

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOTH 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.)"

LORD TENNYSON AS PROPHET AND TEACHER.

I.

When I had perused the two volumes * which Lord Tennyson has most recently given to the world, I seemed to have been listening to the voice of some old Hebrew seer, on whom had been laid the burden of the Lord to the age in which he lived. The Rev. J. Page Hopps † brings out in his notice of these poems very much the same idea. It is, indeed, apparent on the surface; and the very fibre of such poems as "Despair," "The Flight," "The Wreck," and "The Ancient Sage," is penetrated with a burning desire to lift up a voice of protest and warning against the rampant vices of the age—its "bare materialism, its dull agnosticism, its blank atheism"—and, I venture to add, its paltering with the most solemn obligations of the marriage vow, which lie at the root of the very fabric of society. In two of these remarkable poems—"The Wreck" and "The Flight"—we have marriage *à la mode* unsparingly handled. In two others—which, however, I cannot treat of here—"Rizpah" and "The Children's Hospital"—maternal love and tenderness to helpless childhood form the subjects. In yet two others—"Despair" and "The Ancient Sage"—we find our author dealing his heaviest blows against the agnostic, irreligious, and infidel spirit of the day. It is beyond my space to make any adequate attempt to give a true idea of these passionate word-pictures, now full of tenderest pathos, now lashing with unsparing denunciation some abuse that has fired the poet's soul, now painting, as only a master can, the grim despair of one who has lost hope and given himself up to savage fury, kicking in sullen desperation against the pricks. To quote at large is impossible: to give any summary that can convey an adequate notion of the original is hopeless. Yet since the poet, who is also Spiritualist in his faith, deals with vital questions of the age, since we too are concerned to deal with them from our own point of view as Spiritualists—for surely the time has come when we must apply what we are taught to the solution of such problems as these—it may be pardoned me if I briefly indicate and quote now and then some lines that may stick in the memory, and come up when their words may help.

* "Ballads, and other Poems" (1880); "Tiresias, and other Poems" (1885).

† *Truthseeker*, February, 1886.

The Flight.

Two sisters: one pours into the other's ear a heart-broken lament on the morning of her approaching marriage to a man she loathes, and to whom her father has sold her.

"The morn appears

When he will tear me from your side, who bought me for his slave.

Our father pays his debts with me, and weds me to my grave:

No father now; the tyrant vassal of a tyrant vice,
The godless Jephtha vows his child to one cast of the dice."

She has her lover to whom her heart is given: but the father has sold her to some broken-down roud whose money will relieve him from dishonour, purchasing his relief by that greater dishonour which society winks at if it does not sanction.

"Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*? I swear, and swear forsworn

To love him most whom most I loathe, to honour whom I scorn?
The Fiend would yell, the grave would yawn, my mother's ghost would rise:—

To lie, to lie, in God's own house—the blackest of all lies.

Why rather than that hand in mine, tho' every pulse would freeze,

I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of some foul disease.

Wed him? I will not wed him; let them spurn me from the doors,

And I will wander till I die about the barren moors."

And so she goes forth into the wilderness that this world must be to one such as she, rather than be party to the unholy bargain made in her name. Who that knows the open, undisguised buying and selling that disgraces modern fashionable society under the name of "arranging a marriage," will deny that this is a timely protest against a terrible wrong?

The Wreck.

A daughter who has sinned has returned to sit at her mother's feet, to confess her wrong-doing, and to find from that true friend the mercy denied her elsewhere. It is the story of a loveless match. He, "dark-visaged, stately, and tall, a princelier man never stept through a prince's hall," but with no sympathy for the tastes and yearnings of his "heedless and innocent bride." "He would open the books that I prized and toss them away with a yawn," absorbed absolutely in money-getting,—

"All day long far off in the cloud of the city, and there

Lost, head and heart, in the chances of dividend, consol, and share.

And at home if I sought for a kindly caress, being woman and weak,

His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow on the cheek."

And so, the sympathies driven in upon themselves, found vent by illicit channels.

"I came on him once at a ball, the heart of a listening crowd,
Why what a brow was there! he was seated, speaking aloud
To women, the flower of the time, and men at the helm of State,

Flowing with easy greatness, and touching on all things great.

* * * * *

And the sun of the soul made day in the dark of his wonderful eyes;

Here was the hand that would help me, would heal me—the heart that was wise."

The story that follows is redeemed from repulsiveness and common-place vulgarity by the poet's masterly art: by the conviction that he raises in the mind that he is depicting a drama of life—of a life wrecked, before sin and shame overtook it, by the hollow contract that law and conventionality had sanctioned. They fly to his home in the tropics, he "clothing a naked mind with the wisdom and wealth of his own": she "bowing herself down as a slave to his intellectual throne," a worshipper of his intellectual supremacy alone: for "all but a dwarf was he, and all but a hunchback too." And as the days bore them on, a simple scene awoke the voice of conscience, or perhaps the guardian spoke of the child she had left behind her.

"Mother, one morning a bird, with a warble plaintively sweet,
Perched on the shrouds, and then fell fluttering down at my feet;
I took it; we made it a cage: we fondled it, Stephen and I;
But it died, and I thought of my child for a moment, I scarce know why.
But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many will say,
My sin to my desolate little one found me at sea, on a day
When her orphan wail came borne in the shriek of a growing wind,
And a voice rang out in the thunders of Ocean and Heaven:
'Thou hast sinned.'"

The storm grew wilder, the vessel was wrecked, he was swept into the ocean, and she was rescued, a lonely survivor, by a passing ship. Her heart touched, and her sin clear before her, she wrote to the nurse

"Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart: and an answer came,
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife—to her maiden name!
I shook as I opened the letter—I knew that hand too well—
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the 'deaths' in a paper fell.
Ten long sweet summer days of fever, and want of care!
And gone—that day of the storm! O mother! she came to me there."

Painful? Yes; and most pathetic. But even the poet's art cannot make us forget that such sin is linked with shame, any more than the mercenary bargainings of society which breed such plagues, or the vicious laxity which winks at the loosening of bonds that ought never to have been forged, can wholly ignore the danger to the moral fabric of civilisation that springs from the sources which are here laid bare. It is painful. But it is when faith is feeble, the moral sense blunted, and the soul enwrapped in voluptuous ease, that such plague-germs flourish and abound. These are the festering sores that invade the enfeebled body of a nation in its decadence, demoralised by luxury, paralysed by enervating doubt, without vigour, without an active moral sense. In a healthy state of simplicity, when the old sanctions on the marriage state are revered, and when its obligations are binding by virtue of the only tie that can in honesty impose them, it is not necessary to draw warning pictures such as this. It is when civilisation in a people wanes to its decadence; when the vices and iniquities that surely mark a nation's approaching fall become rife and shameless, sanctioned or ignored because accustomed and notorious; it is then that such a sign of the times needs open rebuke. For if these things be, and men and women smile at them or pass them by, what room can there be for spirituality of life, for any thought of aspiration or of progress such as our Spiritualism—if it be not a hollow sham, a variant of more familiar materialism—should implant and nurture?

There is a striking poem in "Aurora" (Mr. and Mrs. Alaric Watts's volume), which is germane to my subject. It is entitled "Mismatched," and is from the pen of Mrs. Watts. In a dream, the poet is borne in a chariot on towards a city "whose gates sin-burdened man can ne'er attain." She rejoices as about to "enter now beneath

Love's canopy," when suddenly the heavenly vision faded, and she seemed to "stand before drear gates and frowning sky."

"Before a gate of Hell it seemed we stood,
Stern portals grim, begirt with gloomy towers,
Lofty and windowless, and red as blood:
Black clouds above, weeping incessant showers."

The chariot rolled on, the gates opened of their own accord, and she passed into this City of Desolation.

"Desolate multitudes around us lay,
In penury of body, heart, and mind;
Ill-mated souls, whom Ignorance doth slay,
Whilst he, in name of God, their hands doth bind.

Ah me! then blank, dull, hopeless eyes aghast,
All turned upon us. Then their hands upraised,
As with black, waving garments on we passed
Amidst those doleful wretches, anguish-crazed.

Chained close together, men and women lean,
Crowded in masses, filled with rancorous rage,
As they had penned-up soulless cattle been,
No space for growth:—and this was marriage!

'O Pity—Love—O Liberty!' from afar
They cried, stretching forth their yellow hands:
Snatching at our black garments, whilst the car
Paused suddenly amidst these loathly bands.

Shuddering, I turned to fly, when spake my friend,
'Wilt thou not labour with dear Christ and me,
To bring these prisoners' bondage to an end,
Bringing to them from God, Love's master-key?'

It is the perversion of love, the substituting for its all-prevalent and essential sanctions motives of a lower order and impulses of a baser sort; it is to this that we owe in respect of the holiest compact what Tennyson laments; as it is to the decay of faith, to the corroding presence of an intrusive doubt, which respects nothing however holy, venerable, or inherently true, that we owe the paralysis of belief which he next exposes.

In this age of scepticism, Spiritualism alone can give satisfactory evidence of the continuity of life and the communion of spirits; to it the desolate mourner turns for the consolation he can receive from no other source, to him the revelations of physical science sink into insignificance before the demonstrable fact of the soul's immortality. A word from one who has passed from earth is of more value than all else. To accept of the truth of Spiritualism one is not compelled to renounce all once held sacred, and denounce all who believe in God and religion; on the contrary Spiritualism inspires a deeper reverence for the spiritual power underlying all material phenomena, a wish to conserve the best elements of all religions, and bring out of old texts their long buried spiritual significance.

MATERIALIZATION AND "EXPOSURES."—The greatest drawback to the investigation of the materialisation phenomena is no doubt the fact of the alleged exposures of mediums. These exposures consist, generally, of the seizure, by what is known in séance parlance as "spirit-grabbers," of a so-called spirit form and finding in their grasp the medium instead. To the enemies of Spiritualism, as well as most Spiritualists, such an "exposure" is claimed as proof positive of fraud. And yet, those who have given the subject the most careful study, claim that it is no evidence of deception. And they give as a reason that the spirit form, having been evolved from the body of the medium, must necessarily go back to the medium; that when rudely seized the sudden shock prevents the natural re-adjustment of spirit, or rather, we should say, of the subtle material forces, of which the psychic form is composed; and that at such times the controlling powers find it necessary, in order to avoid serious injury to the medium, to bring the two forms instantly together. If this is a truth, and can be satisfactorily demonstrated, it would revolutionise thought in the matter of fraudulent manifestations—at least as regards the grabbing phase of these alleged exposures. But we should need to see it in a light and under conditions to render deception absolutely impossible, before we could consent to any such proposition. In fact we are in no hurry to jump at conclusions until we know exactly where we are going to land.—*The Golden Gate.*

M. AKSAKOW'S REPLY TO DR. VON HARTMANN.

TRANSLATED FROM "PSYCHISCHE STUDIEN."

(Continued from p. 183.)

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ANTI-SPIRITIST THEORIES.

There has recently appeared a very interesting work under the title:—*Adolphe D'Assier: Essai sur l'humanité posthume et le spiritisme, par un positiviste.* (Paris, 1883.) 305 pp. 12mo. Its chief interest consists in this, that the author has been compelled by his own experience to recognise the objective reality of certain phenomena usually called "supernatural," of which Von Hartmann makes no mention in his book, "Der Spiritismus," although these phenomena thrust themselves directly upon us through the mode of their appearance, and are of prime value for the advancement of a general hypothesis. In his preface the author tells us how it all occurred to him, and gives us at the same time a survey of the whole. Let us hear him:—

"The title of this essay may perhaps seem to some in disaccord with the philosophical opinions which I have all my life professed, and with the great school to which the study of the sciences had led me, before I had heard the word of the master (Comte). As such may be assured, the contradiction is only apparent. . . . The ideas which I expound are as remote from the reveries of mysticism as from the hallucinations of the Spiritists. Not overstepping the province of facts, invoking no supernatural cause for their interpretation, I believe myself to have impressed upon my book the stamp of Positivism. See, moreover, how I have been led to researches so different from my ordinary pursuits." Having mentioned the history of aerolites, so long denied by science, and the public declaration of Lavoisier in the name of the Academy of Sciences: "There are no stones in the sky; none, therefore, fall upon the earth," and the accounts of the descent of frogs after heavy rainfalls, whereon the learned again replied: "There are no frogs in the clouds, none, therefore, can fall on the earth," the author continues:—"It might be supposed that such lessons would not be lost, and that persons calling themselves serious would show in future more circumspection in their systematic denials.

"No such thing.* The false notions for which our prejudices, or an imperfect scientific education, are responsible, impress upon our brain a sort of *personal equation* from which we cannot disengage ourselves.

"For thirty years I had laughed at the reply of Lavoisier without perceiving that I invoked just the same argument myself in regard to certain phenomena not less extraordinary than the rain of stones or frogs. I allude to the strange sounds sometimes heard in certain habitations, and which cannot be referred to any physical cause, at least in the common-sense of that term. The strangeness of the phenomena is doubled by a circumstance worthy of remark. It is that these noises usually occur only after the death of a resident. As a child I once saw the inhabitants of a whole canton in excitement. The Abbé Peyton, curate of the parish of Sentenac (Ariège), had just died. The following days unusual noises were heard in the parsonage, so persistently that the vicar who succeeded him was on the point of quitting his post. The country people, ignorant and superstitious, had no difficulty in explaining this prodigy. They declared that the soul of the deceased was in suffering because he had not had time before his death to say all the masses for which he had been paid. For my part, I was by no means convinced. Brought up in the Christian dogma, I said to myself that the Abbé Peyton had finally quitted the planet for one of the three posthumous residences—Heaven, hell, purgatory; and I supposed the doors of these three places to be too firmly fastened for him to have the notion of returning. Later, having entered another current of ideas by the comparative study of religions and of sciences, I became still more incredulous, and I pitied those who pretended to have witnessed such things. Spirits, I never ceased repeating, exist only in imagination of mediums or Spiritists; they were met with nowhere else. Being in Berry in 1868, I got quite angry with a poor lady who persisted in affirming that in a lodging she had once occupied every evening an invisible hand drew off her

bed-clothes as soon as the light was extinguished. I treated her as an imbecile, a fool, an idiot. Soon after followed the terrible year [1870]. I emerged from it myself with the loss of sight, and, still worse, with the first attacks of a general paralysis. Having been witness of the marvellous cures produced by the waters of Aulus, in the treatment of certain maladies, especially when it was a question of restoring the vital energy, I went there in the spring of 1871, and was able to arrest the progress of the disease. The purity of the mountain air, as well as the vivifying action of the waters, determined me to fix my residence there. I could then also study on the spot those nocturnal disturbances of which I only knew by hearsay.

"Since the death of the late proprietor of the springs, the thermal establishment was nearly every night the theatre of scenes of this character. The custodians did not dare to sleep alone. At times the bathing-places resounded in the middle of the night as if struck with a hammer. On opening the rooms whence the noise proceeded, it immediately ceased, but recommenced in an adjoining hall. Blows were struck upon the partitions, the steps of some one promenading in the garden-room were heard, objects seemed flung against the floor, &c. My first feeling on hearing these accounts was, as usual, incredulity. But finding myself daily in contact with persons who had themselves been witnesses of these nocturnal scenes, and conversation turning often on the subject, certain peculiarities at length arrested my attention. I interrogated the superintendent of the gardens of the establishment, different persons who had passed the night in the hot rooms, all, in short, who could give me any direct information on these mysterious events. Their replies were identical, and the details so circumstantial that I was reduced to the dilemma of either believing the witnesses or of supposing them to be mad. Now I could not impute madness to twenty honest villagers living peaceably at my side, for the only reason that they repeated what they had seen or heard, and that they were unanimous."

This unexpected result recalled similar circumstances of which M. D'Assier had formerly heard. Knowing the localities and the witnesses, he set himself to institute further inquiries, and at length, he says, he was compelled to surrender to the evidence.

"I then perceived that I had been as absurd as those whom I had so long been ridiculing, in denying facts which I pronounced impossible because they had not occurred under my own eyes, and because I could not explain them. This posthumous dynamic, which, in certain points, seems the antithesis of ordinary dynamic, caused me to reflect, and I began to conceive that in certain rare cases the action of the human personality might continue for some time after the cessation of life. The proofs which I possessed appeared to me sufficient to convince unprejudiced minds. However, I did not stop there, but sought for further information from the most accredited authors of different countries. I then chose among those which presented all the characteristics of incontestable authenticity, preferring facts observed by a large number of witnesses.

"It remained to interpret these facts, I mean to disengage from them the marvellous, which veils their true physiognomy, in order to re-attach them, like all other phenomena of nature, to the laws of space and time. Such is the chief aim of this book. In presence of a task so arduous, I cannot pretend to say the last word on the enigma. I am content to state the problem exactly, and to point out some of the co-efficients which should be included in the equation. Those who follow me will find the definitive solution in the path I have marked out for them. . . . The philosophical idea of the book may then thus be stated: to bring within the compass of the laws of time and space phenomena of the posthumous order, hitherto denied by science because it has been unable to explain them, and to enfranchise people of our epoch from the enervating hallucinations of Spiritism."

In the first chapter the author collects from original sources a series of "facts establishing the existence of the posthumous personality of man": unusual disturbances, sound of footsteps, rustling of clothes, movements of objects, touches, apparitions of hands and of whole phantoms, &c. The second chapter begins thus:—

"The existence of posthumous humanity being demonstrated by thousands of facts observed in all ages and among all peoples, it remains to inquire its nature and its origin. It proceeds evidently from the living personality, presenting itself as the continuation of that in form, habits, prejudices, &c. Let us then examine if there is not to be found in man a principle which, detaching itself from the body when the vital forces abandon the latter, still continues during some time the activity of the human individuality. Many

* It may be in the recollection of some readers that I reviewed this book at considerable length in "LIGHT," nearly three years ago (August 11th, 18th, 25th, 1883). Naturally, therefore, some of the passages cited by M. Aksakow will be already known to readers of this paper.—Tr.

facts show that this principle exists, and that it manifests itself sometimes during life, presenting at the same time the characters of the living personality and those of the posthumous personality. I report some only from the best sources, and which seem conclusive." (p. 46.)

Having adduced remarkable facts of apparitions of living persons, or of so-called doubles, the author concludes this chapter with the following words:—

"Innumerable facts observed from antiquity to the present time demonstrate the existence in our being of a second personality, the inner man. The analysis of these different manifestations, has enabled us to penetrate its nature. Externally, it is the exact image of the person whose complement it is. Internally, it reproduces in copy all the organs which constitute the frame of the human body. It is, in fact, seen to move, speak, take food, in a word, to fulfil all the great functions of the animal life. The extreme tenacity of those constitutive molecules, which represent the ultimate of organic matter, enables it to pass through the walls and partitions of rooms. Hence the name of 'phantom,' by which it is generally designated. Nevertheless, as it is attached to the body whence it emanates by an invisible network of vessels, it is able, at will, to draw to itself, by a sort of aspiration, the greater part of the vital forces which animate the body. One then sees the life by a singular inversion deserting the body, which becomes proportionately corpse-like, and transferring itself to the phantom, which thus obtains an extraordinary consistence. With the living it is an exceptional phenomenon. But when death has burst the bonds attaching it to our organism, it is separated, as it were definitively, from the body, and constitutes the posthumous phantom." (pp. 81-82.)

"But its existence is only of short duration; its tissue easily disintegrates under the action of the physical, chemical, and atmospheric forces which constantly assail it, and restore it, molecule by molecule, to the planetary medium." (p. 298.)

The fourth chapter is entitled: "Character of the posthumous being.—Its physical constitution.—Its mode of locomotion.—Its aversion to the light.—Its clothing.—Its manifestations.—Its reservoir of vital force.—Its projectile power (*Balistique*—*Schwebfähigkeit*.)—Every one has his fluidic image."

The fifth chapter: "Universal fluid.—Nervous fluid. Similarities and differences of these two fluids.—Electrical animals, persons, and plants.—Action of the nervous fluid on the internal personality."

"The human phantom does not always reveal itself so clearly as in the instances I have cited. It has also, at times, obscure manifestations of very various nature, which make it a sort of elusive Proteus. Mesmerism reproducing analogous manifestations in the somnambule, the medium, the ecstatic, &c., it is often difficult to say if the first cause of these phenomena is to be referred to the inner personality or to the nervous fluid, or to the combined action of both these agents. In very many cases their connection appears so intimate that one is led to ask if it is not from the latter that the former derives its origin and its energies." (p. 117.)

Sixth chapter: "The mesmeric ether, and the personality which it engenders.—The somnambule.—The somniloquist.—The seer."

The following are the author's conclusions:—

"(1) Somnambulism, spontaneous in some, is latent in all others. In the latter, one gets only an imperfect glimpse of it, but it can attain to fulness under the influence of a strong mental tension, moral agitation, or other physiological causes. These manifestations are frequent, but incomplete, in childhood, betray themselves better during youth, then diminish with maturity, and seem to disappear in old age.

"(2) The extraordinary things accomplished by the somnambule betray in him the existence of a force active and intelligent, that is to say, of an inner personality. That personality seems completely different from the ordinary, and to have its seat in the nervous ganglions of the epigastric region, as in the case of the somnambule cited by Burdoch, and as we shall encounter it still more emphatically and precisely in other manifestations of mesmerism. Thus is explained why the somnambule does not recognise the voice of persons most familiar to him, nor has any recollection of what has happened during his sleep. Similarly, one accounts for the fact that no immorality has ever been observed in him, as if his mysterious guide were free from the bonds of animality.

"(3) The personality apparent in somnambulism reveals an intelligence equal, sometimes even superior, to that of the ordinary personality. But, like the latter, it has also its personal equation, its obscurities, its weaknesses. For one example only, there is that somnambule mentioned by Burdoch, who, having drawn on

his boots, mounted stridelegs on a window, and spurred the walls to set off his imaginary horse.

"(4) Somnambulism is due to an abnormal derangement of the nervous fluid; many causes may conduce to this result; fright, great mental tension, exuberance of youth, &c.; in a word, everything that tends to break the equilibrium of the physiological functions of which the nervous system is the seat. When the fluid is less abundant, the effects of somnambulism are only obscurely betrayed, and seem to be confounded with those of dream. But if a sufficient quantity is disengaged, the internal personality is immediately apparent, the somnambule then presenting the characteristics of a waking person, for he has then in himself a guide possessing all the energies of intelligence and movement." (pp. 149-151.)

We come finally to the seventh chapter, which deals especially with our subject. It is entitled: "The mesmeric ether and the personality which it engenders (continued).—The turning table.—The speaking table.—The medium." The author now connects the phenomena of Spiritism with his theory of the fluidic being as follows:—

"The mysterious agent which set in motion the speaking table was evidently the same as that which animated the moving pencil and the medium, I mean the mesmeric personality of the sitters or of the medium himself. If it differed in its mode of action, that is referable solely to the intermediaries by which it manifested itself. It is, in fact, not difficult to see that the little table is only a passive instrument, a sort of acoustic alphabet-book put in action by the fluid of the person interrogating it. In other words, it is the latter's mesmeric personality which fills the office of blower (*souffleur*) in the dialogue with the table." (p. 183.)

"The medium has often been likened to a somnambule awake. This definition seems perfectly correct. They are the extreme poles of the mesmeric chain, two different modes of action of one same cause, passing from one to the other by insensible degrees. One might say a transformation of force, analogous to that observed in the imponderable fluids, heat, light, electricity, magnetism, which are only, as we know, different manifestations of the same agent, the ether. Women have been seen to fall into the magnetic sleep when a circle is formed round a table; the electric phenomena of attraction and repulsion are manifested among those who give themselves up to the practice of Spiritism, the mediums become somnambules, and *vice versa*. Sometimes both these characters are presented at the same time, so that it is difficult to say whether the subject is awake or asleep. There is nothing to differentiate the somniloquist from the medium, except the mode of proceeding. The one speaks, the other writes, but both declare that they are under the influence of a mysterious inspirer who dictates their replies. Interrogated as to its origin and personality, this invisible *souffleur* represents itself now as a spirit without nationality, now as the soul of a person deceased. In the latter case it readily gives itself out as the friend or nearest relative of the medium, whom he comes to aid with his counsels. Here occurs one of the most surprising effects of mesmerism. The mysterious personage being invited to write some lines by means of the movable pencil or the hand of the medium, reproduces exactly the handwriting, the style, and even the orthographical errors peculiar to the friend or relative whose posthumous representative he calls himself. At first sight such an argument seems irrefutable, and it is on facts of this nature that the theory of Spiritism is founded." (pp. 186-187.)

"The evocation of phantoms by mediums, then, is an illusion (*mirage*) even when apparent to sight, as happens with certain privileged mediums; these are therefore not less the sport of an hallucination, analogous to that of the somnambules, who are made to see all the phantoms which it pleases the magnetiser to show them." (p. 191.)

"With the medium, as with the somnambule, one sees that it is the same principle which acts, the vital fluid. It attains its maximum of energy in the former, because this one draws from himself, I mean from the centre of production, the live force which engenders the mesmeric effects, while the latter, deriving it from a foreign source, receives it in limited quantity and in diminished activity. Thus Spiritism reproduces in an exaggerated form the prodigies of the mesmeric sleep. Like the somnambule, and better than the somnambule, the medium, even when illiterate, becomes polyglot, composes poems, writes discourses according to all the rules of rhetorical art, divines the thoughts of those about him, has the faculty of sight at a distance, reads the past, and sometimes arrives at prescience of the future." (p. 193.)

As to the German authors who have dealt with this subject, I have no need to mention them here, as I may presuppose that they are not unknown to my readers.

(To be continued.)

WANTED, a copy of "Spiritual Photography," by Miss Houghton. Address, Office of "LIGHT."

PHASES OF MATERIALIZATION.

A CHAPTER OF RESEARCH
IN THE
OBJECTIVE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM.

By "M. A. (OXON.)"

(Continued from page 188.)

Next comes a group of experiments of the highest interest and importance.

On the 22nd of June, a weighing machine was provided, and Peter appeared at the curtain. He complained of the distance of the machine and helped to move it. His weight showed 140lb. He retired, and with the following results, four times:—Second, weighing 134½lb.; third, 129lb.; fourth, 121lb.; fifth, 108½lb. The time occupied from first to last was about ten minutes, the form diminishing 31½lb.

On the 3rd ult., "Zion," "Nun" and Peter having come out in turn, "Geordie" appeared and walked about freely, and carried the large stone to one of the visitors; he intimated his desire to pass to the door. Getting nearer each attempt to reach it he suddenly appeared to change his intention, and going to the window pulled up the blind and raising the sash looked out into the yard . . . he twice got out into the yard. After "Geordie" had retired into the cabinet, Peter came out, then "Zion." Mr. Carson, whose height is 5ft. 5in., stood back to back with him, and it was found that there were six inches difference in their heights. The medium is 5ft. 5½in. in his stockings."

A female form then appeared and was recognised.

On the 7th Geordie walked to a distance of 30ft. from the medium.

On July 1st "Peter was the first form who stepped upon the scales, and had evidently not sufficient stamina to stand the test. He first turned the scale at 100lb., but subsiding so rapidly in weight as to prevent a successive record being taken until he failed to turn the beam at 80lb. He then hurriedly left the scale and went behind the curtain. Emerging a second time his weight was registered 104lb., then 102lb., then under 100lb.; the 20lb. weight being removed, he failed to turn the beam at 80, losing, at least, 24lb. in weight in about 30 seconds."

"The next form weighed was 'Geordie,' who stood firmly on the platform and registered 139½lb. or within 7lb. of the medium's weight. Stepping on a second time, his weight was reduced to 117lb., showing a diminution of 25lb. in about three minutes."

Nine forms appeared on this occasion, three being females.

By the next séance a standard measure was supplied. The medium height is 5ft. 6½in. [a discrepancy of 1½in.]. "Zion" registered 5ft. 8½in.; Peter, 5ft. 1½in.; Geordie, 5ft. 3in.; John's height 5ft. 1½in. "A female form known as 'Nun' measured 4ft. 11½in. Another female unknown, 4ft. 10½in. A child named Lily M., who first manifested when her parents were present, measured 3ft. 11½in. being 21in. less than the highest register of the evening, and 18 in. less than the medium. The tenth and last form to appear was a black man."

"These experiments were conducted in the presence of eight intelligent and trustworthy persons, and conclusively prove the objective reality of the forms who purport to be, and give much evidence to prove themselves, spirits of departed human beings."

Several séances were also recorded of a like nature to the last—weighing and measuring.

On the 1st seven forms appeared.

In two following sittings strangers were excluded.

On the 12th. Peter's weight varied between 139lb. and 86½lb.

After the Nun, a tall military-looking form came; he measured 5ft. 11in.

On the 23rd, seven forms; Lily measured 3ft. 11½in.

On the 26th, eight forms, mostly, as usual, active about the room.

"The medium was several times shown by the spirits during the séance."

It was now found possible to increase the light, so that the more distant observers could see with greater ease. The light had always been sufficient for observers who were seated in the front row; it was now so increased that all were able to see the medium and spirit-form simultaneously. This is in accordance with general experience. When a

circle is first formed the manifestations are feeble and fugitive, occurring only, or at least most readily, in darkness. After a time they become more pronounced, occur more systematically, and in light which can be steadily increased until at last, as we shall find was the case with this circle, the fully materialized form can stand out under the blaze of a fully lighted gaselier, and talk, and move heavy objects without apparent effort, and with none of that shrinking from a fixed gaze or a strong light which characterises an imperfectly materialized form.

The development from this time in Mr. Spriggs's circle was very marked:—

"Finding that the sitters on the second row, unless they had good eyesight, experienced a difficulty in seeing the medium and spirit-forms simultaneously, some experiments were made with the light, and it was found that by the use of a pink shade a much stronger light could be borne by the materialized forms. Since this arrangement, the medium and spirit forms have been seen simultaneously by all present. The child Lily alluded to in former reports is now a constant visitor, and the contrast of her diminutive form with the tall figure of 'Zion' or the more muscular-looking one of Geordie, is very marked.

On the 13th the form of Geordie was very strongly developed; approaching the writer and taking his hand he placed it on the left breast, where a faint but distinct beating was perceptible. On taking his wrist the pulsation was steady and regular, as in a human organisation. The same test was given to three other members of the circle."

"On September 30th, seven forms appeared. Dr. Müller expressed a wish to feel the pulse of the form. Geordie readily complied, and the doctor distinctly felt the pulsations, the medium being shown sitting on his chair immediately after and whilst Geordie was outside the curtain. 'Peter,' who talked freely, stated, in answer to a question, that when spirits materialized first they were not very clear in the consciousness of their condition, their minds being absorbed in the circle."

On the 21st, Geordie had the cover removed from the light, and stood with the direct light from the candle on his face, which is a very characteristic one, and distinct from the medium in every particular. Three of the visitors felt his pulse, and two his face; he remained for about thirty minutes.

On the 25th Geordie appeared, stronger than ever; directed the light to be brought out, and stood in the full glare of it. Several of the sitters touched his face, and one his bare foot.

"After Peter retired, Geordie came out on the 4th November, and stood in the full light, opened the window, leaned on the sill, and looked out into the moonlight. Whilst shaking hands he placed his face within a foot of the visitor's eyes, so that every lineament could be clearly seen. He bears no resemblance to the medium."

"The female form, 'Nun,' appeared stronger than usual; she showed her face and long dark hair plainly, drew back the curtains, and leaning over the medium partly dematerialized in view of the sitters. . . . Some remark being made in reference to her hand, she extended it towards the sitters, the difference being apparent to all. John Wright came, and his fair face and wavy grey beard were in marked contrast to the dark complexion of Geordie. The graceful form of 'Charity' drew the curtain and leaned over the medium—the two forms being distinctly visible to all present."

On the 6th December Geordie wrote a letter of three pages, put it into an envelope and stamped it, having gone into the shop to purchase the stamp.

On the 13th he read the reply that had been received.

On the 16th, "within thirty seconds of 'Peter' leaving, 'Zion' appeared, giving his usual military salute. He was followed by Geordie, who after shaking hands, stood in the full light, and pushing back the curtain, showed the medium."

(To be continued.)

CATALOGUE OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.—This has just been issued, and may be obtained upon application to the Secretary of the Alliance, at 16, Craven-street, Strand, W.C.

A CONVERSAZIONE of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, on Thursday, May 6th, at 7.30 p.m. (Regent-street entrance), when a paper will be read by Mr. Alario A. Watts, entitled "Spiritualism—Aspects of Comfort."

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

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Light :

SATURDAY, APRIL 24TH, 1886.

A RELIGIOUS SERVICE FOR SPIRITUALISTS.

An esteemed correspondent, who also offers to contribute a substantial yearly offering to the necessary expenses, writes urging us to bring this question more prominently before our readers. Frankly speaking, we do not at the present time feel called upon to do so. The hour is not yet come—at least, we think not, but we need hardly say that at all times we shall be only too pleased to help forward any such good work. We, in the main, agree, as to the difficulties in the way, with what our esteemed co-worker, "M.A. (Oxon.)," wrote a week or two since, and have but little to add to what he then said on this subject. As, however, we have often been asked to state our views with regard to the establishment for Spiritualists of a form of worship which shall embody their *special* faith, and satisfy their aspirations, we will now endeavour to do so very briefly.

That this question has long been a matter for thoughtful consideration on the part of many of our readers we are well aware; indeed, we may say that we know there is a strong conviction held by some Spiritualists that the time for action has come. Whether, however, this need is so real and urgent as some think, or not, few of us will be inclined to treat the aspiration with other than feelings of the deepest respect. Provided the attempt to carry this aspiration into effect is not "forced," we can go further than this and can say that the desire to unite on a religious basis—broad and catholic—has our warm and active sympathy. We are not now concerned to indicate all the reasons which lead us to regard the establishment of such a service for Spiritualists, when the time is ripe, as of the first importance; they are sufficiently obvious. It surely is unnecessary to insist on the desirability of providing for ourselves spiritual sustenance congenial to our common faith, or the undesirability of being dependent for it on irregular and chance ministrations. It is not enough that a few are enabled to receive and enjoy teaching that is enlightened in perception, broad in view, and liberal in tendency; there are many who cry for spiritual food, who feel that even in the broadest and most liberal exposition of religious truth there is wanting one essential—an essential which Spiritualism can alone supply—a *zeal and earnestness arising out of personal knowledge and conviction.*

Any attempt in this direction should, we think, be made quietly, without ostentation, and the work should be allowed to grow naturally. Personally, we shrink from any forcing process whatever. Then if, when the attempt is made, we find that after all the action has been premature, even failure will be productive of nothing but good, for the little spell

of united worship which will have been enjoyed will be, not a loss, but a distinct gain.

The basis of union must, however, be broad and catholic. We must stand outside all sects—strictly unsectarian; neither should we seek to forge afresh bonds wherewith to shackle men's souls. Our aim should be in the direction of universal *religious* unity—we mean according to the spirit, not the mere letter. We should recognise that in all creeds there is an underlying unity of purpose and similarity of doctrine to be traced; that the greatness of Divine love cannot be measured by human standards; that in all faiths can be seen a succession of new combinations of the same radical elements—an intuition of God, a distinction between good and evil, and a belief in the continuity of life; in short, that, underlying the individual characteristics of all religions, there is an universal sympathy; that God has sent His teachers unto every age, to every clime, and to every race of men, unfolding through each as much of truth and righteousness as human hearts were ready to receive.

Coincident with this attitude to the great so-called heathen systems, the hand of fellowship should be extended to those who share, with many of us, a common Christian faith. We should seek to vivify and unite rather than add to the number of the discordant elements and barriers to unity raised by sectarianism. For this reason neither alliance with individual existing organisations, nor attempts on our own part to form a separate body, are to be desired. There are those who see in Spiritualism a potent factor in modern life and thought, which by reason of its simplicity, its practical knowledge, and last, but not least, its Divine direction, will ultimately become a lasting bond of union between the various sections of Christendom and the great faiths of the outer world.

Taking the three cardinal doctrines of all religions as our bond of union we shall find ourselves in substantial agreement with each of the world's faiths, and few will be the points of essential difference with the aims of any religious body whatever. Indeed, the distinctive application of spirit-teaching to the affairs of everyday life will only serve to illustrate and emphasise much that at present is merely a matter of faith. Instead of sect denouncing sect, and party being armed against party—an incessant war of creeds because of difference of opinion on matters of doctrine—our position would be one in which the points of agreement are emphasised rather than those of difference. The former are many and essential; the latter, though perhaps equally numerous, are comparatively unimportant.

On these lines we believe that in a future, which may be nearer than we think, Spiritualism will prove itself a potent factor for "the healing of the nations," and the harbinger of a newer and truer interpretation of the teachings of the Christ of all peoples.

MR. J. S. FARMER has been very unwell, and for some days has been confined to the house. Correspondents will kindly accept this intimation. Communications which have remained unanswered will be attended to at the earliest possible opportunity.

THE OFFICES OF "LIGHT" and also those of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be closed from Thursday evening until Tuesday next. There will, therefore, be no mesmeric séances on Easter Monday. In connection with these circles we may mention that the second series has just been completed, and provided sufficient names are received in the course of the current week, a third series will commence on Monday, May 3rd. These circles are open to members of the Research Section of the London Spiritualist Alliance.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—A general meeting of this Society will be held on Monday, May 3rd, 1886, at the rooms of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, London, S.W. The chair will be taken at 8.30 p.m. The meeting, which will be partly of a conversational character, is open to members and associates, who are at liberty to invite friends. Paper to be read by Mrs. H. Sidgwick—"Results of a Personal Investigation into the Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism, with some Critical Remarks on the Evidence for the Genuineness of such Phenomena."—EDWARD T. BENNETT, Secretary.

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA AND "FRAUD."

I venture to commend the following remarkable article, which I have translated from the April number of *Psychische Studien*, for perusal. There are plenty of facts in the experience of most of us to justify the question raised by Herr Wiesendanger, without attaching too much importance to individual observations. These, as regards Slade, are not, however, to be rejected because they do not accord with the experience of that medium which some of us have gained. I think, indeed, that Herr Wiesendanger shows the very common disposition to magnify little circumstances of suspicion, but he is certainly free from any tendency to let the whole observation be dominated and perverted by preconceptions, thus originating or fostered.

It is his hypothesis which makes the article, as it seems to me, a really important contribution. I believe it is well worthy of serious attention at our hands, and that it is soundly suggested by the analogies he adduces.

Visitors to Mr. Eglinton must have remarked that when the slate has been held for some time without result, the medium will rather urgently ask the sitter to put some question, as if a special impulse, or stimulus, were needed. You cannot get motion without definite direction, and the direction must be determined antecedently to the motion.* I conceive that if Mr. Eglinton were, consciously or sub-consciously, anxious that some definite sentence or sentiment should come upon the slate, that would be a *direction*, wanting when he is apathetic; and the only other condition would be a sufficiency of force just then to take up the direction. When a definite suggestion of immediate action suddenly occurs to us, we act upon it impulsively and without conscious volition. The hidden forces of the organism may be similarly excited. But if we happen at the moment to be exhausted, the will has to consciously intervene and to represent the specific action to be performed. Now I conceive that corresponding to this may be a necessity for a more powerful stimulus to liberate the nerve force (or whatever it should be called) which is instrumental in extra-organic agency at séances. Such a stimulus might well be supplied by a muscular representation of the desired extra-organic effect (just as by representing a passion dramatically, in gesture, &c., we may come to feel it). The phenomenon may thus be *started*. The medium may be instinctively conscious of what is wanted, and thus be impelled to do surreptitiously what a better understanding of the subject by his clients—and indeed, himself—would enable him to do without disguise.

The experiment might easily be tried at a dark sitting. Liberate the medium, let him do what he is prompted to do, and ask no questions. Then, if the phenomena seem to have been set going, recapture him. If the phenomena then proceed (having before failed) Herr Wiesendanger's hypothesis would receive the strongest confirmation.

There is, however, another hypothesis, somewhat akin to the above, but which seems to me preferable, and is even more consistent with the general good faith of the medium, against whom appearances tell so severely. It is possible that what looks like surreptitious action is really no such thing, but is the first weak and tentative movement of the force which is credited only with the developed extra-organic effects. When this force is exuberant, bursting, as it were, from the system, in other words, when the medium is "in great power," it clears the organism, so to speak, at a bound, and its manifestations (spirit-manifestations if it is directed by an extra-mundane intelligence) begin unmistakably at once. But if deficient, its first physical action will be within and upon the organism. It is excited, it has its direction, but it cannot pass out. In all probability what in this connection we call psychic or nerve-force is really only the reserve fund of the proper nervous energy, a reserve fund which in the physical medium is either excessive, or is disengaged by abnormal stimulation. If that be so, we can see how its excitation, when unequal to perfect projection, must necessarily operate as mere involuntary impulse to the muscular apparatus, and that in just the direction, towards the like action, that is dictated for its trans-corporeal agency. Any reinforcement of nervous energy asks to be worked off by bodily motion. The directive in this case is foreign to the normal consciousness, but the agent is the same that normal consciousness habitually wields. Hence the painful and pitiable position in which the medium is placed. He feels

* A truth of which Mr. Croll, F.R.S., has made very striking and important use in some papers on Evolution, &c.

the impulse to do a certain thing, and this impulse he takes perhaps for a "control" (as in one sense it is), while at the same time he knows that it must if possible be concealed from observation. This view adapts itself either to the Spiritist or to the somnambulant hypothesis. In the former case we need no longer to tax the spirit with a wilful misuse of the medium, for the spirit's is only the directive will to manifest, and the force at disposal, not being accurately measured, may be supposed actually producing the desired effects, while it is really only arousing suspicion by its influence on the organism of the medium.

It is possible to combine this hypothesis with that of Herr Wiesendanger's in the following article. Both, I think, deserve consideration.

C.C.M.

SLADE AND HIS MEDIUMSHIP.—By Robert Wiesendanger (Dentist, of Hamburg, and President of the Hamburg Spiritist Association, "Pneumatologia"). Translated from *Psychische Studien* for April.

It may seem presumptuous to doubt Slade and his experiments, after a Zöllner has made his own experiences with the former the foundation of a new transcendental science.

Yet the doubt is not wholly without warrant. According to Professor Zöllner's accounts, Slade's force is so extraordinary that every one must obtain absolute tests through him.*

These absolute tests depend, however, upon conditions to which Slade, notwithstanding Professor Zöllner's assurances, does not consent.† These conditions are locked slates. One involuntarily asks oneself, why not consent to them, if spirit-power is really present? The writing does, in fact, appear in folding slates, but they must not be locked. Even the bringing of locked slates so excites Slade that quiet (*decente*) visitors at once remove them to put an end to the scene.‡ Moreover, his extreme excitability, his unsteady glance, his perpetual hawking and coughing, do not inspire confidence, the less that the most credulous observer must notice that he does, in fact, cheat in some experiments.§ Among other things, he breaks the slate upon his knees, touches the sitters with his feet and with the slates, and this, as he asserts, originates with the spirits. His handling of the slates is also suspicious. The frequent reversals and rubbings out, the biting off of bits of pencil, and many renewals of them, arouse suspicion. The very astute will have quite distinctly observed how, by the frequent turning, he first writes on the slate, and at the moment of uncovering displays the writing by extraordinarily clever manipulations.|| Schradick, an expert in conjuring, offers Slade, now that he is gone, a wager that he will imitate every one of his performances, even the writing in closed slates, provided Slade or some other medium first produces them before him. He might easily succeed, if what Slade produced for us were really nothing but conjuring. Herr Schradick seems to me a little doubtful about this, or he would have made the offer while Slade was here, since he had sittings with him. He crows now, knowing that he will not be taken at his word. If this gentleman is so clever, he might still reproduce these experiments which he, as well as we, witnessed with Slade. It would pay him, like his predecessors, to do so, and he would, at the same time, have the merit of freeing thousands from their long delusion. Slade's personality is prepossessing. His manners are those of a gentleman. Everyone feels sympathy and interest for him, increased by his mysterious power, and the more the better one gets to know him.

In order more closely to approach the question of the genuineness of his phenomena, let me be permitted to mention the experi-

* I do not remember that Zöllner committed himself to any such assertion. Reference to Chapter VII. of "Transcendental Physics" (English translation) will show that Zöllner had had his attention called to Slade's comparative failure with investigators at St. Petersburg, and that he was also quite prepared to admit—though without having himself observed anything of the sort—that a genuine and powerful medium might be addicted to the very silly and obvious attempts at deception which have sometimes been charged against Slade.—Tr.

† Here, again, Zöllner seems to be misrepresented. He expressly deprecates the imposition of arbitrary conditions, and, as regards the very instance of locked slates, quotes Slade's letter to the *Times* in reply to Professor Barrett, objecting to them.—Tr.

‡ This "excitement" is very like the evasive wile of a conjurer, truly!—Tr.

§ If and when it is so, the cheating is doubtless of a kind that "the most credulous observer" cannot fail to detect. For my own part, in all the sittings I had with Slade I never remarked anything *really* suspicious, though I took due note from the first of the circumstances adverted to in the text, except the touching *with the foot* and breaking the slate on his knees, which did not—most assuredly did not—occur.—Tr.

|| I can only say that this describes nothing that I have ever witnessed with Slade, though I was always from the very first on the look-out for just such things; not, indeed, *expecting* them, but with the most explicit consciousness that the writing, &c., if not genuine, must somehow thus be produced.—Tr.

ments, which, though few in number, can provisionally not be otherwise described than as *genuine*, till conjurers have tried to produce the *feats* under the same conditions. Thus, for instance, Mr. Slade desired me to write a question on the slate. Now as he had given me to understand that I was mediumistic, I wrote "Am I a medium?"* Of course I took care not to let Slade see the writing. He requested me (I recollect this quite exactly) to hold the slate under the table, the inscribed side undermost. Slade laid a small bit of pencil on the upper side (that not written upon), and we together held the slate, his other hand clasped in my free one upon the table. Immediately I heard writing, and after three raps on the slate we brought it into view. I expressly state that I did not let go of the slate, or allow it to be turned or held awry till it was full in my view, and I read on the quite opposite end from our hands "Yes, you are a medium."† How the writing arose we will leave undecided, but of this much I am sure, that there could be no question of a reversal of the slate.

Mr. Slade took a slate, his thumb being on the clean washed surface, and held one corner of it, so that it was covered up to the half of the other corner, *close* under the surface of the table. Writing was at once distinctly heard, and in the same position; thus with the thumb above, the slate was drawn out, and it was found to be written up in the corner. My first thought naturally was: "there is a pencil in the table." Immediate and close examination, however, showed how utterly unfounded was my suspicion. The writing could not have been produced with his fingers, for in the first place the writing was on the same side as the thumb, and, moreover, with all the will in the world the other fingers of his hand could not reach to the opposite end (long end). This experiment, it seems to me, is just as convincing as writing in a locked slate.‡

A Mr. W., whose credibility is beyond all doubt, had the following interesting manifestation. He sat at the corner of the table at Slade's right, his right hand clasping Slade's left on the table, while his left, with Slade's right, held the slate under the table. To make sure that Slade did not let go of the slate, he only supported the slate from below with his fingers, often detaching them entirely, so that the slate must certainly have fallen if not held by Slade. The latter now requested him to look under the table, and what did he see? In the first place he was assured by sight in an opposite mirror, as well as by touch, of the contact of Slade's left hand with his own on the table; while under the table he distinctly saw *three* hands, his own and Slade's, holding the slate, and over the slate *a strange hand holding the pencil*. He was at first inclined to believe in a deception, the more as he had never supposed such facts to be possible. But the two were alone in the room. No one could be hidden under the table, because it stood free, and the experiment was in full daylight. There was only *one* possibility, that it was Slade's own hand. Yet there he saw and felt the one upon the table, the other holding the slate with him below the table, and a *third* hand had he not. It must therefore be an artificial one. Yet was this supposition impossible. The most faithful imitation could not repeat a hand so naturally as this formation, the cellular tissue of the skin, the nails of the fingers, the motion of the hand.§ It must therefore be genuine. It was besides inconceivable that Slade's own hand, even had he not been able to convince himself of its position upon the table, would have stretched towards them under the table.|| None of the experiments in slate-writing, &c., so im-

* The question was in English (I should have thought that the reason given for selecting this question would have led an investigator apparently so astute as Herr Wiesendanger to avoid it. It is one very commonly asked, and Slade might be suspected of having purposely suggested it.)—Tr.

† I should like to call attention to the form of this answer—the word "yes"—in reference to the supposition that Slade had prepared it in anticipation of the question. For the answer, "yes" was unnecessary, "You are a medium" would have been enough, and that form would have had this advantage to a trickster. Slade (in that case) would not be sure that the question he had contrived to suggest would be asked; and if something different were in fact asked, the words "You are a medium" might pass for a volunteered communication, whereas "yes" *flashes* the message as an answer to the question. Of course I only advert to this for those who are not aware that answers to questions similarly asked are *invariably* apposite; at least I never saw, or even heard of one that was not, except when this was due to some obscurity or obvious misunderstanding, as when I once asked in writing about an *anxiety*, and was told I should have an *annuity*.—Tr.

‡ I have, in a note to my Preface to the translation of "Transcendental Physics," described how, during the Slade prosecution, I tested Professor Lankester's suggestion—somewhat similar to that put forward earlier in this article—that Slade reverses the slate by clever sleight of hand, as it is withdrawn from below the table, so that the under appears to have been the upper side. I got Slade to withdraw the slate very slowly, inch by inch, as soon as the sound of writing ceased, when the writing appeared in successive lines on the upper surface of the slate (that against the table).—Tr.

§ To any one who has seen and felt these hands with Slade (as I have four or five times) the suggestion that they are artificial is simply laughable.—Tr.

|| This is not quite apparent; nor is the account otherwise quite free from obscurity.—Tr.

pressed him as this manifestation, which kept him all day in amazement.

Now, will Herr Schradick, or some other expert, reproduce these three experiments under the same conditions? It is possible, by a free use of "ifs" and "buts," to throw doubt upon the thoroughness of the observation. But all disputing is useless, and fails to weaken the acceptance of either psychic force or spirit influence, until some one of these over-clever persons effects the same results under similar conditions.

What now is the outcome of these observations?

We must recognise that Mr. Slade is a *real genuine* medium, *i.e.*, has genuine psychic or spirit force at his disposal, and yet he perpetrates manifest frauds. There can be as little doubt of that as that some of his phenomena are genuine. Besides many other highly suspicious elements, he gave me evident proof of this when he would put in motion the large table used for the experiments. Instead of trusting to the power of his spirits, he leaned, with his whole weight supported on his arm, on the edge of the table. Naturally the table at once tipped up towards him, and when he saw that we had observed his proceeding, then all was over and the sitting closed.

We have here an enigma. Slade, the medium made famous by Professor Zöllner, cheats just as much as all his known and unknown colleagues and colleagues. The most distinguished mediums—Miss Florence Cook, Bastian, Eglinton—have also given proof of their genuineness, and yet have they all been exposed as cheats, that is, have been caught out in deception.*

One is at first disposed to seek the motive in the circumstance that they are professional mediums, who must do something for their fee when the power is insufficient.

But how is it with the private mediums? Hand upon heart, who will assert that they also do not—cheat, do not deceive? Can the same motive be assigned here? No; the only possible explanation would be that they supplement the phenomena when force fails or is insufficient, in order not to forfeit the interest which is taken in them. Yet no, these suggestions are too superficial, there must be a deeper cause. We stand again before this strange phenomenon and cannot deny it away. It is also the weapon against us in the hands of the sceptic. Let us avow it in plain terms, and try to get at the root of the matter. Order and system have to be introduced everywhere, and we cannot rest till our obscure province has a scientific foundation.

In the first place, we put aside *intentional deception*, which indeed under no circumstances can be considered as completely excluded, and again quite seriously ask: what inducement have the mediums to cheat, notwithstanding the genuine phenomena they obtain?

Do they not thus make friends and enemies alike suspicious, and place themselves in the most fatal position? Must they not be just as well aware of this as those who watch them with Argus eyes? And yet it happens. They do not refrain and—are exposed. Is it levity? Nay, for the same mediums, when they have been once exposed, show the opposite quality. They avoid everything which would offer an opportunity of convicting them.† Nor do they any longer submit to the former conditions, their demeanor is timid and unsteady, because they are always apprehending treachery. Would they find that necessary if they in fact no more carried on any sort of deception? But why go on with it after all? This is the problem, and if this inquiry leads us nearer to the solution, the whole subject will have been advanced a step.

On a closer examination of the subject we must at length conclude that these apparent frauds are a necessity from which mediums cannot escape.

To the first question: why not? it must be replied, because mediums are subjected almost without will to a foreign influence. The question of what kind this influence is may be provisionally put aside. It is there, however, and this cannot be denied.

But if once it is admitted that the medium may in fact be under this influence, why should he not be under it already at or before the beginning of the actual manifestations; why, that is, why should he not carry out under it the fraud, or, rather, the auxiliary manoeuvre? I know that this idea and the development of it will raise a storm of contradictions.‡ But let me be followed to the

* It is not necessary roundly to deny the fact in order to ask whether it would not be well and fair to examine what in each case these "exposures" are worth? Why are we to require the most stringent evidence for every genuine phenomenon, and yet to take for granted the incriminating force of every "exposure"?—Tr.

† Therefore Slade allows no experiments with locked slates. [Which would certainly offer no opportunity for his "conviction" (überführung), as these could only be a failure. If Slade used only locked slates of his visitors, whether writing came or not, no one could even suggest a fraudulent attempt. And the writer's inconsistency is here manifest, since he believes in the genuine writing, whereas his present remark implies that it can only be produced by a trick. Slade's explanation to me of his refusal to try with locked slates will be found in a note at p. 65 of my translation of Zöllner.—Tr.]

‡ Certainly not, so far as already stated, since it is a very old idea, and about the first which occurred to Spiritualists in explanation of the fact referred to. But see further.—Tr.

end, and I believe the storm will subside, till someone, otherwise minded, will be at the trouble to refute my hypothesis (and I am willingly open to correction), and, at all events, it will have served to clear the subject. If we so far change the terms "cheating and fraud" as to say instead "they help, they support the manifestations," we shall get nearer to the truth. Let us compare the force here active (whether proceeding from the Psyche of the medium or from spirits) with the force of nature in general, *i.e.*, with every evolutionary process. Must we not recognise that everything requires an impulse, a furtherance? Would a ball, for instance, overcome the law of gravity, of inertia, if not helped by a foreign force? Yet it is not the foreign force alone that overcomes the inertia. It has a latent force of its own. Take two large balls, the one hollow, the other solid, and throw them. The solid, not overcoming the point of inertia, will fall to the ground sooner than the hollow one. But if there is so much force in the projection that the solid ball overcomes the point of inertia, it leaves the hollow ball far behind it.

This fact is not explained by the force of projection, but by the constitution of the ball itself, for otherwise the hollow ball must travel as far. Thus the effect is not a result of the impulse, but of the force latent in the ball.

Again, the horse's force (the impulse, the furtherance) is not the only factor in the forward motion of the carriage. The proper force (its gravity) of the latter lightens the horse's labour, when once it is set going. The train in motion is not able suddenly to pull up. Its proper force drives or carries it on, and is so strong that if brought to a stand suddenly by a powerful obstacle, the train would be smashed. But in order that ball, carriage, or train may be set in motion, it needs a foreign force, an impulse, an auxiliary. Shall we not, then, recognise the same law in everything which nature brings to pass, and why should it be otherwise with the production of mediumistic phenomena?

Recurring now to the mannerisms and characteristics of mediums, and re-examining accurately the exposures of fraud, we begin to get light upon their proceedings. We are able to understand and judge them. A new era of observation is opened to us with light and perception for separation of the grain from the chaff. It will indeed be asserted that this theory opens to swindling a wide door. I dispute that. The boundaries will very soon be clearly and accurately known, dividing the auxiliary from the fraud. Let it only be known with what we are dealing and the enemy is soon conquered. The mediums themselves will breathe more freely, and will make no more concealment of their partial co-operation. So will the best side of the new knowledge be won, and not only momentary prejudice, but also the sceptic's sharp point be broken off.

Without claiming that my hypothesis is infallible and the only right one, I hope by it to have given an impulse to the solution of this important question.

ERRATUM.—In the obituary notice of the late Mr. Richard Walsh, in last week's "LIGHT," Rochdale was mentioned in error instead of Blackburn.

LONDON. ST. GEORGE'S HALL, Langham-place, W.—On Sunday next Mr. Gerald Massey will deliver the fifth of the series of lectures at 3.30. His subject will be "The Seven Souls of Man and Esoteric Misinterpretation."

LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, REGENT'S HOTEL, 31, MARY-LE-BONE-ROAD.—On Sunday, April 25th, there will be no meeting. On Sunday, May 2nd, at 11, a séance will be held; at seven, a lecture will be delivered by Mr. W. S. Crawshay, on "The Antiquity of Man."—F. W. READ, Secretary.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND RETURN.—In August, 1861, my first husband, Mr. George C. Sherman, was at Montpelier Junction, Vt., on business. He had started for his home in Waterbury, Vt., and was run over by the cars about five o'clock in the afternoon, and died about one o'clock in the night. I was thirty miles from home. I heard a church clock strike one, and awoke from a sound sleep, and to the consciousness that my husband was standing by my bed. He drew me to him, and kissed me, saying: "I will be always near you to warn you of danger." These words he had used a short time before in a conversation on Spiritualism, when he said he hoped he should be permitted to come to me, if there was any truth in it. He rose. I said: "You are not going, are you? It is only just struck one." He answered: "I must go." He stooped and kissed me, and, then with a sigh, said: "Oh, I *must* go!" and vanished. The next day the sad news came of his death. I was not then a Spiritualist, but through the manifestation of spirits I have been brought to the grand and beautiful knowledge that our friends live beyond the grave, and can, under proper conditions, return to earth, and hold sweet communion with us.—MRS. E. A. CUTTING, in *Facts*.

MEDIUMSHIP AND ITS CONDITIONS.

["Birth and Death," by Baron Hellenbach, just issued,* is a most important addition to Spiritualistic literature. A complete review will appear in these columns from the pen of "M. A. (Oxon.)"; meanwhile we may be permitted to give an extract from a chapter which is invaluable by reason of the light which it throws on mediumship, and the conditions surrounding it. At the same time we must ask the reader to remember that our excerpts are somewhat disconnected, and that, therefore, Baron Hellenbach's argument loses somewhat in force and consecutiveness. Without endorsing all the conclusions at which the author of "Birth and Death" arrives, we consider his book to be of the most practical and interesting character to all who concern themselves with what is generically known as Spiritualism and Psychological Research.—Ed.]

What is a Medium?

A medium is an individual in whom the indwelling transcendental or psychic force and manner of perception are not quite overpowered by the organic body, and who, in consequence of this, stands in closer though not complete contact with other kinds of beings, not perceptible to our normal senses. If we represent men to ourselves as transcendental beings, clothed in organic bodies, fakirs might be described as such beings with their clothes torn, and, therefore, more susceptible to the sun, wind, and rain.

How Spirits Manifest their Presence.

It is naturally only a step from this to the manifestation by inhabitants of another world imperceptible to us. The question whether such beings exist can, therefore, no longer be put on one side, when the metaphysical basis of man is proved, as well as whether they can make themselves perceptible to us. The phantoms themselves give us a guarantee as to this. Forms appear to us of quite distinct individuality, in every respect differing from the medium, whose appearance likewise presupposes a *vis formativa*, and above all material substance, which in all probability is at least partly derived from the organism of the medium.

It has been noticed in India, as well as in Western countries, that the figures are developed out of a white, cloud-like mass, and that this misty substance seems to issue from the medium, and after the figure is formed is again absorbed into him. I have always heard the voice of the little Abilla† sounding at first as though it came from, or was close to, the medium, and only after a few minutes got farther off and nearer to me, so that it really gave the impression at first as though the medium were making a toilette previous to coming before the curtain. It is, however, as we know, clearly proved that, at least in some cases, it is the toilette or formation of the materialised figure, and not the change of clothes of the medium, which is being accomplished; this has been proved by strict test conditions and by the evidence of eye-witnesses. If these figures were not really developed in or out of the medium, their appearance would not only be more frequent, but would be independent of him. Certainly, we hear accounts of exceptional cases of such apparitions being seen otherwise than at séances, but these are extremely rare, and occur under very extraordinary conditions; and even in these cases the supposition of matter for materialising being borrowed from an animal organism of some kind, is not altogether excluded.

The Organic Connection between the Medium and the Materialised Apparition.

The hypothesis that for the purpose of presenting a perceptible and tangible figure, some sort of organic connection belonging to a living organism is necessary in order to give the requisite amount of materiality, is the one best supported. It has even been seen that another mist has proceeded from the apparition itself, and a third out of this. A medium for materialisation must, therefore, be a person in whom this matter exists in superabundance, and is capable of being set free. In support of this theory it is known that mediums who have exhausted themselves by too frequent sittings often suffer in after years from partial paralysis, and that many among them after

* London: Psychological Press, 16, Craven-street, Strand, W.C. Post free, 6s. 6d.

† A "control" manifesting through Frau Töpfer, a private medium in Germany, with whom Baron Hellenbach has had considerable experience.

the fatigue ensuing on the séances fly to wine or some other stimulant, and it was from this cause that the most powerful medium in America took to drinking, and suffered from delirium tremens. From this it must appear that, however harmless ordinary séances may be, the lethargic sleep or state of trance is not to be supported by every organism.

[Baron Hellenbach thinks, however, that in answering the question, How does one become a medium? a clearer idea of what a medium is will be obtained. He has previously argued the general likeness existing between Eastern fakirs and Western mediums, together with a similarity in the method of development.]

A Striking Analogy between the Methods of Physical Science and Spiritual Phenomena.

Every one of my readers knows that a bar of iron becomes polarised through rubbing with a magnet or having an electric current passed through it, and that this does not happen with a lump of gold or a bamboo cane. It is likewise to be remarked that a specially adapted person can be rendered *more sensitive* by magnetic passes, and the analogy in these cases is not yet exhausted. In order to produce the table-turnings and rappings, a chain is formed which answers to the batteries and wires used for the production of the electric current. It seems, therefore, that what is usually called polarisation has a great deal to do in this matter. For this reason we must throw a glimpse over Reichenbach's experiments, which are valuable, although his "od" theory is untenable. Reichenbach has made the discovery that some persons are much more sensitive than others, and that this sensitiveness is evinced in a twofold manner. There are those who, in a room from which light is absolutely excluded, begin to see, while certain material objects become luminous to them. Reichenbach calls this light "od" emanation," because he hypothesises a fluid which he christens "od," in spite of the *fasco* which in its time the *emanation* theory of heat and light experienced. He further made the discovery by means of numberless experiments with a great number of persons, that these *sensitives* are not only much more impressionable than others, but are likewise *polarised*, that is, this sensitiveness is situated or circumstanced like that of a magnet. The "od" pole agrees with the north pole, and in consequence of this polarity, sensitives have an undoubted susceptibility for electro-positive and electro-negative chemicals and bodies. This agreement of the symptoms with those of magnetic and electric phenomena should have been sufficient reason for not calling into existence a new "fluid" with a name of its own, because the same fate will await it as "phlogiston" met with in its time. It can certainly be said that heat, electricity, and magnetism radiate from the same body, yet it must be always understood that heat, &c., must be placed in a suitable condition to it.

The Bearing of Reichenbach's Experiments on the Phenomena of Mediumship.

It is not, however, the theories of Reichenbach which interest us, but his experiments, and particularly the fact that the greater sensitiveness stands in close connection with polarisation, and can be called forth and increased by darkness, contact, and passes, so that sensitives hold the same connection to non-sensitives as the magnet does to the bar of iron. The second thing interesting to us is the circumstance that the susceptibility of sensitives presents a striking resemblance to that of somnambulists. From this accordance we may be allowed to draw the conclusion that "polarisation" in its different forms runs parallel with the "manifestation" of the transcendental basis; and that a standpoint for *one* half of the mystical phenomena has been gained. It may be said, therefore, that the manifestation of the transcendental basis may be evinced in those persons who are situated with regard to their normal fellow-beings as iron is to metals, which cannot become polarised, and that this manifestation only first becomes possible *when polarisation ensues*. Now, since iron can become polarised by means of rubbing and the electric current from a battery, we ought not to be surprised if persons arrive at a condition of greater sensitiveness through passes or the formation of a circle. There are persons and metals *who can never become magnetic*; others there are who are particularly adapted for this condition, and there are some who possess it naturally; these last stand on the level of both forms of consciousness, and, therefore, easily pass the threshold. *Here* lies the point which the next generation will have to apply the lever to, in order to unravel the physical side

of the problem as far as it relates to the higher manner of perception and sensitiveness.

Now it is easy to understand why most mediums such as Slade, Eglinton, or Bastian should desire to have a chain similar to a battery formed by the direct or indirect connection of the hands, in which they themselves take part, at least Slade and Eglinton do, while Bastian and Frau Töpfer stand outside. They find this facilitates the manifestations. When with Slade, I have noticed through breaking the chain, a momentary cessation of the writing, which proceeded again immediately the hands were reunited; and the darkness, which has been so much criticised, and which is at least necessary for some persons at the commencement of a séance, is in the same way easier to understand.

The "Modus Operandi" Indicated.

I will try to indicate the whole process by a comparison, and I can find none so fit for this purpose as the telegraphic apparatus, which unites two separate parts of the world. We need for this purpose a connecting wire (in our case the connection is formed by the attraction of masses); and further a battery is necessary (represented by the circle), or a charged accumulator (the medium). If these conditions are fulfilled, then an expert telegraph operator (in our case a powerful will) is required in order to generate the electric light (the manifestation of the transcendental basis), or to send a despatch (normal or transcendental), and get an answer back. The arrangement of a séance and the necessary preliminaries for it are, therefore, completely analogous to the establishment of a telegraphic apparatus and its mode of operation.

This analogy certainly gives us food for reflection. If the conducting wires are given, it is only a question of the capability of receiving or sending out certain influences, to understand the phenomena in question.

Why Darkness is Necessary at the Commencement.

At the commencement of such, complete darkness should, if possible, be secured, as it facilitates all kinds of manifestations. Nothing is more instructive than the fact that Reichenbach was unable to obtain phenomena when the darkness was not absolute, which in rooms not specially prepared is difficult to secure. I have made experiments with Eglinton in which the strength of the rappings depended on the arrangement of the circle, as well as on the amount of light. It is, therefore, more than probable that the arrangement of the circle and the light are matters of great physical importance.

The All-Important Influence of Sympathy.

Besides these physical influences, *sympathy* exercises great effect, and in three directions. It is scarcely necessary to say that a very injurious influence is produced when persons are among the circle who are unsympathetic to the medium; as a rule the latter becomes at once aware that they are inclined to look upon him as an impostor. It is not the endeavour to procure strict conditions, with a view to widening our knowledge and experience, which has a disturbing influence, but unjustifiable mistrust *à priori*. In the same way, it is not a matter of indifference whether members are or are not sympathetic with one another, for this has an effect on the oscillations and the harmony, which will be easily understood by anyone who has been forced to play or sing in company, and who has found his audience thoroughly unmusical. It produces a chilling sensation, when a person, uncalled for, obtrudes his highly sceptical sagacity. I am convinced that even the clairvoyance of a seeress is influenced more or less by confidence or mistrust. All these phenomena depend in some measure on the power of the will, and therefore, harmony or concord, like everything else, exercises an influence.

The subject becomes far more important and of higher interest when we consider the influence which sympathy or antipathy exercises upon the unseen world, which said sympathy and antipathy seem to be caused and influenced by the ethical and intellectual worth of the company or circle. It is this influence which proves that in the case of these phenomena we are not dealing with inert forces of nature. According to my experience, the manifestations increase in importance when the circle is composed of earnest, thoughtful persons, and decrease in a corresponding manner, when frivolous or foolishly-sceptical people are present. When strict conditions are insisted on, with a view to obtaining further increase of our knowledge, results readily follow; when, however, they are instituted as a

trap for the medium, no results are obtained. There can be only three reasons for these coincidences, to which we will come immediately. I will only first remark that, according to my experience, the presence of such persons does not disturb the conditions to any extent on the first occasion, but only afterwards, when the phenomena by repetition do not make much impression upon them, though such a reversal of the known ordinary laws of nature would not fail to stamp itself on the mind of a thinking person. I have often noticed that persons remain quite unmoved in such cases, while they welcome with the greatest energy the most unimportant trifles, calculated to throw suspicion on the medium. Thus a witness, who had seen the most splendid manifestations in the presence of Bastian, grasped the fact of his shoes being found off his feet at the conclusion of a séance, as important evidence against him. When Jesse Sheppard, who created so great a sensation by his wonderful compass of voice, which embraced the deepest bass and the highest soprano, and who could produce these extraordinary notes either accompanied by a church organ or a drawing-room piano, announced his arrival in Europe, he wrote that he would bring his own piano; that was quite enough to prove the matter was a swindle. Because he preferred his own piano to a strange one, the voice must, therefore, come from the piano!

The Conditions on the Transcendental Side.

As to the conditions on the transcendental side, we must evidently dispense with any reliable evidence on that subject which I, for one, do not *a priori* accept; as, however, logic is the same in every form of consciousness, we can, at all events, speculate on the possible and imaginable causes.

When I ask a favour of anyone, it is possible, in case of refusal, that he either cannot, will not, or dare not comply with my request. The *inability* may in certain cases easily proceed from physical grounds, such as vibrations or conditions of the temperament (for telegraphic intercourse), or from the want of that substance necessary for materialising which the Hindoos call *agasa* (for physical visible operations). And the *unwillingness*, and *not daring to*, may rise from *not being able to*. Two of the evangelists, as well as Christ, declare that unbelief prevented the exercise of their powers.

A circle may be compared to a musical chord; it is possible that in a false chord some physical obstacle to the necessary conditions of harmony may be looked for, but this is not necessarily the case, for other circumstances may be quite sufficient to account for the unpleasant result.

What can induce an intelligent unseen being to undertake what I look upon as an uncongenial task (perhaps from a transcendental standpoint), in order to amuse a lot of frivolous people? Or what could be his object in frightening simple, ignorant folks? The unseen world can and will only come forward when they see how earnestly the certainty of their existence is longed for, and how it will be valued and made use of either for subjective development or for objective knowledge.

The subject must be entered upon earnestly, for our transcendental brothers to make such a sacrifice (for it is a sacrifice) as to concern themselves about us, or to enter into our world and manner of consciousness. This last is a step, though only a short one, in a backward direction, a sort of swoon, like that produced by the use of chloroform, which can have nothing attractive in it. I know that if I could imagine myself a transcendental being, nothing but some high aim, or affection for some particular person, would induce me to return to the circle of human beings and to interest myself in their affairs.

Other Conditions Bearing on the Case.

The particular vocation of some persons may likewise be a drawback. Man comes into the world with some purpose of development; if this purpose is opposed to the study of this subject, a certain antagonism is called forth on both sides. As the instincts of animals are directed to obtain nourishment so the inner impulse of man leads him to the vocation in life suited to his ethical development. It is quite conceivable that the unseen world may have a certain reluctance, or even dislike, to communicating with particular persons.

The Quality of the Manifestations Influenced in Various Ways.

As to the quality of the manifestations, experience gives the same results in the case of every medium. The persons who compose the circle exercise great influence, and are to be compared to the elements of a battery, as far as the oscillations,

emanations, and physical conditions are concerned, as the latter may be weak or strong. Even the grouping is not a matter of indifference; the weak elements should be separated, and, if possible, placed near the medium. This seems similar to the arrangement of the bottles in an electric battery. Even success or failure can be reckoned upon with some degree of certainty, according to the motives actuating those who take part in the séance, and this has been proved by observation. The selection and arrangement of the company should be a matter of particular care, the more so, as in the course of time many individuals have sprung up on the Continent, with whose help communication with the unseen world has become possible. I can only repeat what I have seen saying for years:—

“Mistrust and scepticism do no harm if they are not carried so far as to upset the medium and the conditions of the manifestations; doubt is likewise innocuous, indeed even favourable, to the success of a séance, but serious interest must be at the bottom of all. Scientific condemnation or objections are unfavourable *a priori*, though they, as well as curiosity, are always likely to arise. The latter generally has no other aim than a desire for ‘some new entertainment.’ The presence of those persons is injurious, or at least worthless, who know neither how to draw matter for thought, satisfaction for their feelings, nor motives for their actions from these experiences.” Those who are only seeking for an exposure will certainly obtain no results leading to greater knowledge.

Resume of Conditions.

The following conditions should be observed: 1. Individuals of both sexes, preferably young persons; 2. At the commencement complete darkness; 3. Regular days and hours in the week; 4. The séance should only last half-an-hour; 5. Avoidance of change of the members. Of course, all these rules are only of value as long as no regular rappings are given; if by means of these an appeal for direction to the transcendental side is possible, then a free communion will supersede the necessity of the five rules above-mentioned. . . . As to the form of communication, a question which can be answered by either “yes” or “no” is the simplest and least risky. As to the substance of the questions, it should never be forgotten that we have to do with another form of perception (in relation to time and space), not, however, with an omniscient being. In the fourth chapter we have called attention to the unreliable character of these communications, and I cannot warn anyone sufficiently strongly against placing too great confidence in these revelations; much experience is necessary to recognise and to understand the transcendental origin (for it is nothing more) of these pictures or delineations.

Anyone who desires to approach nearer to these “illusory figures,” in order to increase his knowledge or get nearer to the light, can always do so, for if he can get no certain information, he can always obtain indications leading in the right direction; but if he wishes to derive advantage from the communications, to spare himself the trouble of reflection, or to set up one belief through another, he would do well to leave it alone. It is not the substance of the communications, not the intercourse with the unseen world which are of value, but the facts which prove their possibility and existence.

THE BANQUO'S GHOST OF SCIENCE.—For more than a generation demonstrations of the spirit have been given to the world, making converts by millions, and establishing the truth of spirit existence and intercourse by evidence as strong as any that science affords to support the truths which it claims to have discovered; and but for invincible prejudice spiritual truth would have been as generally accepted. From the first, however, this truth came in conflict with the strongest convictions of the scientific minds of the age. It had been settled by the intellectual methods of modern physical research that no such thing as spirit had any existence except in the superstitious imaginings of uneducated minds. Following, as it was thought, the principles of Francis Bacon, science had obtained the true and only key to the exploration of the universe—sensuous observation and experiment; and because in its ultimate researches it had found only material organisms, it had relegated spirit to the limbo of exploded fancies, only possible in a comparatively infantile condition of the race. That, after all its conquests, modern science should be confronted with the rehabilitated ghost of this spiritual fancy was provoking indeed; and especially as the phantom had been evoked through her own methods of sensuous observation. To apply these methods to physical nature was considered the grandest exercise of the human understanding, but to employ them in exploring the phenomena relating to the spirit world was, in the words of Tyndall, “intellectual whoredom.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

J. J. BELL.—Thanks for the cutting.

A. ROSCOE (Otago, N. Z.).—Your letter has appeared. We shall be glad to receive occasional letters recording the progress of Spiritualism in your quarter of the globe.

G. ZIELESCH.—Your question arises, we think, from a misapprehension. According to our present knowledge the idea is inconceivable; still it may be possible, but we do not care to speculate.

R. DONALDSON.—We had already seen your letter in the *Banner of Light*. According to our reading of Mr. Newton's paper, he referred to the teachings of the Christ, and not to what you designate "the modern glosses on that teaching." In that view we accepted Mr. Newton's article, and in the same light nine Spiritualists out of ten would also accept it. You will, therefore, see that there is no occasion to deal further with the subject on the lines suggested by you. All the other points of your letter are also capable of a similar liberal interpretation. In fact, from our experience we believe a large amount of theological difference arises from misapprehension. There are those who ever take the letter of the word instead of its spirit.

T. P. writes:—"Judging from the high tone of your journal, and the unique and interesting character of its contents, I feel persuaded that if the price were raised to threepence it would, without loss of subscribers, somewhat assist 'LIGHT' to turn the corner in the commercial sense referred to in a recent issue."—We have already tried the suggestion made by our correspondent. The result was anything but encouraging, the circulation falling off considerably from the time when the price was raised. While thanking him for his kindly interest, we can only repeat that, from a practical point of view, the only method by which "LIGHT" can be made self-supporting is by an increase in the circulation. As we stated before, if each of our present subscribers would take the very moderate amount of trouble required to introduce the paper to friends and get them to become regular subscribers, the difficulty would be solved at once. From our own knowledge, "LIGHT" is not so well-known amongst Spiritualists as we believe it deserves, and in the absence of the usual facilities possessed by most newspapers for publicity, we are entirely dependent upon the kindness of friends to introduce and circulate the paper. Again we earnestly appeal to all who wish us well to adopt this very simple method of extricating "LIGHT" from extremely hampering conditions.

R. WILLIAMS (Stoke, Devonport).—Whether you will believe us or not, we can only say we extremely regret our inability to give your letter in full, because we do not like even seemingly to burke adverse criticism. We will, however, reply briefly to your various points here. (1) We also read the *Christian* weekly, and have done so for many years. Moreover, for upwards of seven years we were behind the scenes of that section of the "Christian" world which it specially represents, viz., the P. B.—not the J. N. D., but the "Open" section. We can, therefore, claim to speak from knowledge, and we unhesitatingly re-affirm the substance of our paragraph in "LIGHT" for March 27th. We can do this, and at the same time recognise the *Christian's* general charitable and comprehensive view of Christianity. It is only when it deals with Spiritualism that it falls short. In this it is not, however, alone, for few "religious" papers can discuss the subject on its merits. (2) We exercise the greatest possible care to exclude objectionable advertisements from "LIGHT." Unfortunately, that issue of "LIGHT" did contain an announcement of the nature of which we were ignorant. As soon, however, as we discovered our error, we refused further insertion point blank. We think few papers can present a cleaner record than "LIGHT" in this respect. (3) There is a clear answer to that portion of your letter which deals with the theological objections to Spiritualism. Read "How I was Taught of the Spirit," by "Vivat Veritas," and then write us again. There are two kinds of Spiritualism now as in the Bible times. You must learn to distinguish between "things that differ."

MATERIALISATIONS AMONG THE INDIANS.—Father De Smet, Catholic missionary, in a letter to the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels, wrote in 1854:—"The belief in spirits is common among those aborigines of America who have not been demoralised by the white. Indians have often told me that they had met, and conversed with them, and that they may be heard almost every night in the places where the dead are interred; and that the spirits speak in a kind of whistling tone. Sometimes they contract the face like a person in an epileptic fit. Nothing but the hope of gain could ever induce an Indian to go alone in a burying ground at night." Every one who has witnessed modern materialisations and heard that mysterious whispering, whistling tone of the spirits in the cabinet, will recognise the force of Father De Smet's testimony which, by the way, bears the more weight as it comes from him, unconscious that he is testifying to a fact that is in conflict with his creed. The Catholic, like the Protestant, favours no kind of Spiritualism except that which is in harmony with his church. He believes in the apparitions of the Virgin, but distrusts the ghosts of the Indians, or the well defined forms in the cabinet of the medium.—*Spiritual Offering.*

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 psychical 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.