

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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SPIRIT LAWS AND INFLUENCES.

A DISCOURSE BY PROFESSOR HENRY KIDDLE.

(From the *Spiritual Offering*.)

At this time, when the fact of spirit existence has been so clearly demonstrated to our sensuous perception and external intellect, it cannot be trivial or unimportant to gather all the facts within our reach that pertain to that existence, so as to obtain a knowledge of the principles which control this part of the universe. Physical scientists are constantly exploring the realms of material nature, making new discoveries, both of fact and law, and inventing new theories to explain phenomena, the real causes of which are beyond the scope of their research. From these investigations vast good has accrued to mankind in connection with their temporal and material well-being.

Now, when we find, as we most certainly have found, that there is a spiritual as well as a physical side to the universe, it is obviously requisite that we should explore it with the same earnestness, feeling assured that the truths which we shall obtain will be capable of an application that will promote the spiritual, if not the temporal well-being of our race.

The Importance of the Question.

If there is a spirit world above us, or around us, it is certainly important that we should study our relations to it. If, as we believe, the spirit of man is deathless, it is the world in which all who ever lived on the earth must now dwell. Although passed behind the veil that separates the world of matter from the world of spirit, do these immortals still influence us; and, if so, in what way, to what extent, and by the operation of what laws? Can we avoid, attract, or modify that influence? Can we, through external manifestations, establish such relations between these invisibles and ourselves, that there may be a sweet and holy communion—a beautiful, loving intercourse with them from which may spring results of mutual benefit—an intercourse by means of which we and they may alike bless and be blessed? Can we thus advance the culture of our own spiritual nature, so that we may be fitted to be the associates of the wise and good in spirit life?

Certainly these questions are of momentous interest; though they are often treated by the wise scientists and the learned theologians of our time as indicative of insanity or superstition.

In this discourse, I can only touch upon a few of the most salient points of my theme—the laws by which we are related to the spirit world, and the influences that come from it.

The Cyclical Nature of the Great Waves of Spiritual Influence.

I think the history of mankind on the earth clearly shows that the existence of the spirit world has not at all times been equally obvious to their sensuous perceptions. The stream of influence that ever flows from that world may, and probably must, be always acting upon the unconscious recipients of it, with greater or less power and copiousness; but external manifestations, both as to themselves and their instruments, while

never wholly absent, have varied greatly at different times. Spiritual waves seem to have passed over the earth in particular cycles, due to the operation of laws which we do not yet understand. There are times when there is among the people what the Jewish prophets and historians called the "open vision"—that is, when "spiritual gifts" abound, and multitudes of clairvoyants and other kinds of mediums spring up; and there are also times when a kind of spiritual famine prevails, such as we find predicted by the prophet Micah: "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them."

In the fulfilment of this significant prophecy, we are told, during the four centuries that preceded the coming of the Great Teacher, bringing overwhelming manifestations of spirit presence and power, there was spiritual darkness over the land; and men, losing sight of the spirit world, lived and cared only for the things of this life, for they believed in no other. It was an age of materialistic prosperity, intellectual refinement, pompous ritualism, and Sadducean blindness—just such an age as, it would seem, always occurs towards the close of a spiritual cycle, and antecedent to a new dispensation of light from the spirit spheres, when in the words of Joel the "spirit is poured out upon all flesh; and the sons and daughters of men prophesy, the young men see visions, and the old men dream dreams." The early Christian Apostles recognised a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy when the spirit came upon them in that remarkable Pentecostal flood, and they were confronted with such manifestations of spirit power.

Spirit Influence never wholly Withdrawn.

Independently, however, of these great epochs, which we find in the history of every nation, spirit impression, as well as manifestation and communication, has ever existed, the latter at least as sporadic phenomena. The curtain that hides from us the eternal world has in every age been occasionally rent or lifted; and heavenly visions have flitted before the enraptured gaze of mortals. A few specially gifted ones have always been able to hear the angelic voices, chanting peace and good-will, and bidding them look beyond the vale of earth to the everlasting mansions of the spirit world. Longfellow poetically expresses this fact:—

"The spiritual world
Lies all about us, and its avenues are open
To the unseen feet of phantoms,
That come and go; and we perceive them not,
Save by their influence, or when at times
A most mysterious Providence permits them
To manifest themselves to mortal eyes."

On the Threshold of the Temple of Spiritual Truth.—How only it can with Safety be Crossed.

The existence of the spirit world having been demonstrated to us by means of sensuous or external manifestations, we are brought only to the threshold of the grand temple of spiritual truth. The door is open, and we can enter; but a voice comes to us, as to him who stood on Mount Sinai: "Take off thy shoes, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." You cannot enter the spiritual temple, unless your spirit is imbued with reverence and humility. Attempt to do so in any other spirit, and you will certainly be taught that lesson by a painful experience. The door of the spiritual temple is indeed open, but let selfishness, arrogance, pride, or earthly passion of any kind beware of seeking an entrance. The language of ancient revelation is as good and strong as any that may be used as an admonition: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." You enter that temple not as mortals but as spirits; and hence you must divest yourselves of all that is incompatible with true spiritual life. It is not necessary to be a disembodied spirit to realise this mediamental law of spiritual progress; it pertains to all spirits, whether in or out of the

flesh. Does any man believe that he can carry his sensual appetites, his earthly desires and ambition, his self-love, pride, and passion into the spheres of spiritual purity, and with them enjoy the companionship of the just made perfect? No doubt he can carry them into the spirit world, and he can retain them as he may wish, for there is no compulsory force brought to bear upon a spirit's free agency; but he must turn away from the realms of light, and seek a congenial companionship in the spheres of darkness; and the temple of spiritual truth will forever remain closed to him, unless he come to the doorway in reverence and humility, after laying aside the habiliments of mortal wickedness and weakness. The sensuous manifestations, which some mistake for the all of Spiritualism, only serve, in a materialistic age, to recall mankind to a recognition of the spirit world. They can teach but little to him who has not developed his own inner sight—his own ability to appreciate spiritual things. There is a soul perception from the penetrating gaze of which nothing is hidden. The most perfect and critical observation of external light may, indeed, serve in a superficial way to test mediumship, to study the various phases which it assumes, and to gather the rudimental facts which it serves to present; but, of itself, it can make but little progress in acquiring a knowledge of the deep and mysterious subtleties of our higher nature, and its laws and its relations. Schiller, among the most intuitive of poets, felt this, as the following lines show:—

“It is not they who boast the best to see,
Whose eyes the holy apparitions bless;
The stately light of their divinity
Hath oftentimes shown the brightest on the blind;
And their choice spirit found its calm recess
In the pure childhood of a simple mind.”

St. Paul, who evidently possessed this developed spiritual intuition, recognised its power when he said:—“The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” And he added: “The natural (unregenerated or unspiritual) man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*”—that is by intuition, which, in the *Great Harmonia*, is expressively called the “light of the inner world.”

Man, a Spirit Here and Now.

The fundamental truth to be considered in the study of our capacities for spiritual progress, and for the acquisition of true spiritual wisdom, is the self-evident one that even now *we are spirits*—it is true, embodied spirits, but no less endowed with the capacities of spirits, and subject to the laws that govern the inter-relations of spirits—the laws of spirit influence—of psychologic control, as well as of spirit activity and development. Moreover, *as spirits*, we may be said, in a certain sense, to live in the spirit world at present. We are ever surrounded by those spirits who are in affinity with us; we are in their sphere; we really reside spiritually where our desires, our mental habitudes, our aspirations take us.

Where is the Spiritual World?

Where, it may be asked, is the spirit world? In a material sense—in the sense in which we understand space and location, it may be said, the spirit world is *here*. The spirits (as they have said) “dwell not in some far distant orb, hanging in the lone depths of space; neither do they wander, as some vainly think, without a local habitation, homeless in the wide wilderness of the air.” They are with us, and we with them, all belonging to spheres, or grades of advancement, corresponding to their spiritual condition. This is a great truth; let me dwell upon it a little.

There is a “spiritual body,” as St. Paul said; but it is of a nature inconceivable to us. Some look upon it as formed of highly-attenuated matter; but, whether this is so or not, it is not my idea of what I may call *pure spirit*—the highest and innermost element of the human trinity. This probably differs from matter—that matter which we cognise through sensation—not simply in quality or density, but in kind. As I understand it, there is absolutely no analogy between spirit and matter. They are subject to different laws, and each has its own field or sphere of being and influence.

The inspired poet, T. L. Harris, in *A Lyric of the Golden Age*, says:—

“My spirit inly saw,
That matter to an angel's radiant shape
Is absolutely without weight; that he
Feels *thoughts* to be more solid than the stars:
That states of angel minds are as the day,
Proceeding by degrees from morn to eve;

That they perceive affections, and discern
A fixed reality in thoughts of love,
Compared to which all nature is a mist
Or floating vacuum.”

The Conceptions of Earth-bound Spirits regarding their State of Existence.

I do not conceive the spirit world as composed of material zones, separated by distances that can be measured and exactly expressed in miles, and connected by broad or narrow roadways, along which the spirits drive in splendid equipages. Such ideas may emanate from spirits, but only from those who are not spiritualised, who are, more or less, “earth-bound,” having never passed from the external to the internal world—who, although they have laid aside their mortal bodies, have scarcely any other than earthly ideas, and know nothing of the spiritual life. As spirits, their unfoldment has scarcely commenced. A profoundly intuitional writer has said: “There are two distinct and dissimilar worlds beyond the grave. One of these is the mere external world of spirits, wherein a life, analogous to that of earth, is for a period [and often for a long period] led by the inhabitants thereof. Millions of beings there are who, although disrobed of fleshly garments, are yet pilgrims in search of the soul-world.” The latter is divine and interior; the former merely a relic or reflection of physical conditions. Of this there can be but little doubt; for death does not bridge the wide chasm that separates the material and the celestial world. There is a “middle sphere,” or “intermediate state,” into which the disembodied spirit enters, and which is to him, primarily, the sphere of instruction or unfoldment; and, secondarily, that of retribution and purification; for it is through the discipline of this sphere—often a discipline of suffering intense and indescribable—that he is purified and made fit for his celestial destiny—true, spiritual life. Here occurs that judgment which every spirit must meet, a judgment perfectly just and inexorably severe; for it is that which every person, by virtue of his own nature, pronounces upon himself. As Whittier says:—

“The soul itself its awful witness is.”

Through the corrective discipline of this sphere, the lower tendencies of our nature, implanted or intensified by the material life, become subordinated to the higher faculties and aspirations of the soul; and until they are thus subordinated no one can enter the sacred penetralia of spiritual, or soul, existence. This is, doubtless, what the old Revelation referred to when it said: “Blessed are they that do the commandments of God, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gate into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Such are the inhabitants of the lower, earth sphere, beyond which rise (I mean spiritually, not physically) the abodes of spirits in various degrees of advancement, while they are preparing for celestial life.

The Earth a World within a World.

In the lower spheres, many spirits have very little knowledge of the state of existence to which they actually belong; and there are millions of such now communicating their erroneous ideas to those whose minds are spiritually infantile enough to receive them as true. To them time, space, and place are just as they were in the earth-life; and to be invisible is to be *mathematically* at a distance. But, in fact, the earth world in regard to the spirit world is, to some extent at least, *a world within a world*. Let me illustrate. We do not see, or cognise at all by perception, the essences of things in this mortal life; we only infer their essential reality from the effects which they produce on our senses. Change or modify these senses, and, while these essential entities remain the same, we should virtually be in another world at once. The objects around us are clothed in matter, in order that we may perceive them by means of the material organs of sensation; but, as spiritual entities, they exist independently of material expression, and are so cognised by the spiritual senses.

Death a Total Change in the Faculty of Perception.

Death brings a total change in our faculties of perception; but as I have already suggested, not the same change in all persons; for, unless our minds have become spiritualised, that is, disengaged from earthly desires, tastes, and passions, we shall find ourselves in a world of illusions corresponding to our own mental condition, and in darkness as to spiritual things. Hence, we often find unprogressed spirits who allege that death has brought them no change in their surroundings, and some who

even deny that they have experienced death. Some say they are wandering companionless in the woods, among bleak and sterile rocks, in desolate sandy plains, or on the lonely shore; while others complain that they are encompassed with impenetrable mists, in dimly lighted caverns, or shrouded in absolute darkness. These are not objects of sense perception, for the physical senses have ceased their functions; they are, probably, subjective mental creations working themselves out into objective realities. Dr. Hare quotes his spirit father as saying:—

“Thoughts, being motions of the mind, assume specific and definite forms, and when distinct in the mind can be clearly perceived and understood by any spirit who is in sympathy with the mind in which they are generated.”

The Spiritual and Physical Conception of Space and Location.

The terms *space* and *location*, even in this life, may have a spiritual, as well as a physical, signification. Go into any mixed company, and look at the people mingling together; and then ask yourselves how many of these are really together *in spirit*—in sympathy, in community or harmony of thought. In the same manner, two spirits may be standing side by side, as we might think; and yet, in their respective spheres of spiritual being, they may be at an immeasurable distance from each other. Near and far, high and low, are terms that, in relation to the spirit world, have by no means the same significance as they literally bear in their application to the material world. Only as spirits harmonise are they near to one another—are they really in one another's presence, or can be seen one by the other—with this qualification as it appears, that as spirits advance they have the power, at will, to approach, to perceive, and to manifest themselves to all that are in spheres, or states of being, inferior to their own.

The Law of Spirit Affinity.

If, then, these two worlds are thus interlocked, and we, though denizens of the earth world, are nevertheless, in our spiritual natures, dwellers in the spirit world, it must be obvious that we are subject to the psychologic influences that are exerted by the unseen intelligences around us. These influences are controlled or directed by the law of spirit affinity. Like attracts like. Our spiritual environment is the counterpart of our own spiritual condition. In conformity with this law, no person can receive the ministrations of good and pure spirits whose nature does not correspond, in its aspirations at least, with theirs; and all receive the purest and best influx and the highest aid which they are capable or worthy of receiving. This is true of both states of being.

Spirit Influx of Two Kinds.

Spirit influx, in general, is of two kinds:—(1) That which is pure and elevating,—giving strength to the spiritual nature, and exalting the intuitional and intellectual faculties; and (2) That which debases the moral and spiritual nature, and by intensifying the sensual appetites, weakens both the intellectual and physical powers. To the first belong inspiration and all the higher orders of spirit control, or mediumship; to the latter, (1) the habitual control of debased or unprogressed spirits, voluntarily submitted to, and (2) involuntary spirit control, generally known as obsession or possession. There are, unquestionably, peculiar dangers incident to mediumship; for unless the greatest precautions are taken to guard against it, its tendency is to the deterioration of spiritual and moral as well as physical health. Mediums are always liable to become the prey of a class of spirits who are essentially vampires; and, moreover, they are subject to the influence of vampires who do not belong to the spirit side of life. None should be more careful of the company they keep than these magnetic sensitives; and they should be exceedingly cautious as to the persons in whose presence they surrender their God-given individuality, and yield to spirit control. It is said that every human being is surrounded with an atmosphere peculiar to himself, this enveloping aura being charged with the qualities, good or bad, that characterise the individual. Even those who are not sensitives are often conscious of this. How much more than these persons who are so susceptible of spirit influx—who become, in the constant exercise of their perilous vocation, almost perfectly negative to surrounding spirit influences.

Volition the Basis of Human Individuality.

And here let me say a few words as to the basis of human individuality. That basis is essentially *volition*. It is by the exercise of will that individuality is established—that selfhood

is realised; and, therefore, the stronger the will, the more complete the individuality. Through will, consciousness is intensified, and experience rendered more vivid. These are the elements of what has been called a person's *sphere*, within which he really lives; for it is his thought world—his spirit world. Now while his individuality is fully supported by his volition, the walls of his sphere can never be broken down, so as to let in intruders—he is safe from the psychologic control of the lower spirits. Let a man in the innermost depths of his being believe in himself—in his convictions as true, in his aspirations as noble, in his motives as pure, and in his feelings as unselfish and benevolent toward others; and no other individual in the universe can enter into his sphere to injure or disturb him. He is, as it were, in an impregnable castle, and may laugh all assailants to scorn.

A Truly Spiritual Life the only Safeguard against Hostile Spiritual Influence.

Such is the safety afforded by a truly spiritual life. But, on the other hand, let him begin in his conscience to doubt the truth of his principles, the rectitude of his conduct, the purity of his motives, or in any way to feel that his relations are not as they should be with infinite Goodness, Love and Truth; and that instant the doors of his strong castle commence to yield to the spirit intruders upon his peace and happiness. Then they endeavour to rush into his sphere; and, if he does not restore its integrity, he is in danger of being carried away by an obsessing spirit invasion. We are sometimes told that a certain spirit is “trying to get into our sphere.” This may be a notification that should prompt us to prepare our sphere for his reception by the highest aspirations, and the most earnest resolutions to be as pure and good as our best ideal permits; or it may be a warning to beware of yielding to the slightest temptation, either in thought or deed, that is calculated to weaken our individuality, and subject us to the misleading or pernicious influence of another. Let it be ever remembered that a person is never spiritually strong and secure, save when there is a perfect conviction in his own soul that his life is entirely harmonious with the highest light he has attained. Any inharmony between the inner and the outer self is at once apparent to the dwellers in the spirit world, and there are always those who will take advantage of it, to enter the disrupted sphere, and commit depredations on its possessor.

The Dwellers on the Threshold.

Thus goodness, purity, and absolute *conscientiousness* constitute the only safeguard against the hostile incursions of the lower spirits around us; for there are spirits of every grade of advancement in communication with, or imperceptibly influencing the earth world; and all mankind have their invisible spirit associates. Some men would be horrified could they behold the company that surround them. Mediums often live in almost perpetual terror because they do really see and feel the dark spirits that strive to control them; while, in consequence of their negative state, their enfeebled individuality, their want of spiritual strength, they know they are liable at any moment to become the victims of these unprogressed spirits. Whereas, if they repaired the broken spheres of their individuality by the exercise of their will, resolutely determining never to yield to wrong of any kind, with earnest prayer to God for assistance, these dark phantoms of evil would vanish, all noisy disturbances would cease, and they would be surrounded by angelic visitants from the realms of celestial life. “Fear,” says the spirit teacher of M.A. (Oxon), “is the worst possible frame of mind. Fear establishes the best condition for obsession by the *adversaries*.”

Within the last few years, there have been many cases that illustrate the power of the lower, unprogressed spirits to exert their psychologic power upon sensitives, when, through unfortunate conditions, they have become exposed to them. Such instances have occurred at all times. The case of the Gadarene, I have no doubt, is a frequent one, in connection with the phenomena of insanity. All such cases of obsession or possession show an abnormal relation of mortals to the spirit-world. It is irregular, because the natural law gives to every one his own individuality, and the means to preserve it unimpaired; but other laws supervene, and lead to its apparent infraction. These laws should be carefully studied as a part of scientific Spiritualism.

The Influence of the Earthly Life on the Succeeding Life of the Spirit.

And now let me say a few words upon the influence of the earthly life and character upon the succeeding life of the spirit,

We often hear descriptions of the "summer land," as it is called, with its lovely scenery—its lofty mountains, verdant vales, flowing rivers, and limpid lakes—its beautiful edifices and stately mansions, the homes of the good and true; and we wonder how such things can be, because we give these descriptions a materialistic significance while they refer only to that which is spiritual. In the latter sense, they are literally true; and everything described is as real to a spirit as any of the objects which we here perceive with our physical senses. Not to go into the deeper philosophy of the matter, as revealed to us in this age of spiritual enlightenment, I may say, the character of the scenery we shall behold in our next state of existence, the houses we shall inhabit, the occupations we shall pursue—our environment and our lives, will be whatever we have made them in the earth life. We are, each and all, supplying the materials out of which will be fabricated in spirit life the garments we shall wear, and the homes in which we shall dwell. Every thought, every act, is a part of that material; and the structure is now, perhaps, being put together by spirit hands. "I go to prepare a place for you," said the Nazarene to His disciples. How little did they understand these words when uttered; but how significant must they have appeared, when, having passed to the spirit realm, those faithful workers were ushered into abodes resplendent with the beauty of their self-sacrificing deeds, as expressed in the glowing objects around them! How imperfect, on the other hand, must that spiritual habitation appear that is formed merely of good resolutions, intentions never realised, sentiments of benevolence never carried into action, and mere selfish prayers for personal benefit or salvation! How loathsome the den or hovel which, in spirit life, awaits him whose only deeds are those which vice and sensuality prompts—of him who has permitted avarice—that *auri sacra fames*—to extinguish every generous emotion of his soul, and has written upon his darkened sphere nothing but images of the pain and woe of those whom he has cursed by his selfishness or blasted by his crimes!

To Build for Spiritual Life we must Build from Within.

Nothing can be more certain than the truth—a truth pregnant with meaning—that to build for spiritual life, we must *build from within*; and he who neglects so to build may erect for himself, in this material life, the most sumptuous palace that the pride of man can plan, or his art construct; but, ere long, he will be obliged to quit it, and take up his abode in perhaps the meanest hovel in the spirit world. He may here revel in costly furniture, treading on luxurious carpets, lounging on silken cushions, and sleeping on a bed of down; but if amid that earthly splendour he has nourished toads and vipers in his spirit, he will find them, in the next life, crawling around him.

The Sowing and Reaping.

That is the way in which this life is related to the next. Truly do we reap what we sow, and nothing else. We may sow to the flesh; and, as the Apostle said, "we shall reap corruption"; we may sow to self, and we shall reap leanness and barrenness of spirit. We may labour for the intellect exclusively, and we shall construct for ourselves perhaps a sphere as glittering as the purest crystal, but it will be as cold as an iceberg; and there we may abide in solitary splendour, surrounded with the creations of our own thought, but shivering for the want of human sympathy and love.

On the other hand, we may sow to the spirit, and we shall reap the fruits of the spirit in love, joy, and peace, the memory of kind and loving deeds, charitable thoughts, and gentle words. These are far better materials of which to construct our spirit homes than all the fine-spun theories and subtle reasonings which have ever emanated from the loftiest intellects that emblazon the history of the race. It has been truly said that "a person may know but little, but yet may approach much nearer the Divine than one who has more brain furniture with less of heart."

The Baneful Influence of Mere Intellectuality.

The sphere of the mere intellectualist is always a positive one, made especially so by the fixedness of the thought in which he has been absorbed, and which necessarily prevents his expansion in other directions. In such a sphere the modern Epicurean finds himself imprisoned; and before he can commence his career as a spirit, it must be broken. The darkness of his mind as to spiritual things must be dispelled, and this is not so easy as it may appear, for earthly habitudes and prejudices are amazingly persistent. There are myriads of unhappy beings in

spirit-life surrounded with the objects of their perverted or deluded minds, who for long periods will be able to see no other. We have many illustrations of this fact. These spirits live in their own thought-world, without any of the distractions or relief afforded by material existence. They often desire no change, for they know nothing better. Thus the atheist may wander a long time in the regions of the spirit world wrapped up in his intellectual speculations as to the power of material nature to *unfold itself*, recognising no Supreme Being, no Heavenly Father, to whom His spiritual children may bow in reverence and humility, and to Whom they may send their aspirations and prayers for strength, to aid them on the journey that leads them nearer and nearer to Him; but the progress made by such a spirit must be very little until he learn to recognise the existence and love of the All-Father, since to know Him is the goal of all spiritual progress.

The Mighty Power of Prayer.

The power of prayer is a topic directly pertinent to the subject of which I am treating, in a general, practical way—the philosophy of spirit relations and influences. Prayer is despised by some of the wise ones of the earth as a superstition. *Saying prayers*, indeed, may be to a great extent; but in holy, reverential, heart-felt prayer to the Supreme, "uttered or unexpressed," there is a force as natural as that which propels the locomotive, and as mighty as that which holds the planets in their orbits. There is not a single aspiration for truth, purity, or goodness, uttered in the heart of the humblest person on earth, that is not known and felt in the spheres above, and answered from them. You can never receive what you do not desire. What you desire you attract, and nothing else. Earnestly desire the good, the beautiful, and the true; and you will as surely obtain it as the sun will rise to-morrow, and by a law as fixed and as natural as that which rules the stars in their courses; only, the former is a spiritual law, and the latter one of a physical nature. But do not dictate terms and conditions. God makes no bargains, covenants, or compromises with His creatures. His only covenant was made when He *thought* the universe into existence, with all the laws, or modes of operation, both spiritual and physical, which any and every possible concurrence of circumstances would ever require. Hence no special covenant can ever be needed.

"Still lift to Heaven the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice."

I speak not from any old association or prejudice; I speak as enlightened by actual spirit communion, and a careful perusal of the literature of Spiritualism, tested by the highest light in my own soul.

Before the spirit communications that commenced in 1848, this was attested by the mesmeric sensitives. This was shown in the experiments of Cahagnet; and Leger, in *Psychodumamy* (1846), says:—"I have seen many somnambulists, and I have not found one who does not bear precisely the same testimony to the truths revealed to them in that state." And among those truths, which he enumerates, he mentions "the necessity and efficacy of prayer." Leger was a pupil of the celebrated Deleuze.

In Linton's *Healing of the Nations*, one of the grandest products of modern inspiration, it is said:—

"There is a power to pray, and God hath power over His creation. Prayer is a result of powers or privileges; and hence can He answer all prayers by an exercise of the privilege which His supreme power giveth. What folly to condemn that which has never been tried! Those who condemn prayer are ignorantly striving to deprive themselves of their greatest privilege, even that of communing with their Father in Heaven."

The wonderful seeress of Prevorst said:—"Prayers are the living waters that quench the tantalising thirst of the unhappy spirits."

I can, from my own experience, fully certify to the truth of that statement.

Prayer to Spirits.

Some persons, who seem to be unable to recognise any Infinite Intelligence in the universe of matter and mind, think they must direct their prayers to the finite intelligences, their brother and sister spirits. Well, if that is the best they can do, I am sure God and His holy ministering angels overlook the weakness. But experience has taught me that nothing so shocks the pure minds of exalted spirits as to put them in the place of Him Whose "incorruptible spirit is in all things." "Do not pray to us," they say; "pray to God, and we, His ministers

and servants, will do for you all that accords with His will,"—that is, with His supreme laws, which they ever strive to understand. Praying to finite spirits seems to disclose a spiritual condition of mind that is unfavourable to the reception of the highest influx, for it does not harmonise with the nature of advanced spirits, who feel that, of themselves, they are nothing, and can do nothing. In God they "live and act, and have their being;" they are His children. Though far progressed and still progressing, toward that great Central Source of truth and wisdom, they know that there is, and must ever be, an infinite disparity between themselves and Him. Hence the farther they go, the more humble they become,—the more inclined to bow their heads, and exclaim, in the words of the Hebrew seer :—

"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are all Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

"Prayer," it has been said, "is the mightiest weapon ever given by God to man ; and yet it can be wielded with potent effect even by a little child ;" and, I may add, it is only as a little child that any one can wield it all.

In condemning the offering of prayers to finite spirits, I but condemn that which all exalted spirits refuse to accept, that is, whatever approaches to worship or adoration. The age of polytheism is past, at any rate for the higher civilisation to which we have attained ; and paganism can never be accepted as an improvement upon Christianity. I do not mean to say, however, that no request is ever to be made to our spirit friends, any more than I should advise you never to ask a favour of an earthly friend. But asking the aid of a fellow-creature is one thing, and praying to the Almighty is quite another. We do not humble ourselves as to God, when we ask that kindly assistance which it is the part of friendship to afford ; but when we offer our supplications to Him who is all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, we do it with entire self-surrender, absolute humility, and a sense of infinite weakness and dependence, in His presence. Of our fellow-creatures we may make definite requests, with a positive judgment as to our necessities ; to God alone we may say :—

"This day be bread and peace my lot ;
All else, beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not ;
And let Thy will be done !"

A Grand Law of Progression.

My friends, there is a grand law of progression by which the two worlds are united on an uninterrupted gradation, or scale, of being. "Order [gradation] is Heaven's first law." We begin our course here, to continue it in that better, brighter world beyond—better and brighter, if we have made it so by our lives here. Perhaps, there is no word that is used with so little appreciation of its true import as the word *immortality*, which is used, according to its literal signification, as an absolute exemption from *death*. If death were extinction, or the termination of consciousness and personal identity, this would probably be correct ; but death, we know, is only a transition from one state of being to another ; and we know that there are changes analogous to it in the spheres of spirit life. One friend or companion parts from another, disappears, goes into what is really another state of being, as soon as the time comes for him to pass on his career of advancement. He enters into a new life, with different surroundings, associates, views, and aspirations, with even a changed spirit body, which has thrown off some of its material grossness, and assumed a greater degree of purity and brightness. The old and effete has been dissipated, and the new shines with more of the splendour of the inner soul, whose light, though clouded, and obscured, is never extinguished. This, it is true, is not physical death, but it is often a spiritual resurrection, by which the spiritually dead rises to newness of life—to that condition which may truly be called *immortality*. This is the immortality which Jesus of Nazareth preached, and in regard to which he is reported to have said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"—the way not merely to a continuance of existence, but to the light and glory of that supernal sphere which may truly be called *life*.

Spiritualism not a Fallacious Guide to the Spiritual Life.

If Spiritualism affords no incentive to man in the material life to prepare himself for that condition—if it lulls him into the belief that he can be reckless here as to what his spiritual state is to be hereafter—if it obliterates from his mind the lofty principles, the sacred injunctions and the solemn warnings which all the Messiahs, avatars, and spiritual teachers of the past have presented to mankind, it is a fallacious guide, and

cannot be the true evangel to lift the human race to a higher plane of being. But this is not so. As a rational system, it presents the strongest, best motives for constant effort in the cultivation of all the elements of our nature, and shows, most conclusively, that the noblest and purest life here is the best, nay, the only passport to real immortality, or spiritual life, beyond. Or, as Dean Stanley has suggestively said, "When in its perfected form love has indeed mastered self, here, even in this life, we may trust that the mortal has put on immortality." Yes, and we may be sure, that only on that condition, whether he be an embodied or a disembodied spirit, can the mortal ever become truly immortal ; for, in the words of St. John, "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him"—which condition alone is the true *athanasia*—that of which Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria : "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst forevermore ; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

"Great is the mystery of godliness (spirituality), manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, gazed at by angels and received up in glory."

Never-ending life ! Eternal progress ! What a destiny to contemplate ! What a career to look forward to ! Created to dwell here, imprisoned in clay, for a few years—moments in infinite duration ; endowed with capacities for enjoyment almost limitless, even in this rudimental state—enjoyment only alloyed by our own errors and follies ; kept in this kindergarten of space and time in order that we may learn the lessons we need in our future existence, we then pass away—not as the materialistic poet hath said :—

"To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon."

but to enter upon an endless life of inconceivable bliss, ever and ever obtaining higher, and clearer, and grander conceptions of that Great Being whose children we are, and who is ever calling us toward Himself with beseeching accents of love.

The Grandest Lesson of Spiritualism.

In view of this tremendous destiny, the prospect of which almost paralyses our feeble, earthly conceptions, of what value are all the things of time and sense, except as they are related to that higher state of being ? Men look forward to the future of this life—a future of luxurious ease and enjoyment—forgetful of the mighty future beyond. They are like children anticipating the pleasure of a holiday, heedless of the great prizes of life, which ere long will tempt their ambition, and arouse their mightiest energies. Certainly, Spiritualism teaches a grander lesson in regard to our destiny as immortal beings than was ever taught before. It shows more clearly and rationally the sublime relations of the human soul to the great Oversoul of the universe ; and it presents a higher incentive to soul culture than could have been conceived in any previous age ; albeit the Great Teacher said : "Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect," expressing a possibility which learned theologians would confine exclusively to this infant life. As well might you tell the child, while in infancy, to attain the full development of his earthly father.

It is an inestimable boon to know that our souls may reach Divine perfection, even though we may have to labour for almost infinite ages to achieve it ; but to imagine that we may reach a point of progression beyond which there is no advance—no mystery to unravel, no problem to solve, no task to accomplish, no wider horizon to soar to—where we can no longer say, "Nearer, my God, to Thee !"—that would imply desolation, indeed ; for the prospect beyond would be only an eternity of sloth and stagnation, equivalent virtually to annihilation. Such a thought, however, is not consonant with the constitution of our minds, for we know that, as the finite can never reach the infinite, the progress of the soul must be unending. We may, indeed, be one with God in love, sympathy, and harmony of will, while His attributes of power and wisdom still baffle our comprehension. Hence, let us exclaim with the inspired poetess :—

"Throughout the boundless All in All,
Life lengthens—an unbroken chain—
And He in Whom we stand or fall
Feels all our pleasures and our pain.
O, Infinite ! O Holy Heart !
Give us but patience to endure,
Until we know Thee as thou art,
And feel our lives in Thee made sure."

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Light :

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1886.

TWO PSYCHICAL NOVELS.*

BY A. P. SINNETT.

In the first of these psychical novels, which the author of *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism* has published, we have an exposition of the doctrine of Karma, the Eastern equivalent for one of the central doctrines that differentiate spirit-teachings from average orthodox religious beliefs, viz., that man makes his own future, the inevitable consequence and result of the acts and habits of his present life. Readers of *Esoteric Buddhism* will know how considerable a part this doctrine plays in the teaching therein conveyed. Spiritualists will recognise its frequent presentation in a form, varied only so far as to adapt it to their specific beliefs, in what they have learned from many sources. Students of the primitive Christian teaching of an age before the purity of the faith had been adulterated by priests to adapt it to their own requirements, will know that this doctrine is conspicuous there also. In fact, it is a truth that finds its place in all systems of religious belief: an eternal principle, "the law of the conservation of energy on the moral and spiritual planes of nature."

In Mr. Sinnett's novel we have all the materials for psychical complications. A mysterious Baron von Mondstern, at whose castle on the Rhine the party of inquirers into occult phenomena is assembled: a worker of marvels, one who wields the hidden forces of nature, "sweeps them forward with a commanding gesture" (for example) against a doomed tree, which, "with a mighty tearing crash, broke a few feet above the roots, and fell heavily to the ground." A clairvoyante, Mrs. Lakesby, sees the adepts, "two men dressed in white," standing by the Baron and aiding him to perform this occult act of destruction. She is a Spiritualist rather than an Occultist, and her visions lead to some interesting conversations, in which the Theosophical beliefs as to the danger of communion with spirits are expounded. A dominant Professor, who naturally takes the lead in all arrangements; a magnetic person, born to subdue others to his will, who, in this process, has got himself into some very mixed and reprehensible relations with certain members of the opposite sex, and who, it seems to us, does not find his Karma at all sufficiently unpleasant. These are the leading characters, and besides we have Mrs. Miller and her husband ("Jem," a very attractive character), Mr. and Miss Blane, Merland and Annerly (a developing clairvoyant), with Sir John Hexton, and some others not important.

The interest of the novel rests less on the story, the thread of which is, to say the truth, not strong, but on the incidental conversations and expositions of the belief which the author holds. For example, the contradictory nature of the messages given by spirits is strongly brought out by the Baron, who represents Occultism. "The difficulty (he

says) is to understand rightly the nature of the entities Mrs. Lakesby perceives by her clairvoyant sight. There is nothing in nature more delusive than the phenomena of that borderland of spiritual life that we get into when we first cross the frontier of physical phenomena. We may seem then to encounter living beings whom we may be apt to mistake for spirits of a more or less angelic order, when they are really no more than shades of former human beings, whose nobler aspect, so to speak, is turned away from us, and imperceptible even to the higher clairvoyant sense, which perceives what may be called their astral aspect." In order to illustrate this problem, which lies at the root of the difficulty of spirit-identity, the Baron is represented as causing the "astral shade" of the Professor's mother to utter an opinion on Occultism absolutely contradictory to one expressed by her shortly before in the course of the same conversation. This is rather severe; but one must not be too hard upon the devices of the novelist. Without accepting as probable such an extreme of contradictoriness, or even acquiescing in the existence of such a power of suggestion as that claimed for the Baron, it may be admitted that the scanty information given (and usually volunteered) by these *revenants*, combined with a general prevalence of evasiveness in reply, does complicate the question of spirit-identity, as a matter of logical proof, very considerably; and this complication is not lessened by the difficulty of framing a test of identity which would be perfectly conclusive logically. Conviction, when obtained, is got on another plane altogether, and by methods which often cannot be qualified as logical.

We conclude with a striking passage on the relation of these psychic studies to religious questions which is worthy of attention, and, at the same time, gives a fair example of the clear and incisive style which Mr. Sinnett commands.

All that the religions of the world, so far, have laid down on authority, the enlarged wisdom of man, developed along the psychic path, may enable him to reconstruct out of his own consciousness with clear and certain confidence—casting aside, with no less confidence, the incrustations of error which have gathered round the central truths. To acquire this psychic knowledge is the moral coming of age of humanity, and with its help we may begin a religious life of quite a new kind: Let me try and make this idea quite plain. What is it that makes so many of the best men stand aside from what is ordinarily called religion, refusing to have any dealings with any of its forms and customs? Surely it is that they cannot stoop to the intellectual ignominy of bowing down before the obvious strain of human error that runs through them all. There is always a something, or some group of conceptions in their own minds, that they reverence; but to profess reverence for prevailing religious tenets, and, still more, to practise religious ceremonial, is to effect an intellectual submission to human teachers whom they may clearly see to be their intellectual inferiors. That revolts their sense of the fitness of things, though they may not always want to assert what dull-witted people, failing to understand their position, would rebuke as intellectual pride and foolishly regard as a sin against the principles of religion, which prescribe a child-like attitude of mind in approaching what they would, perhaps, call the throne of God, and what others might call the consideration of the absolute. The pulpit of the Rev. John Smith is not the throne of God and his sermon is not the absolute; that is what the earlier type of religious people forget. The priest, in all his aspects, is to humanity what the nursery governess is to the single human creature. It is perfectly right that the child should respect the nursery governess: there is a period in his life when she can teach him.

Man, on coming to maturity, does not want teachers; he has that within himself which, developed properly, enables him to acquire real knowledge of religious truth, of good and evil, of the absolute verities of nature at the fountain-head of knowledge, for himself. The process of developing this inner power of discerning the truth is psychic science. For the purposes of such development one may need guides, instructors, masters if you like, but the teaching of psychic science is not that such and such a doctrine is to be accepted on authority, however exalted; but that such and such a course of training will awaken dormant faculties by means of which truth in that direction can be perceived by a man for himself.

* KARMA. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885.) UNITED. (London: G. Redway, 1886.)

SPIRITUALISM AT HOME.

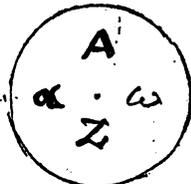
A TEST ENVELOPE AND ITS DENOUEMENT.

At p. 216 in "LIGHT," the number for the 8th of May, will be found a record of two sealed up envelopes, entrusted to my care by my friend, Mr. E. T. Bennett, having been written upon, outside, by direct spirit power—such writing purporting in one case to be a copy of, and in the other a reply to, the contents of the sealed envelope. My friend was not satisfied with the result because it was subsequently ascertained that by strong light, carefully shaded, the contents could be deciphered. There was no question that those envelopes were returned intact, but naturally Mr. Bennett was dissatisfied with the result, and I was annoyed at the failure through the test itself proving valueless.

A third envelope was then more carefully prepared and my friend shall recount the story in his own words :—

"On the 13th of February, 1886, I posted to Mr. Morell Theobald an envelope carefully gummed in the usual way, and then sealed with my own seal, "E. T. B." The envelope contained some writing on a slip of paper the size of the envelope, and which was enclosed between two pieces of card, also the size of the envelope. The writing, according to a memorandum which I retained, and which has been in an envelope in my own private desk ever since, was as follows :—

0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 - 10
W'X7 77WX
Psalm. 1.1.



E. T. B.
13. Feb. 1886.

Kindly do your best to write this on the outside of the envelope. E. T. B.

"The value of a previous experiment had been vitiated by a similar written slip being enclosed between two pieces of paper in an envelope. It was found possible to read the writing by the aid of a strong lamp. In order, therefore, to avoid this flaw, card was used in the present experiment for covering the writing; and still further to avoid the possibility of the enclosed writing being thus read, part of it was in ink and part in pencil.

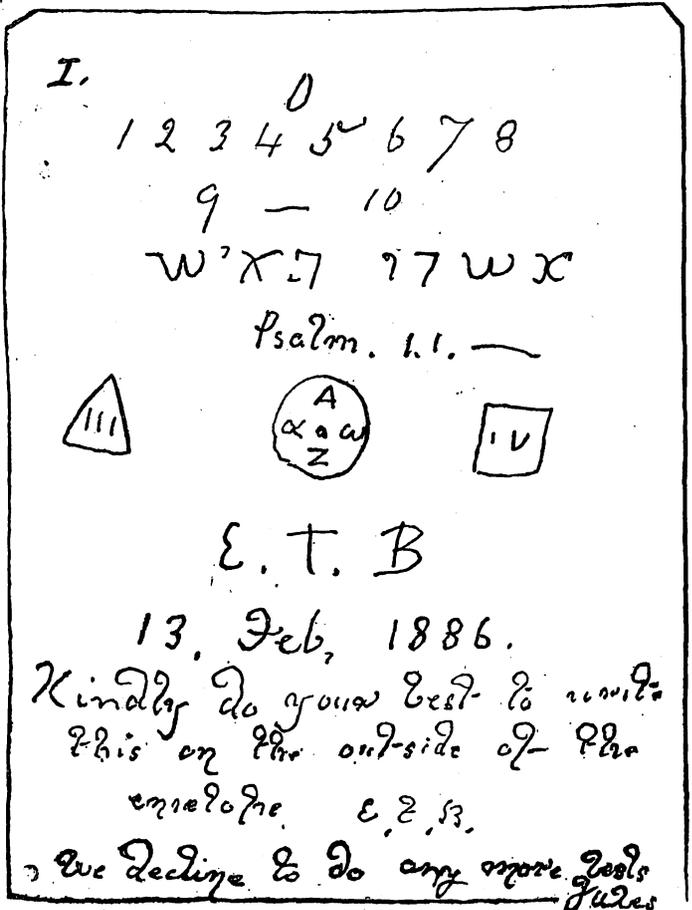
"What was written was entirely unknown to any one except myself. No communication passed between Mr. Theobald and myself as to the contents of the letter, between the 13th of February and the 1st of September, on which date he wrote to me enclosing a rough transcript of what purported to be a copy of the contents. No one could have had access to the memorandum which I retained, and I had not communicated its nature to any one whatever.

"The envelope is now, so far as I can see, in exactly the same condition as when I posted it, the paper, gumming, and sealing intact.

"September 7th, 1886. EDWARD T. BENNETT."

So that on 7th September, on my showing Mr. Bennett this envelope the only difference he could detect in the

envelope after a most careful examination was the writing on the outside, of which the following is a facsimile :—



At the same time it was closely inspected by other friends, who recorded their testimony as follows :—

September 7th, 1886.

We whose names are hereto subscribed declare that we have carefully examined the envelope marked "I" and sealed securely at the back with a seal bearing the initials E.T.B., and can detect no sign of its having been in any way tampered with, and it appears to us never to have been opened.

(Signed)

- C. C. MASSEY.
R. M. THEOBALD.
E. DAWSON ROGERS.
H. WITTHALL.

Any member of my family who also carefully examined it would sign the above, as would also two outside friends who saw it two days previously. I myself, and others, examined the edges of the envelope under a magnifying glass before taking it to be inspected.

One gentleman whom I especially wished to be present and see the envelope opened was, through some misunderstanding as to time, not there (Mr. R. Hodgson, whose investigations into Madame Blavatzky's surroundings in India are well known). We all agreed that it would be better to leave the envelope unopened, and subsequently I suggested that, as I was then going to Newcastle, Mr. Dawson Rogers should take it away and obtain a facsimile (as above) before the writing became rubbed or faint. He was accordingly good enough to take charge of it for that purpose (on Tuesday evening, September 7th).

On the following Saturday Mr. Hodgson called upon Mr. Dawson Rogers on other business and was shown the envelope, which in the meantime had been through five or six different hands in the process of obtaining the fac-simile; and upon inspection then it was discovered that one edge had been opened and gummed up again.

I am reluctant to suspect any one through whose hands it passed, although I am quite accustomed now to be suspected by persons only partly informed of phenomena

daily occurring at my house. I simply state the circumstances as they occurred, leaving others to judge for themselves.

The fact, however, remains;—our spirit friends object strongly to tests and to the modes of investigation pursued by the Society for Psychical Research, although they have completed three such envelopes to oblige me; but each one has had an inglorious end.

However, I hope before long to place before the public a narrative of phenomena, extending over a period of twenty years, which in their record shall include and account for many failures in this direction, which at first blush simply suggest fraud as the readiest solution.

I do not suggest it myself, nor will any one who knows the members of our household suggest it as applicable to them. Of course the writing has to be accounted for even if it is suggested that those whose names appear above, vouching for the integrity of the envelope, were deceived—a thing scarcely to be imagined after critical examination.

Blackheath.

MORELL THEOBALD.

September 19th, 1886.

PROFESSOR KIDDLE'S ADDRESS, which appears in another column, is very lengthy, but rather than spoil the continuity of his argument we have given it *in extenso*, especially in view of its very valuable character.

ON the back page of the cover of this issue of "LIGHT," will be found announcements of new and cheaper editions of some standard works on Spiritualism. We hope this will lead to our friends making a free use of them as presents for inquirers.

THE London Occult Lodge and Association for Spiritual Inquiry will recommence their second course of lectures at the Regent Hotel, 31, Marylebone-road, on Sunday, October 3rd, at seven o'clock, when a discussion will take place on "Esoteric Buddhism," in which Mr. A. P. Sinnett will take part.

WE learn that Count Emile Wimpffen has been acquiring land in South America with the purpose of forming communities on a fraternal and Spiritualistic basis. From the failure of similar schemes in America and elsewhere, we are inclined to doubt the possibility of success of this latest "crank."

MRS. SIDGWICK AND MR. EGLINTON.—Mr. Eglinton has, during the past two months, been busily engaged in preparing for press the vast quantity of evidence for the reality of psychography which he has received in response to the appeal which he made some time since. This testimony, prefaced by a personal reply to Mrs. Sidgwick, will be published as a supplement (extending to some sixty pages) to "LIGHT" for October 16th. Full particulars will be given next week.

GHOSTLY VISITORS AT HAMPTON COURT.—In his *History of Hampton Court*, Mr. Law says:—"Catherine Howard has left a memory as well as a name in the palace. Her troubled spirit is said to frequent 'the old mysterious "Haunted Gallery," the door of which is on the right-hand side as you go down the Queen's great staircase.' Tradition, or rather history, says that Catherine had contrived to escape from the chamber in which she was confined, and, hurrying down the long gallery, intercepted her husband on his return from hearing Mass. Henry turned a deaf ear to her prayers; shrieking and struggling, she was dragged back by her guards; and ever since she still shrieks in that gallery from time to time. Two ladies of character and station have heard her plaintive screams within the last few years." Mr. Law tells another ghost story of the Court which is at least as well authenticated; and he appears to be not altogether sceptical as to either.

EACH generation has had its own problems to solve, its special critical and speculative difficulties. And there have always been in the churches those who were troubled and were afraid, and have pleaded the danger of progressive thought as destructive of faith. They have urged men to cling to the old dogmatic forms, as though in them alone were safety. They have not understood that, if the inward life is failing, the old forms will not create it anew; nor have they seen that most often what they lament as loss is but the preparation for larger truth and the stirring of new energies of life. But, happily, in our free churches, we have always had for our strongest teachers true sons of the Spirit, who have known the value of their birth-right, and in the midst of whatever fear and distrust have been unmoved. Their chief concern has been for the truth, which has been their one authority. They have not been anxious for the morrow, but have trusted that, through simple faithfulness, they would be led aright. And so, out of each wrestling with darkness and difficulty, fuller spiritual life has come. Forms of thought have changed, knowledge has increased; but the life of devotion has remained. Still, the pure in heart see God, and the quietness of the Spirit gives us peace.—*The London Inquirer*.

MR. S. J. DAVEY AND "V."

My attention has been called to some references to myself in an article by "V." in "LIGHT" of September 18th, 1886, p. 425.

The writer of the article refers to certain correspondence I had with her towards the end of 1884, and says: "I have hesitated some time before mentioning this correspondence, but the notoriety which is now attached to Mr. Davey's name in connection with Mr. Eglinton and Spiritualism does, I think, not only justify but require me to state the facts I have here mentioned in the interest of truth and justice."

Now, sir, I have still in my possession the written promise of "V." that she *would not mention my letters to anyone*.

Further, "V." raises the question as to whether I was setting a trap for her in that correspondence, although she "charitably" inclines to another view.

It would seem from her statements that my good faith is to be impugned because my position now as regards Mr. Eglinton's "phenomena" is so different from what it was some time ago. Such a charge hardly deserves comment.

At the time of my correspondence with "V." I fully believed in the genuineness of these phenomena, and I spared neither time nor trouble in endeavouring to further what I then regarded as the cause of truth.

You, sir, must be aware of this, and you will doubtless remember that I wrote a private letter in answer to an inquirer who had written to "LIGHT." This private letter was published by your mistake, with my name and address appended, in "LIGHT," September 20th, 1884, without my knowledge, and without my consent. This letter sufficiently shows my earnestness.

As for my "mediumistic power" in 1884, I have already pointed out in "LIGHT," August 21st, 1886, that "certain manifestations which I was then led to believe proceeded from my 'developing mediumship' turned out to be simple hoaxes imposed upon me by two persons who have since confessed to the methods they adopted in order to deceive me."

It is true that at the time of writing to "V." I was collecting evidence with the view of publishing it in order to demonstrate the genuineness of the "phenomena" occurring in the presence of Mr. Eglinton.

The inquiries which I addressed to "V." concerned the strengthening of such evidence. Yet "V." says with respect to my correspondence:—

"In his third letter he went a little too far, and asked me to send him a specimen of my spirit friend's handwriting. I therefore wrote shortly and civilly, of course declining to comply with his request; and a few lines of apology from him finished the correspondence."

This statement conveys a misrepresentation, though, no doubt, unintentionally.

I still have the lady's letters (they have up to the present time been treated by me as confidential), and I shall certainly feel now justified in publishing them should occasion require.

As a matter of fact "V." wrote me a long letter in reply to my request for a specimen of her friend's handwriting, in which she stated she regretted she could not comply with my request as her spirit friend had "so particularly requested" her to keep his letters absolutely to herself, and that she would not show them to her most intimate friend, fearing the privilege of receiving them might be taken from her. Besides many other details contained in this letter, "V." also enclosed me an account, quoted from her private diary, of what "V." at that time described as the most marvellous séance she had ever had.

The third and last letter I received from "V." was pervaded, I think, by a somewhat different tone.

The publication of "V.'s" communications would amply justify my statements.

Regarding the "twitches or convulsive movements" to which, in 1884, I was occasionally subject, I do not now regard them as proofs of developing mediumship. I have sometimes noticed similar movements myself in other persons during what were unquestionably conjuring performances, when these persons were under the impression that communications were being received from spirits.—Yours, &c.,

Beckenham.

S. J. DAVEY.

September 20th, 1886.

A BLACKBURN hospital has benefited to the extent of £22 by the recent discussion on Spiritualism which took place between Mr. E. W. Wallis and the Rev. M. Ashcroft.

MR. EGLINTON IN RUSSIA.

[FROM THE "Neue Spiritualistische Blätter," No. 33,
AUGUST 12TH, 1886.]

TRANSLATED BY "V."

The following phenomena took place through Mr. Eglinton's mediumship in the Spiritualistic circle of Moscow: On one occasion Abdullah, a control of Eglinton's, appeared, a tall, black-bearded man with a woman and a child. Another time the same spirit showed himself, together with his medium, to all present. Direct spirit writing in the *Russian* language was obtained between two slates closely screwed together, lying upon the table. Direct writing was likewise received between two cardboard slates, so closely pressed together that the pencil could not have moved without abnormal power. One of the gentlemen sat upon these, and felt, while the others heard the writing. In spite of the close pressure of the morsel of lead the corresponding side of the other cardboard slate was without a mark. The numbers of bank notes unknown to everyone present were correctly given in the spirit writing. A question was asked at hazard concerning the word which would be found in a certain line in a certain page of a certain book, without its having been previously seen by any present, and the answer was given correctly in spirit writing, the supposition of thought-reading being thus excluded. Mr. Eglinton had only touched the slates with two of his fingers. Spiritual manifestations frequently took place. A spirit complied with the mentally expressed wish of Herr Blagonrawow that himself and Herr Lwow should be touched simultaneously. On one occasion Herr Btagoi felt that a spirit hand pressed through his coat on his right shoulder and pinched the naked flesh.

In all four séances the chain remained unbroken even for a moment. The medium's neighbour on either side held his hands fast, and bear witness to his perfectly passive demeanour.

We retail this account, much condensed, from Nos. 17 and 21 of the *Rebus*, and append the signatures of the witnesses present in token of the truth of the statements:—E. J. Tolstaja, Th. A. Lwow, P. Th. Blagonrawow, A. A. Smagin, E. G. Grek, R. P. Grek, J. O. Jarkowski, D. J. Btagoj, and N. A. Lwow.

In St. Petersburg the first three séances took place at the rooms of Professor Butlerow, the fourth at the residence of State Counsellor Alexander Aksakow.

At the first of these séances direct spirit writing was obtained in sealed ordinary slates and in cardboard slates, tightly screwed together, belonging to Professor Butlerow. Morsels of pencil had been previously inserted and the slates marked by all the professors present.

Professor Dobrostawin took from his pocket a book, *Bernay's Chemistry*. The book was not shown to Mr. Eglinton, and from this book, without looking in it, Professor Butlerow selected the forty-sixth page, Professor Wagner the twelfth line, and Professor Dobrostawin the fifth word to be given. The slate with the question written upon it was laid upon the table with the writing downwards. Mr. Eglinton took the cardboard slates, laid them upon Professor Butlerow's shoulder, and writing was soon heard, followed by three soft taps inside the slates. The latter were opened and these words were found written, "The word is compound—'chimney-glass.'" When they came to examine the book, they found that the fifth word on the twelfth line of the forty-sixth page was "glass," the word preceding it being "chimney," to which it is connected by a hyphen, thus the explanation "the word is compound." A facet of the pencil was found to be worn and the corresponding side of the cardboard free from mark, though the pencil was closely pressed against it. No one then present knew that such a word was to be found at the place mentioned. When the sealed double slates were opened, the words "Good-bye" in large letters were found written. We append the signatures of the professors of the university who were present:—Professor A. Butlerow, Professor Nicholas Wagner, and Professor A. Dobrostawin.

At the second séance at Professor Butlerow's rooms, the spirit of a female of middle height appeared in voluminous white garments, with a round face and black hair, arranged after the fashion of fifty years back. The spirit came before the curtain, and Frau E. D. Pribytkowa recognised her aunt who had died ten years previously, the recognition being confirmed by Herr Viktor Pribytkow. Then Abdullah showed himself (who is said to have been a Persian prince in the sixteenth century) and disappeared before the eyes of the spectators, becoming smaller and smaller.

Afterwards, when Eglinton essayed to come forth from the cabinet, a spirit form was seen holding him back, so that on this occasion both medium and spirit were visible at the same time.

The witnesses to this and the following séance were:—E. D. Pribytkowa, W. J. Pribytkowa, A. N. Aksakow, M. P. Gedeonow, Professor N. P. Wagner, E. P. Wischniakow, and Professor Butlerow.

At the third séance, which took place at Professor Butlerow's rooms, a small table was placed before the curtain, upon which were laid three sheets of paper, marked by Professor Butlerow, Professor Wagner, and Herr Alexander Aksakow, together with three pencils, one red, one blue, and the other of the ordinary kind.

A hand was seen to write and then disappear; then the same thing was done by another hand. Afterwards Abdullah came forward. Herr Aksakow asked him to show that his left arm was missing (which he had lost in battle). The spirit seized the hand of Barbara Iwanowna Pribytkowa and let her feel him on both sides, and she remarked that he had no left fore-arm. At his second appearance E. D. Pribytkowa wished *mentally* that Abdullah might bring her a sheet of paper from the little table, and everyone saw him lift up the table and reach it to her. The last time he came forward he disappeared before the eyes of the spectators after he had grown in height and raised himself free above the floor. After him two materialised spirits appeared together—one being a male figure (Dr. Forbes) the other a female, and remained visible for some time.

At the conclusion of the séance the following words in *Russian* were found written upon one of the marked sheets of paper with the blue pencil:—

"Science explains much, but it will never with its bold grasp comprehend the laws which enable us to manifest and to show ourselves to you. This secret belongs to the future, not to the present."

On the same sheet was likewise writing with the red pencil, in English, by one of Eglinton's controls, named "Ernest."

The fourth séance took place at Herr Aksakow's residence. There were present as well the University Professors Dobrostawin, and W. W. Paschutin, Herr M. Gedeonow, and Mesdames M. P. Saburowa, S. D. Bestuzewa, W. J. Pribytkowa, and Dobrostawina.

A tambourine, the surface of which was covered with a luminous preparation, raised itself slowly from the table and approached Frau Saburowa, then was thrown upon the floor. A musical box played and ceased playing at a wish expressed and then played only three notes when wished to do so. At the mentally expressed wish of Frau Bestuzewa, a ring was drawn from one of her fingers and placed upon another. Round Eglinton, luminous tongues were seen (who will not be reminded of the tongues of fire above the heads of the Apostles?) One of these *penetrated through* the table, moved slowly about those present, remained stationary before Professor Paschutin and then disappeared into Eglinton's breast. After that the medium ascended four ells from the ground, so that Mesdames Saburowa and Dobrostawina had to mount upon their chairs not to lose hold of his hands. Mr. Eglinton hovered some time in the air and then sank slowly down again.

At all these séances the medium's hands were securely held. The direct writing took place in full light.

I have only given the principal occurrences at these séances, extracted from the accounts in the *Rebus*, Nos. 23 and 26.

L. P.

MRS. GIRLING, the "mother" of the New Forest Shakers, passed away on the morning of the 19th at the encampment near the village of Hordle. The *Standard* says that: "Through all the vicissitudes and hardships of the seventeen years which have elapsed since the Shakers settled on the confines of the New Forest they have been sustained by the assurance which Mrs. Girling gave them that she and those who followed her precepts would never suffer physical death, but would be endowed with an earthly immortality. That this could be other than a blessing, other than a desirable privilege, never seems to have occurred either to the Mother or any of her family. Up to the present time their robust faith has been proof against all adverse demonstrations. Several members of the community have died; but their decease has been attributed to a want of that earnest conviction and belief which alone could ensure a supernatural interposition between themselves and death." At one time it was popularly supposed that Mrs. Girling was able to produce psychical manifestations, but on inquiry it was found there was no foundation for such a statement.

NOTES ON ROYAL NATIVITIES.

PRINCE ARTHUR, SON OF THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

Born 13th January, 1883, 0.5 p.m., at Windsor.

I am not aware that any astrological judgment on the nativity of this young Prince has yet been published. It is rather with the view of calling to it the attention of experts—among whom are some readers of "LIGHT"—than with much confidence in my own judgment, that I offer the following remarks on what seems to me a very gravely afflicted horoscope. I am the rather induced to do this now, because, if I am right, the present is about the time at which the evil positions should make themselves known by their results.

We find 19° of Taurus ascending, with an oblique ascension of 23° 15'. Saturn has the same longitude (within a few minutes), and an oblique ascension of 27° 9', giving an arc of direction of 3° 54', or about three years, ten months, three weeks from birth.* The sun, "Hyleg" or "Apheta" (giver of life) is on the meridian, receiving the exact mundane square of Saturn. The moon is on the cusp of the twelfth (a bad house) in Pisces 19° 37', applying to the opposition of Uranus from the sixth (the house of sickness) retrograde in Virgo 23° 15'. We thus find about the same interval here as between Saturn and the Ascendant. And as I venture to think some notable modern authorities in error in disregarding the lordship of houses in nativities, I add the circumstance that Venus, ruler of the Ascendant, has about the same distance in longitude from the fatal eighth house. For the same reason I cannot wholly neglect the fact that the moon is squared (again with the like interval) by Jupiter, who in this scheme is lord of the eighth. *Cauda Draconis* is on the Ascendant.

Passing to the Solar Revolution for the present year (which fell at 5.35 a.m. on the 13th January last), I am struck by the fact that the very degree of the eighth house at birth was ascending at the Revolution. The moon was on the cusp of the fourth, with the declination of Mars, who was only about a degree from the place of Uranus at birth, which would denote a greater severity in the effects of the direction of moon to the opposition of Uranus.

The transit at present of Saturn over the opposition to the place of the sun at birth will be watched with interest by those who agree in my estimate of the above positions.

I may add that the Duke of Connaught's Solar Revolution for this year (May 1st, 1.18 a.m.) is much afflicted. It is a curious coincidence that, as in the case of his son, the Ascendant at the Revolution is exactly the eighth of birth. The moon was in close application to the opposition of Uranus from the eighth and to square of Saturn from the cusp of the sixth. In the Duke's nativity, the secondary direction of the moon to conjunction with Uranus is close at hand. But I find no great primary directions denoting that His Royal Highness is himself in danger.

The Solar Revolution of the Princess Margaret of Connaught has Saturn exactly rising, and the sun, lord of the third (the house of brethren), in the eighth. The youngest daughter of the Duke (born 17th March last, at 9 a.m., in London) has Saturn on the cusp of her third house. The hour and place of birth of the Duchess of Connaught I have not got. She was born on the 25th July, 1860. Mars was in opposition to Venus, who was exactly on the zodiacal place of Mars in the Duke's nativity. There is now a transit of Saturn over this place, which should have an observable influence, according to the signification of Mars and Venus in the two horoscopes.

September 21st, 1886.

C. C. M.

O, MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence;
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
Of miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's minds
To vaster issues.

GEORGE ELIOT.

* Some astrologers do not direct when the significators and promissors are "within orbs" at birth. The former are then supposed to be already under the influence, and the time of the event is determined by secondary directions and transits. And, judging of time by direction, it is to be remembered that the coincidence is rarely exact, the event usually preceding the date of direction by periods varying from a few days to a few months.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

Hermetically Sealed Glass Tubes.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Perhaps there may exist a natural reason for the failure which it is said has hitherto accompanied the attempt to obtain direct spirit writing on a slip of paper enclosed in a hermetically sealed glass tube.

Spirits are no more than mortals possessed of supernatural powers, and can only act in accordance with spiritual law as mortals do with so-called natural law. Glass is a non-conductor of electricity, and electricity plays a conspicuous part in the conditions necessary to spiritual manifestations. I know from the recorded experiences of others, and my own observations, that no weather is more unfavourable for spirit manifestations of any kind than what we call thundery weather. Now, wood is a well-known conductor of electricity, and especially in physical manifestations, wooden objects such as chairs or tables seem most easily acted upon by spirit power. For the purpose of psychography, slates enclosed in wooden frames, either single or securely fastened together, are generally used, the hand of the medium touching the wooden framework. If instead of a glass tube one of wood, or a small wooden box were used, equally hermetically sealed, and, therefore, affording quite as crucial a test, I venture to think, other conditions being favourable, the results would be different. Indeed, such experiments with articles either of wood or any other material except glass have been tried with perfect success times innumerable with competent investigators; and it seems as unfair, if my supposition is correct, to ask the unseen intelligences to perform what is simply an impossibility to them as it would be to ask a mortal to write without ink in his pen, or to do anything else contrary to the laws of nature.—I am, sir, yours truly,

V.

Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. Eglinton.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—There is one point in the case between Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. Eglinton to which the advocates on either side do not seem to have given sufficient weight, viz., that these slate-writing phenomena do not stand alone, but must be taken in connection with the whole system.

If Mr. Eglinton's Psychography is only "clever conjuring," so in all human probability are his materialisations, and the whole series of wonders with which "Twixt Two Worlds" is filled.

If it is logical to conclude that where imposture has once been attempted its presence in every other case may be assumed, it is equally logical to conclude that if one abnormal phenomenon has taken place under test conditions where "continuity of observation" was either certain or unnecessary, the probability, if not the certainty, surely is that all are genuine.

Neither does Mr. Eglinton personally stand alone. If he is a conjurer so probably is every other medium—and they are not few—in whose presence direct writing has been obtained.

If it is a trick the *modus operandi* must be well known, and who can suppose that a number of impostors who, for the sake of a precarious living play upon the tenderest feelings of their victims, would ALL prove above the temptation of the reward and notoriety which a public exposure would undoubtedly earn for them. Such an exposure has never been made. The obvious conclusions seems to be that there is none to make.—

AN ASSOCIATE S. P. R.

September 18th, 1886.

DR. T. L. NICHOLS has removed to 446, Strand, where all his all-reformatory works on sanitary and social questions may be obtained.

"V.'s" LETTER on "A Learned Lady's Logic," in our last number, has called forth many expressions of approval from correspondents.

THE *Harbinger of Light* for August contains a long and highly laudatory notice of "Twixt Two Worlds," a second edition of which is now in the binder's hands, and will be published at the greatly reduced price of 6s. As this volume contains evidence of extreme value a perusal of the same will well repay the investigator at this juncture, when the question of psychography has been referred to the domains of conjuring.

WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of any legerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a

mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which, even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

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

CONJURERS AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

HARRY KELLAR, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, regarding which he said:—

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

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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