The corpse was then carried to the grave by Messrs. James Pemberton, Samuel Slater, John Higham, and William Graham. The coffin was literally covered with flowers and wreaths. At the grave Mr. Wolstenholme read the following service:—"We this day consign to the earth the body of our departed friend; for him life's fitful dream is over, with its toils, and sufferings, and disappointments. He derived his being from the bountiful mother of all; he has returned to her capacious bosom, to again mingle with the elements. He basked in life's sunshine for his allotted time, and has passed into the shadow of death, where sorrow and pain are unknown. Nobly he performed life's duties on the stage of earth; but the mystic veil has fallen, and the physical body we shall see no more for ever. But he leaves to his sorrowing relatives and friends a legacy in the remembrance of his virtues, his services, his honour, and his truth. He fought the good fight of Free Inquiry and triumphed over prejudice and misrepresentation. His voyage through life was not always on tranquil seas, but his strong judgment steered him clear of the rocks and quicksands of ignorance, and for years he rested placidly in the haven of self-knowledge. He had long been free from the fears of, and misgivings of, superstitious belief. He worked out for himself the problem of life, and no man was the keeper of his conscience. His religion was to do good, the service of humanity his highest aspiration. He recognised no authority but his own reason, adopted no methods but those of science and philosophy, and respected no rule but that of conscience. He valued the lessons of the past, but disowned tradition as a ground of belief, whether miracles and supernaturalism be claimed or not claimed on its side. No sacred scriptures or ancient church formed the basis of his faith, but by his example he vindicated the right to think and to act upon conscientious conviction. By a career so noble, who shall say his domestic affections were impaired, or that his love for those near and dear to him was weakened? On the contrary, his independent method of thought tended to develop those sentiments which have their rise in the love of human nature, which impel and ennoble all morality, which are grounded upon personal conviction, and which manifest themselves in worthy and heroic actions, especially in the promotion of truth, justice, and love. For worship of the unknown he substituted the known; for prayer, work; and the record of his life bears testimony to the goodness of his heart, and the bereaved ones know but too well the value of the one they have lost. If perfect reliance upon any particular belief in the hour of death is proof of its truth, then in the death of our friend the principles of Spiritualism are triumphantly established. His belief sustained him in health and during his illness; with the certainty of death before him at no distant period, it afforded him consolation and encouragement; and in the last solemn moments of his life, when he was gazing as it were into his own grave, it procured for him the most perfect tranquillity of mind. There were no misgivings, no doubts, no tremblings lest he should have missed the right path, but he went undaunted into the land of the great departed, unto his inheritance. It may be truly said of him that nothing in life became him so much as the manner of his leaving it. Death has no terror to the enlightened; it may bring regrets at the thought of leaving those behind we hold dearest, but the consciousness of a well-spent life is all sufficient in the last hour of humanity. Death is but a shadow, and there is nothing in it that should blanch the cheek, or inspire us with fear. In its presence, pain and care give place to rest and peace. The sorrow-laden and the forlorn, the unfortunate and despairing find repose in the tomb. All the woes and ills of life are swallowed up in death. Now that our friend has been removed, death, like a mirror, shows us his true reflex. We see his character, undisturbed by the passions, and the prejudices, and the infirmities of life. Death is so genuine a fact that it excludes falsehood, it is a touchstone that proves the gold, and dishonours the baser metal. Through the portals of death, our friend has entered upon that eternal state of progression, which is the happy heritage of all. While we stand around his open grave, and in the presence of death's latest victim, let us strive to emulate the good deeds of our friend, and to resolve so to shape our course through life that when our last hour comes we say, though our temptations were great, though our education was defective, though our trials and privations were sore,

we never wilfully did a bad action, never deliberately injured another man. The reward of a useful and virtuous life is the conviction that our memory will be cherished by those who come after us as we revere the memory of the great and good who have gone before. As we drop the tear of sympathy at the grave now about to close over his form, may the earth lie lightly on him, may the flowers bloom over his head, and may the winds sigh softly as they herald the coming night. Peace, peace, and respect be with his memory." At the conclusion of this address Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" was sung, after which Mrs. Butterfield, of Blackpool, delivered an address, concluding with an invocation, when the procession reformed and walked back to the Hall, when about 200 sat down to tea. Suitable addresses were subsequently delivered, and a vote of condolence with the family was passed, after which Mrs. Butterfield delivered an impressive address, in which she urged the living of such pure lives that whenever death came upon us we should be prepared to meet it.

RUSSIA.—*Mr. Eglinton's Visit.*—A correspondent writes:—Your readers will be glad to learn that Mr. Eglinton, the celebrated English medium, reached our city of Moscow on the 27th ult., after a long journey of five days' duration. A deputation from the Spiritualist Society here met him at the railway station, and gave him a cordial welcome. We were extremely sorry that his recent illness prevented his setting out earlier, as our winter is now over, which is by far the pleasantest time to visit Moscow, but we are doing our best to make his stay amongst us agreeable and interesting. There is much demand for inquiry on all sides, and to guard Mr. Eglinton against the intrusion of curious or objectionable persons, the Society here, which numbers many persons, has arranged that séances should be given to those only who are introduced and guaranteed by it. Mr. Eglinton has already given several séances to high personages, with marked success, and without repeating in detail the results obtained, I may mention that we have already been favoured with the direct writing in the English and Russian languages on our own slates, with our table and pencils, and in our own rooms; the movements of objects, the touching of people by hands, &c., &c., giving great satisfaction to all, and causing much enthusiasm. Mr. Eglinton is the honoured guest of Colonel and Mrs. Greck, both of whom are well-known to English Spiritualists, the former from a residence of many years in London, and the latter as Mrs. Olive. The friends of this lady will be glad to know she still retains her mediumship unimpaired, and is frequently successful in allaying the diseases of those of her friends who are favoured with a séance. In the home of these good Spiritualists Mr. Eglinton is well cared for. And our English brethren may rest quite satisfied that during his sojourn amongst us he will be as carefully guarded and appreciated as in England. Owing to stringent laws here, there is no public demonstration made in favour of Spiritualism, but our organ the *Rebus* usually gives the necessary information and news each week in its columns, and I believe a verbatim account of all the séances with Mr. Eglinton will appear in this journal in due course. His visit, which he has so kindly conceded to us at great personal inconvenience to himself, cannot fail to give an impetus to the movement throughout Russia, in which country some of the foremost scientists of the day are engaged upon an investigation of the phenomena. Should occasion demand it, I will give to your readers the benefit of any remarkable results which may be obtained at future séances, with any additional information as to the progress of the movement, but I regret to say "LIGHT" is not generally seen here, owing to its failing to pass the censors, before whom all journals and books have to come prior to entering the country.

#### THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM.

The following are a few books which will prove of service to the inquirer. They can be obtained by members from the Library of the London Spiritualist Alliance, or they may be purchased of the Psychological Press (see advt. pages), 16, Craven-street, Strand, W.C. :—*Animal Magnetism (Wm. Gregory)*; *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism (A. R. Wallace)*; *Researches in Spiritualism (W. Crookes)*; *From Matter to Spirit (De Morgan)*; *The Debateable Land (Dale Owen)*; *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World (Dale Owen)*; *Planchette (Epes Sargent)*; *Proof Palpable of Immortality; The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism (Epes Sargent)*; *Report of the Dialectical Society; Zillner's Transcendental Physics (Translated by C. C. Massey, 2nd Ed.)*; *Psychography ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Spirit Identity ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Judge Edmonds' Letters and Tracts; Primitive Christianity and Spiritualism (Crowell)*; *New Basis of Belief in Immortality (Farmer)*; *Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism (M.P.)*; *Theosophy and the Higher Life (Dr. G. Wyld)*; *Mechanism of Man, 2 vols. (Mr. Sergeant Cox)*; *Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism (N. Wolfe)*; *Arcana of Spiritualism (Tuttle)*; *Spirit Teachings ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *The Use of Spiritualism (S. C. Hall)*; *Spiritualism at Home (Morell Theobald)*; *Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation (Howitt Watts).*

These are but a few volumes of a very extensive literature. Not counting pamphlets and tracts, upwards of 2,000 volumes on the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism have been published since its advent. It is therefore manifestly impossible to do more than allude to the fact here.

The next instalment of M. Aksakow's reply to Dr. von Hartmann, translated from *Psychische Studien*, has been received and will appear in our next issue.

## THE EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH SECTION OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE

Has been established with the object primarily of—

Promoting systematic research by experts, including (a) the encouragement of exact methods of inquiry; (b) the accurate recording of observed facts; (c) the regulation of admission to and the graduation of circles, so as to afford a complete and progressive course of investigation and instruction; (d) the more careful treatment of mediums, and (e) the publication in the Spiritualist Press of carefully tabulated results.

And secondarily of—

Assisting inquiry into Spiritualism either by (a) directing inquirers, where necessary, in a preliminary course of reading; (b) advising in the formation of private family circles; or (c) where practicable furnishing introductions to already organised circles.

Members of the London Spiritualist Alliance are eligible for election to the Experimental Research Section. The minimum subscription to this section is £1 ls. per annum, payable in January for the current year, but it is hoped that persons interested in the extension of research will contribute to a special fund for that purpose.

The members of the Research Section are divided into four grades, viz. :—

1. CIRCLES OF EXPERTS,
2. ELEMENTARY CIRCLES OF INVESTIGATORS,
3. INQUIRERS,

all under the direction of

4. A CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CONTROL.

Circles of Experts will study, at their own discretion and opportunity, special groups of phenomena. They will especially direct attention to the means of securing the best conditions of observation. Their experiments will be such as could not safely be made in a less harmonious circle, or by less experienced persons. They will so experiment as to throw light on perplexing problems, and generally to add to our now scanty store of knowledge as to the methods employed by the invisible operators, the results of whose action we are all more or less acquainted with, but of whose methods of operation we know almost nothing.

Inquirers into Spiritualism, upon becoming members of the Research Section, will, if desired, be introduced to some Expert who will give the necessary advice and guidance; will direct their reading, if required; will give help in difficulty, and generally act as Mentor and sponsor to them, until, in due time, they become fit to take their place in an elementary Circle of Investigators. As circumstances allow, inquirers will be drafted into such a circle, or if it be preferred they will be advised and directed in the formation of a private circle.

#### GENERAL RULES.

All groups of circles of whatever degree are subject absolutely to the direction and governance of a Central Committee of Control. The names of all who desire to take part in these circles will be submitted to that Committee, and the election will be by ballot. Great care will be exercised in the selection of suitable persons, and their arrangement in circles so composed as to secure the utmost possible harmony. These circles will meet, each at its own convenience, in private houses for the most part, and their proceedings will be strictly private. They will be conducted by an Expert Director chosen by the members and approved by the Central Committee of Control. Accurate minutes of all proceedings will be kept by a Recorder; and these minutes, verified at the opening of each meeting, will be submitted at stated intervals to the Committee of Control, who alone will decide as to their publication. No publication will be permissible without the sanction of the Committee; and from its decision there will be no appeal. Each member of the various circles will pledge himself to keep all proceedings strictly private until authority is given for publication. The names of the persons who constitute a particular circle need be known only to themselves and to the Committee of Control.

#### PLEDGES REQUIRED.

Those who wish to take part in this work will be invited to pledge themselves

1. To an ungrudging assistance, within reasonable bounds, to any fellow member who may be assigned to them for guidance.
2. To sink absolutely any private or personal feelings that may in any way be thought likely to interfere with the perfect harmony that must characterise an inquiry of this nature if success is to be attained; or that may be at variance with the spirit in which alone this investigation can be profitably undertaken.
3. To obey, and submit to the reasonable control, of the Central Committee of Control, which is charged with the administration of this plan, and to preserve a faithful reticence as to any results obtained in any circle, until the records are published by order of that Committee.

No expression of opinion as to theories which may be held to account for observed facts, or acceptance of any special form of belief, is sought from any member. The Central Committee of Control, however, regards psychological facts from a Spiritualist point of view, though it is by no means bound down to any special theory, and may, indeed, receive and canvass any that may be proposed; and the Spiritualist Alliance, as its name implies, is, as a body, professedly Spiritualistic.

#### CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CONTROL.

The constitution of this body, together with other details explanatory of the general scheme of work, will be found in the pamphlet entitled, "Spiritualism at Home and Abroad." Persons wishing to join the Experimental Research Section are requested, if already members of the London Spiritualist Alliance, to apply to the President, 16, Craven-street, Charing Cross, S.W., who will enter into further communication with them on the subject. If not members of the Alliance, application for such membership should first be made to the Hon. Sec. at the same address. On election, the new member of the Alliance will be eligible for admission, if approved by the Central Committee of Control, to the Experimental Research Section.

## WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have never examined them, but profound study alone can explain them. We do not know where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of these, as it seems trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature's kingdom they may open the way; but that they will bring forward important results is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonblad* (Stockholm), October 30th, 1879.

BARON CARL DU PREL (Munich) in *Nord und Sud*.—“One thing is clear; that is, that psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. We shall find: (1) That the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside for the tiny morsel of slate pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate or lead pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are therefore, although invisible, of human nature, or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. (10) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (11) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (12) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. . . . Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.”

J. H. FICHTE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR.—“Notwithstanding my age (83) and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent.”

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—“I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me.”

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS.—“I have for many years known that these phenomena are real, as distinguished from impostures; and it is not of yesterday that I concluded they were calculated to explain much that has been doubtful in the past; and, when fully accepted, revolutionise the whole frame of human opinion on many important matters.”—*Extract from a Letter to A. Russel Wallace*.

PROFESSOR HARE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—“Far from abating my confidence in the inferences respecting the agencies of the spirits of deceased mortals, in the manifestations of which I have given an account in my work, I have, within the last nine months” (this was written in 1858), “had more striking evidences of that agency than those given in the work in question.”

PROFESSOR CHALLIS, THE LATE PLUMERIAN PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY AT CAMBRIDGE.—“I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. . . . In short, the testimony has been so abundant and contemporaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”—*Clerical Journal*, June, 1862.

PROFESSOR GREGORY, F.R.S.E.—“The essential question is this, What are the proofs of the agency of departed spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honourable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory.”

LORD BROUGHAM.—“There is but one question I would ask the author, Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism.”—*Preface by Lord Brougham to "The Book of Nature."* By C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S.

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL COMMITTEE reported: “1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals, answer questions and spell out coherent communications.”

PROFESSOR BARRETT, F.R.S.E.—“I know and rejoice in the blessing Spiritualism has been to my own faith, and to that of several dear friends of mine. Moreover, I cordially recognise the fact that in bereavement and deep distress numbers have been cheered and consoled by the hope that Spiritualism has set before them. . . . Nevertheless, loyalty to truth compels me to acknowledge the evil and the good that have come under my own observation. . . . So far from Materialism being true, I do not believe a single person has ever yet lived on this earth who has truly and heartily desired to know if an intelligent and personal existence be possible without our present bodily organism, and has steadily set himself to solve this supreme question with

all the help he can gain from every source,—I say I do not believe any such earnest seeker after truth has ever failed to obtain a clear and definite answer in the affirmative.”

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, THE FRENCH ASTRONOMER, AND MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.—“I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated ‘magnetic,’ ‘somnambule,’ ‘mediumic,’ and others not yet explained by science to be ‘impossible,’ is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biased by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.”

CROMWELL F. VARLEY, F.R.S.—“Twenty-five years ago I was a hard-headed unbeliever. . . . Spiritual phenomena, however, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, were soon after developed in my own family. . . . This led me to inquire and to try numerous experiments in such a way as to preclude, as much as circumstances would permit, the possibility of trickery and self-deception. . . . He then details various phases of the phenomena which had come within the range of his personal experience, and continues: “Other and numerous phenomena have occurred, proving the existence (a) of forces unknown to science; (b) the power of instantly reading my thoughts; (c) the presence of some intelligence or intelligences controlling those powers. . . . That the phenomena occur there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, F.G.S.—“My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences, and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts. When the opponents of Spiritualism can give a record of their researches approaching in duration and completeness to those of its advocates; and when they can discover and show in detail, either how the phenomena are produced or how the many sane and able men here referred to have been deluded into a coincident belief that they have witnessed them; and when they can prove the correctness of their theory by producing a like belief in a body of equally sane and able unbelievers—then, and not till then, will it be necessary for Spiritualists to produce fresh confirmation of facts which are, and always have been, sufficiently real and indisputable to satisfy any honest and persevering inquirer.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as, for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of any legerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience, of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR.—“No one can doubt that phenomena like these (Phrenology, Homoeopathy, and Mesmerism) deserve to be observed, recorded, and arranged; and whether we call by the name of mesmerism, or by any other name, the science which proposes to do this, is a mere question of nomenclature. Among those who profess this science there may be careless observers, prejudiced recorders, and rash systematisers; their errors and defects may impede the progress of knowledge, but they will not stop it. And we have no doubt that, before the end of this century, the wonders which perplex almost equally those who accept and those who reject modern mesmerism will be distributed into defined classes, and found subject to ascertained laws—in other words, will become the subjects of a science.” These views will prepare us for the following statement, made in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336: “We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long inquiry and experience a firm believer in spiritual power and manifestations. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home's recent work by Messrs. Longmans, and he authorised the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given, which happened to a near and dear member of his family.”

## CONJURERS AND 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. We give the testimony of one of them:—

Harry Kellar, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, 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.”