

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

No. XLVI.

[In the month of April, 1874, I was receiving a number of communications by automatic writing, similar to those which are contained in my volume *Spirit Teachings*. For an account of the methods used by the communicating Intelligences, I must refer my readers to that volume. I can only say here that communications made to me in this way were written without any conscious knowledge on my part of their contents. In some cases information thus given was provably outside of my experience, so far as that was known to me. Since I published my *Spirit Teachings* I have heard a good deal about the unconscious self, and have listened to many speculations as to the extent of the knowledge that may be concealed somewhere deep down in my inner consciousness without my being aware of it. I must leave my readers to settle for themselves the knotty question how far they think that the consecutive series of communications made to me are explained by this recondite theory, or are more simply and naturally accounted for by the account always put forward by my instructors. I have my own opinion, from which I have never varied. Spirits these people called themselves, having an existence independent of my life and consciousness, and as such I accept them. All these messages were certainly written out without any conscious knowledge on my part, and many of them after I had taken extraordinary precautions to prevent my seeing what was being written, and so to use my own mind as to make it reasonable to believe that the communicating Intelligence was alien, as it invariably pretended to be. Once more I must leave it to my speculative readers, who favour apparently every hypothesis except the natural one, to account, first, for those Intelligences who gave to me a prolonged and remarkably elevated series of teachings approaching me with a lie in their mouths: and next for the fact, on the assumed hypothesis, that I, a morally constituted being in the normal state, should become, in a higher and more spiritual condition, a consistent and phenomenal liar, deceiver, and fraud. It seems to me that some evidence is required beyond fine-spun speculative theory before we ought to be asked to do more than listen with a smile to such explanations. They will obtain, I believe, in the present state of mind on the part of some who concern themselves with these matters. I believe also that that state of mind will last only so long as real knowledge is absent. Once experience has chased away ignorance the specu-

lations will evaporate. In the meantime they are useful only as throwing up into clear relief the completeness of the only explanation that really covers the whole ground. This I say with a disposition to believe—I may say with a full conviction—that recent experiments in hypnotism, especially at Nancy, have thrown much light on sub-consciousness in man, and with an expectation that they may be looked upon as likely to prove very fruitful in the future.

I have kept these particular messages a long time by me. I have already explained in some of my recent "Notes by the Way" how that has been. And now I print them (as I should have done, if I had had my way, long since), because they seem to me slight and simple sketches of what are contained in elaborate books, and therein worked out at great length, and in a very dry and unreadable condition. Also I print them with no pretence at originality in the opinions and views expressed in them. They were new to me when given. They were considered by my instructors necessary for my information. For, it will be remembered that most of my *Spirit Teachings* turned on religious subjects, and these teachings on the harmony of religions, and the central idea in each, were very germane to the matter of the *Spirit Teachings* which have been published, and to many others which have not yet seen the light. It is only recently that I have found that new truth to me in 1874 may be by no means new in 1889 to some of my readers. But, though the various volumes that issue from Trübners, and other publishers, under the direction of Max Müller and other authors, deal very extensively with the religious faiths of the world, it is in one book only which has quite recently come under my notice that I find anything approaching to a consideration in a single volume of more than 500 closely printed pages of what is lightly sketched in these few communications. The volume to which I refer is called *The Ten Great Religions*,* and it has in its exhaustive pages that which a student may well consult, but which is a little beyond most busy readers. This is an additional reason for my printing these messages now. The subject with which they deal is "in the air," and similar ideas seem to be occurring to many people at the same time. I can say definitely that, when originally presented, these were new to me, and quite off the lines of my thought.

It remains only to add that they have been in a very few places verbally altered, and very slightly added to, in the same way that *Spirit Teachings* were before republication in a volume. "M.A.(Oxon.)"]

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

I have some questions to ask.

Ask not now. We are prepared to speak to you on matters which it is important for us to deal with at once. We have told you before how that the religions of the world find their sum and crown in that Divine Revelation of

* *Ten Great Religions, Part II, a Comparison of All Religions*, by J. F. Clarke, Price 10s. 6d., Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill.

which we are the messengers. We have told you that each nation in times past has had so much of truth revealed as it was able to bear.* Each germ of truth has been obscured and stunted by human error, yet each religion in some degree has had a particle of truth within it. We have pointed out to you generally how Jesus recognised this in His teachings, how He spoke of the other sheep who should be gathered into His fold, and how even in the imperfect report which has come down to you He is described as judging all the nations and not only the particular people whose Messiah He was. We need not now dwell on the teachings of those who are the followers of Jesus, because we desire to take a wider range and to show you the germ of truth in each one of the great religions of your world. In short, we tell you that the Supreme has one grand plan of education which He has developed up to its final crown of which you are now the recipients. You are sufficiently familiar now with our teaching on this point to obviate the necessity of going over the same points again. If we have hitherto dealt almost exclusively with the errors that have crept into the religions of the world† and especially into that with which you are most acquainted, we have done so from the necessity of pointing out the fallacy of the doctrine of plenary inspiration. We desire now to show you that in all, even the most ancient religions, there is a germ of truth which you may recognise, and which constituted so much of Divine and perfect truth as the then recipient was able to accept. We have told you that the Books which make up your Bible show a progressive revelation of the Supreme from days of extreme ignorance up to the coming of Jesus, from the Family-God up to the Great Father revealed by the Son of Man. You have so far understood this that you would not now attach importance to the idea of God entertained by an early Jew.‡ At the same time you would gladly study the idea which then was prevalent, in order to mark the progress which has since been made among mankind. In similar sort we desire to show you the several conceptions of the Supreme which have been revealed by Confucius among the Chinese, by Brahma and Buddha in India, by Zoroaster in Persia, by Mahomet in Arabia, among the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Teutons, the Jews, and the Christian nations. In each case we shall point out to you distinguishing characteristics and show you how the sum of all is found in the Gospel which we teach. All that we shall say is not new, but it is strange to you. We could point you to works and to authorities who have expounded the same. But we desire rather to give you what we wish by this means. We have with us those who know of each subject, and we shall be able to present in brief what others have laboriously worked out. You may rely on us to say only what is necessary for you to know.

We partially expounded to our circle the truth as to the religions of India.§ We shall go over the same ground again in order that our record may be complete. We told you how that the religion of China as taught by Confucius embodied the family idea, the notion of repose and rest. Brahminism we showed you as the religion of spiritual Pantheism. Buddhism, on the contrary, as the reaction from Brahminism, the recognition of nature as the domain of law. Zoroaster again taught truth as to the eternal conflict between good and evil, the everlasting antagonism between Ormuzd and Ahriman. Greece we held up before

* The way in which this remark originated was in rebuke of my speaking of "the heathen." It was pointed out that some Christians (so-called) were themselves worse than heathen.—"M. A. (Oxon.)"

† This part of the communications is (I believe) entirely contained in *Spirit Teachings*. At any rate, the kernel of the argument is there.—"M. A. (Oxon.)"

‡ This again refers to *Spirit Teachings*. I had to be told that the God of Moses was not the God of Isaiah, nor He, again, the One Whom Jesus revealed.—"M. A. (Oxon.)"

§ This was done by means of trance addresses; and (as frequently happened) what was then said *videlicet* and imperfectly recorded was written automatically through my hand.—"M. A. (Oxon.)"

you as the worshipper of Humanity. Rome as the stern religion of fate and unchanging law, the inflexible organisation which is still perpetuated in that city. Egypt again embodied the religions of the body, the worship of daily life. The Teutonic and Scandinavian religions shared with Zoroaster the idea of endless conflict between the spirit and the temptations to which it was subjected, and made man's chief virtue to be courage. Mohammed taught pure Monotheism in an age when corrupt Polytheism was dominant, and embodied much that was true in respect of spirit influence. Of each we shall have somewhat to say, not new indeed, but necessary for your education. We commence with the teachings of Confucius. But not now. Rest awhile and meditate on what we have said.

[The messages may be understood to emanate from the same source as that from which *Spirit Teachings* were derived.]

THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK.

SHALLOW ADVANCED THOUGHT AND RADICALISM —ETHICAL CULTURE.

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY—SPIRITUALISM—THE TWO PATHS

BY GILES B. STEBBINS.

From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

Forty years or more ago that able and earnest orthodox clergyman, Rev. Horace Bushnell, sat in a meeting of his Congregational clerical brethren in Hartford, Ct., and listened quietly to their discussion of sundry theological dogmas. At last his opinion was asked, and he said, in substance :—

"Brethren, it is not for me to say that these questions are trivial, but their vital importance is passing away. Graver and deeper matters loom up before us in the near future, not of election and reprobation, not of trinity or atonement, but we shall soon be asked, 'Is there a God or any Divine government? Is there any future life?' And these questions we must be ready to meet, not by dogmatic assertions, but by argument and illustration that will satisfy reason and conscience, and awaken spiritual life."

The condition of religious thought to-day justifies his sagacious foresight. "Old things are passing away"; time-honoured standards are going down; authority is giving way to the progressive development of truth.

Arthur Penryhn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, addressing the Episcopal clergy of New England during his visit to this country a few years ago said :—

"The crude notions which prevailed twenty years ago on the subject of Bible inspiration have been so completely abandoned as to be hardly anywhere maintained by theological scholars. . . . The doctrine of the Atonement will never again appear in its old crude form. . . . A more merciful view of future punishment and of a hope of universal restitution have been gradually advancing and the darker views receding. . . . No one would now make miracles the chief or sole basis of the evidence of religious truth."

A million readers of *Robert Elsmere* are proving Dean Stanley's words true. Old dogmas, which the larger thought of our time cannot accept and against which enlightened conscience revolts, are on the wane. The reign of law is coming in place of lawless miracles. Evolution—the Divine plan by which man is uplifted—is taking the place of the fall of man and the wrath of God. The sway of old dogmatism is still strong, and its gradual disappearance gives us time to keep what truth it held while we let its errors die. The old method of religious thought is reversed; the standard was without; now it is within. Books and creeds, fixed and unchangeable, have been authority over the soul, tyrants to crush and dwarf the spirit in man; now the soul is higher than book or creed and the freed spirit gains and grows in a pure air. So great a change is not without its dangers. The new freedom is better than the old bondage, but it does not make us infallible. Without the infallible Bible, the iron creed, the bloody atonement, the miraculous Christ, the mystical trinity, the Oriental Sovereign on a great white throne, the fiery hell to which his subjects are eternally fore-

ordained by countless millions, what shall come in their place? What ideas shall uplift and inspire man, helping to make to-morrow better than to-day? What great truths of the past shall we keep while putting its errors aside? What danger-signals are along our paths?

The old religions were not wholly false, the old creeds not all error; men and women who believe them have led noble lives. Underneath Paganism and orthodox Christianity were certain great and enduring ideas, not to be cast aside or made light of, but to be seen more clearly and to glow with warmer radiance. Conceptions of Deity, duty, and immortality were the light of Asia and Old Egypt, and of Europe in the Middle Ages, and that light will shine with a more golden glory as the clouds of superstition melt away and the spiritual nature of man asserts itself more and more.

Advanced Thought and Radicalism.

We have a good deal of "advanced thought" and of "radicalism" in these days, in connection with those who not only reject the old theology, but have no spiritual faith in its place, no belief in a supreme intelligence, in an immortal life, or in anything beyond the range of the outward senses, it being implied that they are most advanced and most truly radical. Is it an advance to wander a way in the mists of materialism? Which has gone farthest in the path of wisdom and light, Emerson who says:

"Ever fresh this broad creation,
A Divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds;
A single will, a million deeds,"

or these sceptics absurdly called advanced thinkers?

Radicalism is going to the root or origin of things. That gifted and inspired spiritual seer, Selden J. Finney said:—

"How is religion possible to man? On the ground of three great ideas. First, an infinite spiritual reason and causation; second, a representative divine or spiritual nature in man; third, the inspiration of the second by the first. The absence of either of these great fundamental conditions makes religion impossible to man. If the Deity be zero, there can be no divine soul in man, no inspiration from God. If there be a soul in man and no infinite soul, there can be no inspiration, no progress, no divine ideals of perfection to charm on to the spiritual levels. And if there be a God, and a soul in man, and no vital connection between them, there can be no transcendent ideas, no march of man for the Morning Land."

A spiritual philosophy makes mind active in will and instinct with ever unfolding and evolving design, the cause of all phenomena, the soul of all life from mollusk to man, Man is a microcosm; rock, earth, and all flora and fauna, mount up into his "human form Divine." All subtle forces that hold and sway sun and stars pulse through him; all great truths that save and uphold this world, and all worlds of men and angels, are in and of his spiritual being. So made up and related, he must have large wealth of innate and intuitive knowledge, wide and great powers of discovery. The absolutely unknowable is an absurdity, time and eternity will reveal more and more to him. The soul says, "God is," and sea and sky and mountain and rose reveal Him. The soul says, "I shall never die," and the facts of spirit presence in all ages confirm its testimony. The outward is but test and sign of that which is within—invisible and intangible, known only by its results and effects, as we know the spirit in man by the music of his voice or the glance of his eye, and his mental power by pyramid and palace, by railroad and steamship, in constructing which the skilled hand is but the tool of the guiding mind. Vast spaces lie beyond the view of the telescope; no chemist can test and no eye can see the inner life of man. Around and within us is this wide, super-sensuous region. The realm of the spirit is far wider than that of the senses. The truths of the soul are primal and creative; to give these truths due weight, and to pay heed to their outward signs in the testimony of the senses is wisdom needed to-day.

The so-called Radicalism which repudiates old creeds, and lives on a poor pride of doubting spiritual causation, does not deserve the name. It does not reach to the heart and core of things. Channing said: "I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit helps to its own spiritual enlargement." These are deeper words than the shallow style of so-called Radicalism can give us. To doubt error helps us to

gain truth, but to live in a sceptical mood and habit is to make life superficial and unsatisfactory.

Ethical Culture.

This is a day of Ethical Culture. Societies to that high end are organised, able discourses go out emphasising nobler morals and a wiser daily life—aims surely worthy of all commendation. This movement ignores all discussion of a future life and a supreme mind as possible helps to its aims; and treats of man as living here with no infinite relations, no inspiration from any sphere beyond this little ball we call our earth. Its exclusive this-worldliness is an extreme reaction from the equally absurd other-worldliness of old-time pietists. That extreme must be abandoned; for the highest and most vital thought of duty is only possible when we see man as an immortal being.

Channing said: "The sense of duty is the greatest gift of God. The idea of right is His primary and highest revelation to the human mind. We little understand the solemnity of the moral principle in every human mind. We forget that it is the germ of immortality."

Theodore Parker, as stern in morals as he was earnest in his deep spiritual life, said: "O, young man, now in the period of thy passions remember your conscience. Defer it to no appetite, to no passion, to no foolish compliance with other men's ways. Ask always, 'Is it right for me?' Fear not to differ from men; keeping your modesty, keep your integrity also. The flesh will come up with deceitful counsels; the spirit teaching the commandments of God; give both their due. Be not the senses' slave, but the soul's free man." Emerson's noble verse is in a like strain:—

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
The Youth replies, 'I can.'"

No cold and narrow this-worldliness chilled and dwarfed the thoughts of these great teachers. They saw and felt that man's divine relations and the large scope of his immortal life must help to light his daily path and enlarge and enrich his ethics. Ethical culture must be spiritualised; its air is too cold, its light too dim. Among its leaders are true men with noble aims, but their ideal of life is fragmentary. Can we learn most and best of duty by ignoring Deity and immortality, or by not using these great ideas as inspiring helps? Surely not. If we can, the New Testament and the morals of Christ had best be set aside.

Liberal Christianity.

How fares our Liberal Christianity? At the heart of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Hicksite Quakerism are ideas of religious progress, of man's capacity for culture, and growth, and of the Divine beneficence and the upward tendency of things. By these ideas they have greatly profited. They have put aside errors and gained truths, and an increasing number among them are glad of this growth. Bibliolatry and lawless miracles are fading out and rational religious views taking their place. With no rigid standards there is large diversity among liberal Christians, much agreeing to disagree on non-essentials and sometimes disagreement on deeper matters. A spiritual indifference or blindness, which is called agnosticism, is quite prevalent, external and inductive science tending that way. There is a lack of the strong affirmation that gave the old-time evangelical preachers such power.

Dogmatic assertion is one thing, and the positive utterance of deep convictions to meet man's highest needs and help his growth is another and quite different. The first is passing away, and the last is greatly needed to take its place in some pulpits of the liberal faith. The reasoning and critical faculties and literary taste may grow somewhat, but the deeper wants of the spirit are not met. The old creed was an iron fetter which it was mortal sin to break; the new creed—I believe—will be a statement of a few foundation ideas, not as fetters but as helps, not to bind any but to give definite aim and thought and to be amended with more light. The old creed is going, the new statements are coming, but not yet in full shape, and we have a Western Unitarian Conference, with its "Fellowship and Faith," lacking in affirmation and strong conviction, all afloat and indefinite, between materialism and a spiritual philosophy, so that the outer world cannot see where or what its advocates are or what they stand for. The "deeper matters" which Dr. Bushnell foresaw are upon us now, and this blind indefiniteness of aim and purpose will not meet or solve them.

In the many comments on *Robert Elsmere*, one feature of that remarkable book has been singularly overlooked. Elsmere's faith in immortality, his view of the high significance it gives to human life, is quite dim and uncertain—a hope so weak as to be, perhaps, delusive. On his death-bed is no gleam of light from the spirit-world; no heavenly presence is seen just as the mortal eye grows dim and the clairvoyant sight of the spirit opens. Is this dissolving view of the life beyond, a view fading and not brightening, a feature of liberal religious thought in England?

It is noticeable that Unitarians of this school of cloudy uncertainty treat Ethical Culture, with its exclusive this-worldliness, with more marked and deferent attention than they do Spiritualism with its ethics enriched by the affirmation of the immortal life. This reveals the fact that their reckoning of spiritual latitude and longitude is confused. Sailing wide seas of thought, a current drifts their ship toward the sunken rocks and blinding fogs of materialism. Would it not be wise to mark this drift and set up a danger-signal?

Spiritualism.

A great and growing power is modern Spiritualism; too great to be put aside or put down, and giving signs of permanence as well as of power. Bigots and thoughtless persons judge it by its follies and frauds, and so are blind to the wisdom and truth, the glory and beauty, of its higher aspects. Judge any popular sect in Christendom in like manner; look only at the follies and frauds to be found in them all, and we should sink them, one and all, lower than the plummet ever sounded. But they are not so judged. Under froth and scum we see the clear water and the sweep of the strong wave. A few years ago an able article on Theism appeared in the *Westminster Review* in which it was said of Spiritualism:

"It is in our midst, with signs and wonders, uprising like a swollen tide. It comes veiling its destined splendours beneath an exterior that invites contempt. Once more the weak will confound the mighty, the foolish the wise. Spiritualism will re-establish, on what claims to be the ground of positive evidence, the fading belief in a future life,—not such a future as is dear to the reigning theology, but a future developed from the present, a continuation, under improved conditions, of the scheme of things around us."

The *Scientific American*, not accepting its facts, says:—

"If it were true it would mark this nineteenth century with unperishable lustre; if it were true we can find no words adequately express our sense of its importance."

Millions, quite up to the average in critical care and wise insight, and with many among them eminent in these qualities and of high integrity, can and do testify to its truth—the reality, that is, of its central and sublime fact, the real presence of the departed.

Conversing once with a Unitarian clergyman of large mind, heart, and manly courage, who had paid some attention to this matter, I said to him: "Unitarians and other liberal religionists are in a peculiar situation; no infallible book, no miraculous Christ, the old evidence of immortality and of the being of God gone out, no high trust in the soul and its powers of discovery yet strongly developed, with the external tendencies of inductive science, dealing only with crude matter and blind force, and ignoring spiritual causation, drifting your thought toward materialism. Suppose Spiritualism to be true; its proven facts, evidenced through the senses, of great truths of the soul; knowledge added to intuitive faith; blessed manna for the heart-hunger of the bereaved—would it not meet your great need? With your scholarly culture and large thought lighted up and made warm and vital in this new atmosphere, would you not gain a deep assurance, a conquering and affirming power to supplant the old theology and put something stronger and more rational and uplifting in its place?"

After a moment's thought his deeply earnest answer was: "We should gain new and deeper life, and be able to move the world with a mighty power."

I then said: "I have no wish to underrate the good done by Unitarians and others of like progressive views. I try to take some part in that good work and would be one with you in it, but it is for you to study and accept the higher aspects of Spiritualism, and live, or to hold the great matter off and die, bewildered and chilled by fatal doubt."

His answer was: "It may be so. Surely it is worth serious thought."

In the last century that great German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, intuitively foresaw and foretold the coming of modern Spiritualism: "There will come a day when it will be demonstrated that the human soul, throughout its terrestrial existence, lives in a communion, actual and indissoluble, with the immaterial natures of the world of spirits; that this world acts upon our own through influences and impressions of which man has no consciousness to-day, but which he will recognise at some future time."

The thought of supernal spaces and realms full of the wealth and glory of angelic human life, of the dear immortals of whom we may gain glimpses in hours of open vision, or whose presence we may feel and know, and of the Infinite Presence, fills the soul with joyful reverence. Spirit visitations may be "angels visits, few and far between," but these rich experiences lift and light up the whole being and their memory lives and glows for long years. They are like sweet strains of music, brief, because one could not bear them long and live in the body, yet no earthly melody so thrills the heart as these voices from the spirit-land.

No accepted theory of modern science is more strongly proved than the fact of spirit intercourse. Volumes of testimony, from the best witnesses the wide world over, are filled with this proof. "Add to your faith knowledge," is a good Apostolic injunction. The old faith in Bible and creed is of small moment; the rising faith in the soul is shaken by inductive science; the voice within, which says "Thou shalt never die," sounds feebly in the thin air of agnosticism. Surely knowledge is needed to verify and confirm faith, and this knowledge can only come through Spiritualism. Deep and strong convictions, spoken with positive and joyful affirmation, are greatly needed. The truths of the spirit must be emphasised. "Where there is no vision the people perish." Shall there be no vision to-day? The poet-soul is prophetic. Years ago Emerson said:—

"Then shall come the Eden-days,
Guardian watch from seraph-eyes,
Angels on the slanting rays,
Voices from the opening skies."

Shall we be blind and deaf while this prophecy is being realised all around us?

Two Paths.

Passing out from the marshlands and leaden clouds of old theology, the regions where the Giant Despair holds fearful sway, two paths open before us. One leads to Spiritualism, the other to materialism. Along one path the traveller ascends to heavenly highlands, leaving his pilgrim's burthen of mortal sin behind if he but look up and move on, and entering a more real life to learn more fully the significance of the poet's aspiration,—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee!"

Dropping out of the other path the traveller goes down, soul and body, "to the undistinguished dust from whence he sprang," buried in the soulless clods, dead in the grasp of relentless force. Which shall we take? The agnostic hesitates in brief and enervating uncertainty, but the march of the coming host carries him along. Lacking faith in the sky he clings to the clod which his poor feet can feel, and is swept into the path which leads to his grave, and which he follows with decent courage but with no heavenly light along the darkening way.

Liberal Christians and all manner of progressive religious thinkers may well bear in mind that they must choose between these two paths. They must hold to the Supreme Intelligence and the immortality of man or become materialists, and they must be able "to render a reason for the faith that is in them." The two schools and methods of thought are not merely unlike, they are opposite. If one is true the other is false. There need be no detraction of honest Materialists. All sincere opinion deserves respect. But how is most light gained? Which path is best for daily life? How is religious growth or inspiration possible without spiritual ideals? "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?"

We can all unite in practical reforms, but to join in teaching godliness and godlessness, deathlessness and death, spirit as king and matter as king, would be confusion worse confounded, ending in decay and disorganisation.

All liberal religious movements must rest on sure spiritual foundations, or they fall in their high mission and die. Light, more light! from the life beyond is the cry to-day. Science must be spiritualised and perfected and put in accord with a spiritual philosophy—a change like "putting a soul beneath the ribs of death," but a change which a growing number of scientists will hail gladly. Spiritualism and psychic research are helps and guides indispensable to that knowledge of man's inner life and infinite relations needed for our release from materialistic doubts, and our progress in religious ideas.

AN UNSUCCESSFUL SEANCE.

BY THE EDITOR OF *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter*.

TRANSLATED BY "V."

In connection with the séances we described in our last number, we will endeavour now to point out the causes which prevented the séance on Thursday, February 14th, from taking place, the medium not being able to go into a state of trance, as we mentioned last week.

The medium, both before and during the operation of binding, was so upset and agitated by all kinds of occurrences, that a séance—even if it had partially succeeded—would not have been productive of any important manifestations, for it is only when the medium is perfectly at ease and passive that good results can be looked for, and the gentlemen who were present should have known this fact well and should have provided for it.

When a medium gives a séance either for physical, trance, or materialisation phenomena he begins to be sensible of the influence directly the preparations are begun, and, therefore, it is advisable that the necessary searchings, precautions against fraud, and binding should be completed as quickly as possible, if satisfactory results are to be hoped for. Being well acquainted with the laws of mediumship and the conditions under which alone good manifestations are possible, we had announced before the arrival of Herr Schrap's that only such persons as were conversant with the subject and who were willing to subscribe to the conditions would be admitted to the séances. The Psychical Society had sent for Herr Schrap's, in order to give an opportunity to many new members and their friends, who had never witnessed physical manifestations, of convincing themselves by the evidence of their own senses of the facts of mediumistic power. As the society were obliged to make a charge to those attending the séances, in order to cover the necessary expenses, they naturally felt it their duty to take care that the conditions should be such as to guarantee good results, that is, as far as results in such matters could be guaranteed by human beings. These conditions were that the medium should be under our direction, that the séances should take place in our dwelling, that we should arrange for the medium to be bound in the manner to which he is accustomed, and that a member chosen by us should assist us in releasing the medium from his bonds at the conclusion of the séance, for him to be brought out into the séance room.

At all the other séances our arrangements were carried out, and the results were, therefore, highly satisfactory. But at the last séance it was otherwise; the gentlemen did not trouble themselves to search the medium and his clothes thoroughly; then the medium, as before agreed upon, was to be weighed, but it was a long time before they could agree whether this should be done with or without his clothes, and finally with regard to the bandaging they made all sorts of propositions for security; one wished to fasten his fingers to the chair by pasting paper over them; another wanted very fine thread used for binding him; a third proposed that the knots should be sewn up and that when the binding was accomplished a cord should be fastened round his throat to tie it to the chair. At last the medium's patience gave way and he declined to give a séance at all. He allowed himself, however, to be persuaded, and was securely bound and placed behind the curtain, but he felt he was too upset to hope for good results and so he opposed himself to the influence, feeling that it would be better to have no séance at all than a bad one, which would satisfy no one. We will remark here that Herr Schrap's does not receive payment for his services unless he can give satisfaction, and that he had had private séances offered to him, by which he would have gained a sum of 200 marks in two evenings; he declined them, however, in order to fulfil his duty to the Society and not to weaken his powers by giving extra séances.

We will not go into the question whether the circumstances above mentioned were really of a kind to upset and annoy the medium to such a degree that he was unable to attain the necessary condition of passivity; for this, in great measure, depends upon the individuality of the medium himself and how he understood them; but we must always recollect that a medium is a peculiarly constituted being, sensitive to the highest degree, and therefore we ought not willingly to aggravate him. But there were other incidents which affected and annoyed ourselves

as well as the medium. Scepticism is proper and necessary to obviate the risk of deception, but it can be carried too far and then it becomes ridiculous. We had told the gentlemen beforehand how they were to proceed; the room was allowed to be thoroughly examined in order that they might be convinced that no accomplice was anywhere concealed and that none could be anywhere introduced, and then the medium was to be searched to see that he had no phosphorus concealed about him. All kinds of things might remain in the cabinet, because everything used in the manifestations was placed before the curtain. The examination of the medium was performed, however, in a most negligent manner, quite unlike it had been done in the other séances, and we are convinced that not one of the gentlemen could have been positively certain that the medium had not a flask with phosphorus concealed upon him. Why so careless in this matter, my sceptical friends? The close examination of the medium is the most important point, but this you neglected, while you seemed to attach undue importance to other details. The door which led out of the room used as a cabinet was bolted in the presence of the gentlemen and a strip of paper which was marked by one of them with pencil was gummed across the crack. With this, however, they were not satisfied, but they must have another peculiarly marked piece of paper pasted over the door and door post underneath the first, just as if one piece of paper, if torn or loosened, would not be as good a proof that the door had been opened as two? Then they turned out a cigar box and a paper bag with Albert biscuits, took from the book-shelves a linen cloth with which we bathe our eyes in the evening with eye-lotion and threw it upon the bed, and a small piece of carpet, which we had laid on the other side of the curtain for Schrap's to rest his feet upon, as he was without shoes (on account of the toe-rapping theory), so that his feet should not be upon the cold boards, was removed as suspicious and hidden, nor would they say where they had put it, in spite of being requested to do so. (Afterwards we found it hidden under the bed and had to hook it out with a stick.) We think all this in very bad taste, and as it took place in our own private apartments it was even against the laws of courtesy. We had freely allowed our rooms to be examined, but things like these only prove that people who wish to show their excessive cleverness can carry matters to the verge of stupidity. What power in the world can lie in a little bit of carpet? We are convinced that the gentleman who originated this masterpiece could not himself have said what he expected to be hidden in it. We can, however, tell these gentlemen what really took place: a weakening of the medium's power by all this delay before he was placed behind the curtain. They wish to be too clever and yet are unacquainted with the first principles of the laws of magnetism and therefore work round in a circle. Mediumship rests upon magnetism and those who desire to study it should try to understand the principles which govern it and should not (as happened at another séance) feel the medium about and stroke and touch him too much, thus drawing the power from him.

If these gentlemen are desirous of making fresh tests and experiments they should engage a medium for several weeks, and then commence their experiments, but they must be prepared to obtain nothing for several séances if they are given under new conditions.

AN APOLOGY.—We have been asked to publish an apology which has been given by Mr. John Trego Gill, of Riversdale, Ramsbottom, to the Rev. Thomas Ashcroft, of Westleigh, near Manchester, and which has been signed in the presence of Mr. Joseph H. Peters, solicitor, Manchester. We cannot give the apology in the terms in which it has reached us, but it will be sufficient to say that Mr. Gill alleges, as to certain statements which he had made to the discredit of the Rev. Thomas Ashcroft, that he had made them on the authority of a certain London medium, who professed to be able to substantiate them; that the medium referred to, having been called upon to prove his assertions and produce his evidence, had failed to do so; and that he, Mr. Gill, finding there was no truth in the statements, regretted having repeated them, and apologised, agreeing to pay all costs and expenses that Mr. Ashcroft had incurred.

"I believe there is a supernatural and spiritual world in which human spirits, both good and bad, live in a state of consciousness. I believe that any of these spirits may, according to the order of God, in the laws of their place of residence, have intercourse with this world, and become visible to mortals."—DR. ADAM CLARKE.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
2, DUKE STREET,
ADELPHI, W.C.

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Light :

EDITED BY "M. A. (OXON.)"

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17th, 1889.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to the Editor.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.*

The Lord Chief Justice completes his notice of his friend Matthew Arnold in the current number of the *New Review*. We gave some account of the first part of his interesting paper in "LIGHT" of July 13th ult. The chief interest to our readers in the present instalment is concentrated on his religious and theological essays. These, we must all of us remember, excited a storm of criticism when they appeared. Since his death, as the Chief Justice says, they have "drawn forth the only notes out of harmony with that full chord of tender, melancholy, respectful regret which has been poured forth over his tomb." Such criticisms as Arnold's, so incisive, so keen, and, in some respects, so fierce, are not met by argument. Men's prejudices are stirred; the inherited instincts of many generations are rudely awakened, and there is war in Heaven, where sweet reason should hold sway. Strange it is that the most conclusive argument is wasted when applied to a form of faith which has seemingly lost its hold on a man's life. He will let it slumber the week through, airing it fitfully and with languid interest on a Sunday, but let a critic lay hands upon it and apply to it methods of analysis such as are used in ordinary cases, and our languid professor wakes up at once and displays most unexpected acrimony. It is as though unholy hands had been laid upon the sacred ark, which he has inherited from his fathers. The ark is no particular good to him, but somehow he does not want it meddled with.

Matthew Arnold meddled with that ark to some effect, and he drew down thereby on his devoted head a storm of obloquy. The words of Chief Justice Coleridge—himself a distinguished and zealous Churchman—are so important in discussing this matter that we make no apology for a rather long quotation.

What, he asks, has been the state of religious opinion amongst persons of education and reflection since Matthew Arnold first began to write? This is his reply to that question:—

"The vast majority of men and almost all women in this age, as in every age, can hardly be said to think at all upon religion, or on any grave or serious subject. They believe what they have been taught, and hold what they hear asserted, with indo-

lent or unintelligent acquiescence; either because they are too careless and indifferent to trouble themselves, or because they care so much, that it seems to them profane to question the soundness of that which is the life of their soul, the stay of the better part of their nature; and thus they make the importance of a truth the evidence upon which they accept it. 'Whether that which is proposed to be made out be really made out or not, whether a matter be stated according to the real truth of the case, seems to the generality of people merely a circumstance of no consideration at all.' 'There are even of the few who read for their own entertainment and have a real curiosity to see what is said, several, which is prodigious, who have no curiosity to see what is true.' 'Thus people habituate themselves to let things pass through their minds, as one may say, rather than to think of them. Thus by use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and attention and even forming a judgment become fatigue; and to say anything before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their way.' So says Bishop Butler in sentences which are true of all time, certainly as true of the present as that of which he wrote them. Men accept Bishop Butler because the testimony in favour of his greatness, his fairness, his wisdom, is absolutely overwhelming; but they are much 'put out of their way' if asked to follow his example, an example which in fact in practice they habitually disregard. The difficulties with which the great Bishop dealt, the objections which he answered, are not those which surround us and which we hear of now; but most certainly if he were now alive he would not assume the points to be proved, he would not attempt to answer historical inquiry or critical investigation with a moral sniff, nor would he 'hop with airy and fastidious levity over proofs and arguments and perch upon assertion to call it conclusion.' He has told us himself, 'I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to vilify Reason; which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even Revelation itself; or to be misunderstood to assert that a supposed Revelation cannot be proved false, from internal characters.'

It was to men who had been content to accept without thought or without question what they had imperfectly comprehended concerning their most vital interests that Matthew Arnold addressed his incisive criticisms. He was no respecter of hereditary beliefs, and his acidulated method of criticism was not calculated to calm the prejudices that he had only too successfully stirred. He rubbed salt into the wounds that he gave, and arrayed against him all the irritated feelings of those whose slumbers he had disturbed.

Yet did he not do well to open the eyes of the blind? What was the state of the religious world? What is it even now?

"Surely the travesty of Christianity which surrounds us, the severance of doctrine from practice, of creed from conduct, the substitution even in precept of outward ceremony for softening of the temper and purifying of the heart, the divorce probably never before so complete between good works and definite belief, the reproduction with curious fidelity of the state of things in which it was 'an agreed point amongst all people of discernment that Christianity is at length discovered to be fictitious'; the blindness of the clergy and of religious men to the fact that the edifice which is so fair and seems so strong is undermined in all directions; the awful consequences which would follow from an open revolt against religion which the bigotry of Churchmen is but too likely to bring about; thoughts of these things might well lead a man of lofty character and keen mind to try to point out to his contemporaries what was the Christian verity which in his judgment fable and superstition had joined together to conceal and, piercing through, or tearing off, the human incrustations of so many centuries, to display once more the Divine kernel of unspeakably precious truth which lies hid beneath them."

It is easy to make much of Matthew Arnold's "imperitences," "levity," and even "insolence." The defenders of the faith are not less obnoxious than himself to such criticisms, and they, at least, have not the excuse of profound thought and deep knowledge for what they write. If, says the Chief Justice,

"If there be men of thought and learning who can accept without hesitation the whole of Christianity as popularly taught

* *New Review*. August, 1889.

(and many clever men maintain that the whole thing, from Genesis to the Revelation, stands or falls together), men to whom the Fall, the Flood, the life and still more the deathbed of 'the man after God's own heart' ('God the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever'), Elijah and Elisha, the curse and the blessing pronounced by the same authority on the same man for the same act; to whom these and a hundred more things like them create no difficulty, let them thank God with all their hearts that He has heard their prayers and blessed their lives. But let them not dare to judge or to condemn other men, as much in earnest as themselves; who seek after truth as simply and as purely; whom 'honest doubt' assails not always quite without success; who do sincerely try to prove all things that they may hold fast that which is good; who desire to give a reason of their faith, but who find that reason very hard to give after a lapse of twenty centuries and since the changes wrought in the whole conception of Heaven and earth by science, which is as much a revelation from God as any other; men who pray for faith which is not granted them in full measure, for light which does not come unclouded, for certainty they cannot attain to. We must all, men of faith, and men of doubt, stand or fall at last by the earnestness and sincerity with which we have striven to see God's will and to do our duty."

These are noble words, and their significance is enhanced by the source from which they come. Whatever final judgment may be pronounced on the theological and religious criticism of Arnold, no thoughtful man can afford to ignore his utterances: no candid mind that desires to look facts in the face can be other than thankful to that masterly and transparently sincere mind.

MR. F. EVANS AND THE PATTERSON
"EXPOSURE."

We have received from Mr. Fred Evans, under date, Sydney, N.S.W., June 20th, a letter, the material portion of which we are glad to publish. The same mail brought us a private letter, in which Mr. Evans complains of some comments of ours on certain published matter which reached us from Brisbane, and also a number of extracts from Brisbane and other papers.

After reciting what he considers a grievance, viz., that we gave publicity in our columns to that which had already become public property both in New South Wales and in America, Mr. Evans states that he has only lately seen our comments upon the so-called Patterson *exposé*. He then proceeds:—

I will endeavour to clear myself, and ask you to allow me to throw some light on the motives of Mr. Patterson in getting up his fraudulent account. It was quite evident that the whole business was a got up affair to make money at the expense of my reputation—because it was well known that Patterson had offered his professed discovery to the *Brisbane Courier* for £50—but that journal having refused to have anything to do with it, the *Telegraph* had bought the sole right to publish it for a less amount.*

That it was purely a business transaction was shown by their copyrighting it, which they certainly would not have done had they published it on public grounds. When the *Telegraph* in a spirit of bravado offered me a thousand guineas if I would produce spirit writing on slates provided by them, I wrote to the secretary of the Brisbane Psychological Society, asking that body to wait upon the Editor and request him to put the offer in writing, when I would immediately come from Melbourne to accept his challenge. In compliance with this request the secretary and other members called upon the Editor but could not induce him to write the challenge.

No one who had sat with me could be found to endorse Mr. Patterson's imitation; and four out of the six persons who signed the Patterson *exposé* were shareholders in the *Telegraph*, and admitted that they had never witnessed my manifestation, but that they were all guided by Patterson's statements. The Psychological Society held a meeting to consider the matter, expressed their confidence in myself, and a deputation was appointed to wait upon the Editor to arrange for space to reply to his charges against me, but they were refused such an oppor-

tunity. The *Telegraph* circulated a report that I had taken the first steamer to America, whilst I was giving successful sésances in Melbourne.* Copies of the *Telegraph* and *Week* (which belong to the same proprietary), containing the alleged exposure, were sent to Editors of Spiritualistic papers, among them yourself, to the detriment of my reputation, and it appears that you, for one, were misled by them.

It is very remarkable that the false report of *one* individual should carry such weight with it, in contradiction to the testimony of hundreds, nay thousands, who have had successful sittings with me; and it is still more remarkable that "LIGHT," the diffuser of spiritual knowledge throughout the world, should so accept the aspersions of this pretender as to cast a shadow of doubt or suspicion upon the character of an honest hard-working medium, who has always worked boldly and fearlessly to the front, to demonstrate the truth of Spirit return. Mr. Patterson had only one sitting with me, on October 3rd, 1888, when he expressed his opinion "that the manifestations were wonderful," but pointed out that conjurers did many wonderful things, and among them slate writing. I explained to him the three methods usually adopted by conjurers in imitating the phenomena of slate writing, one of them being the "masked slate trick," the latter appearing the most satisfactory to Patterson.

I did not leave Brisbane till January 3rd, 1889, previous to which my mediumship was endorsed by the Psychological Society, who also presented me with an address, and a purse of sovereigns. It was not until nearly three months after his sitting that Patterson attempted to expose me, and at least a fortnight after I had left Brisbane. Why did he not challenge me openly and fairly before I left, that I might have had an opportunity of vindicating myself against his charges, and clearing myself from such vile aspersions?

Was it fair to allow me to leave Brisbane, and use every effort to cast suspicion upon my character, when I was perfectly unaware of the existing fraud, and therefore unable to meet the defamer upon his own grounds? But that you should allow such a shadow to cross the columns of your journal pained me deeply, because I had heretofore placed such confidence in your support of all true mediumship, and I was under the impression that I had already given ample proofs of my honesty.

I have forwarded several columns of matter published in the Brisbane papers refuting the charges of Patterson (*Telegraph*) by this mail, and hope you will take the trouble to wade through them, as you have through the *exposé*. I think common justice demands this. I know I have hundreds of staunch friends in the Colonies who have had sittings with me, who will support my character before the public, and willingly *prove* that under the clear light of spiritual truth the mediumship of Fred Evans will bear the keenest scrutiny. After all this Patterson business (whilst it has pained me) may become the means of spreading the very light it was intended to darken, and many who would otherwise have remained indifferent may thereby be induced to come and investigate and discover for themselves. I have fully vindicated myself in the Colonies where the *exposé* was fathered, and have fully convinced all those who have sat with me and who had previously read all that the *Telegraph* published that I have been a much maligned man, for I desire to walk in the full light of honest truth before all men so that I may indeed be the instrument of the spirit world to spread the light of spiritual knowledge, and scatter the shadows of doubt and materialism like clouds before the sun.

FRED EVANS.

We have carefully perused the printed matter that has reached us, and also Mr. Evans's private communication. While we cannot admit that we did any wrong in our editorial comments on what came before us—Mr. Evans's defence was not sent us, and did not come under our notice till the other day—we are most desirous to avoid doing any sort of injustice to any man, most of all to one who is devoting his psychical powers to the thankless work that all public mediums discharge. The newspaper cuttings sent by Mr. Evans lead us to take a different view of the matter from that which we took on the *ex parte* statement forwarded to us. We are not judges in this matter, but the evidence wears a new complexion when both sides are heard.

There are expressions in Mr. Evans's letters which are

See *Harbinger of Light* for February, March, April, May, June, &c.

* This, of course, is news to us.

the natural result of irritation at what he conceives to be an injustice done to him, however unintentionally, by ourselves and other critics. Let them pass, and let us frankly say that if we have erred we are sorry for our error, and that we disclaim altogether any animus or any wish to do more than our duty as an impartial critic. We might contend, perhaps, that Mr. Evans's appeal to us is tardy, and that we are not omniscient: but we are not disposed to split hairs. We have too real an appreciation of the work done by every honest medium to desire to add to it one feather's weight. We have, too, so cordial a detestation of the harm done by the fraudulent traders on a bogus reputation as mediums that we are, perhaps, in danger of believing too readily what is alleged against a man who earns his living by the exercise of his psychical powers. That is a grave error, and if we have fallen into it, we frankly express our regret.

But Mr. Evans exaggerates the harm that any journal or any man can do him. Truth prevails. Let Mr. Evans come to London and give us a taste of his quality. We promise him a fair field and every consideration. There are Philistines, and they will smite him if they can. But if he will place himself in the hands of the London Spiritualist Alliance he may be sure that he will meet congenial sitters, and we pledge ourselves that all that comes under our personal observation shall be impartially and fully recorded in these columns.

THEURGY.

"DO NOBLE DEEDS, NOT DREAM THEM."—*Kingsley.*

The present moment has seemed to me and one or two others opportune for establishing a Theurgical Church and Society, which shall occupy a position midway between Theology on the one side and Theosophy on the other. Theology is etymologically, and in fact, talk about religion, and Theosophy is the Wisdom-Religion *par excellence*. Theurgy, as its name imports, is the religion of action, the doing of the work so as to know of the doctrine.

But "Church" and "Society" are big words. Let me narrow the ground they cover in my scheme. For the former I accept the definition approved by the Rev. H. R. Haweis, according to which "Church" is synonymous with "Circle." The latter I use in its most elastic and least formal sense, as implying only that amount of organisation which is necessary for combined action. After all, the work of Theurgy is primarily with the individual self; and a man or woman may be a good Theurgist without belonging to a Church or Society.

Roughly speaking, the idea arrived at is that of (1) the Cambridge Platonists of two centuries ago, for which see Principal Tulloch's *History of Rationalism*; (2) the Neo-Platonists, who take us back to the *origines* of Christianity; (3) the Primitive Christians themselves, that model which every new sect claims to embody. We are simply the last new sect, differing from others in the fact that we do not call on our members to "come out" of the denominations to which they belong, but, on the contrary, exhort them by all means to get all the good they can out of their own special *cultus*, and to join us only so far as they feel that fall short. We are a Secret Society to this extent alone, that we require no open profession of discipleship, and thus avoid the temptation to proselytise, and also the heart burnings and inconveniences which every Neophyte risks in exchanging one form of faith and practice for another.

As to ideal members, we have fixed upon the Pentecostal limit of 120 for our Church, with thirteen for an Inner Circle. When these numbers are attained it is better that a new Church and Society should be formed than that the numbers should be unduly extended. These details, however, may be largely left to the practical experience of

the individual societies. Where they become important is in relation to the delicate question of ways and means.

We have calculated that if each member of the Church or Society contributes a shilling weekly, and each member of the Esoteric Circle adds the same amount in that capacity, the sum thus realised will amply suffice for our modest wants which are mainly confined to rent and working expenses. Our ministers, who are of both sexes, do not leave their secular avocations, or expect to "live of the Gospel," and any excess of income over expenditure may go to form a building fund for a modest church in the far future. At present our model of an oratory is the one aimed at in the pamphlet called *The Church of Silent Demand*, published in the "White Cross" series of tracts. The writer of the treatise contemplates a separate building for his Church. We are content with a room for the concentration of this higher stratum of thought-atmosphere and for the systematic pursuance of our investigations into the occult, the exegesis of Scripture, &c.

In order to prevent unnecessary inquiries, it is well to state here that the arrangements of this particular Theurgical Church are made on Broad Church of England principles. This circumstance is due simply to the fact that the Founder is a clergyman of the "Established" Church, but the lines of a Theurgical Society can easily be laid down so as to suit any denomination, and the founder will be only too happy to give his best advice and help to those who desire to adopt the idea crudely embodied in the present letter.

The Circle is at present small; but contemplates widening its circumference a little, when the holidays are over, at Michaelmas. A simple dedication festival will be held on Sunday, September 29th; and a series of four lectures on "The New Advent" will be delivered during the month of December. Attendance at these and other functions of the Theurgical Society will be strictly limited to members, and the numbers above mentioned will on no account be exceeded; but there is no reason why other centres should not be simultaneously organised either in London or the country. The multiplication of centres instead of being regarded in a spirit of jealousy or rivalry would be hailed as a healthy omen and a sign of the only success which is worthy of the name. The sole pre-eminence which the present writer seeks is the privilege of subscribing himself

THE FOUNDER OF THE THEURGICAL SOCIETY.

"If spirits enjoyed corporeal memory, no spirit could be with man, consequently he would die; for there cannot be two memories acting simultaneously, as in that case the memory of the spirit would take away that of the man, and the spirit would think from his own memory; and if the man then spake, it would be a kind of speaking together, as in the case of possession. Besides, it is not allowed to any spirit to teach man nor consequently to lead him, except from cupidity; but the Lord alone wills to teach man and lead him, which could never be done if aught of corporeal memory pertained to a spirit."—SWEDENBORG'S *Spiritual Diary*, 4001.

"Mind reading and thought-transference are often the result of undeveloped mediumship, and are accomplished by means of spirits who take from one and give to the other. It is possible, however, for one mind in full possession of itself, utterly free from trance, to receive impressions from and give impressions to another mind. It is the common law of the spiritual world, and only requires a sensitive subject capable of a degree of abstraction from the bodily senses. Spirits are always communicating their thoughts and reading ours as their own; and given a fit subject with attention fixed upon another with strong desire to impress it, and he may take or give as really, if not as readily, as if both were in the spirit. *Coincidences, premonitions, and warnings* are to be similarly explained. Spirit communicates with spirit, in the common atmosphere of the spiritual world, with a whole company of sympathising spirits living entirely in that world to help on the communications."—SWEDENBORG'S *Doctrine of Correspondence*, by the Rev. L. P. MERCER, p. 65. (Published 1889.)

NEW VERSE IN OLD VESTURE.*

This work may seem to possess some affinity with "new wine in old bottles," but we doubt there being sufficient strength in the wine to burst the bottles. The aim of the book is rather form than spirit, and when that is the case the form is likely to be the stronger. It is a collection of poetry designed to display old French forms of metre, and labours under those disadvantages inseparable from all verse that is written for metre, instead of the spirit being allowed to formulate its own moulds of expression. These difficulties may be illustrated in the following lines from a poem entitled "Triolets," an apology, if we may so describe it, for that description of metre:—

"Skip little Triolet
Back to your race,
You are no violet—
Skip little Triolet.
Vainly you sigh, oh let
Me have a place.
Skip little Triolet
Back to your race."

Nothing but the supreme exigencies of rhyme, than which we are told kings are not more imperative, could have induced a poet to reproach a Triolet with not being a violet, which it could not reasonably be expected to be.

It is, probably, not difficult to arrange in any variety of sequence or order our fancy may devise very similar terminations of words, if only in doing so we are content to dispense with the accompaniment of sense; but such combinations, however ear-catching, must not be regarded as poetry. Fortunately, Mr. Graves has had to deal in his specimens with less exacting forms of metre, and in doing so has justified his claim to be regarded as a poet. The following "ballade" may be cited, we think, as a very favourable example, and as indicating thought, and power to express it in verse:—

CONSCIENCE.

(BALLADE WITH A DOUBLE REFRAIN.)

Every man hath a lamp within
Set with a beacon to show with its light
In the sea of existence the rocks of sin—
Evil is Evil and Right is Right.
None confound the twain, despite
Desires that endeavour to blind our eyes.
Fair is the Morning but what of the Night?
Hell is real as Paradise!

Bolt and bar as we may, the thin
Steel wedge of conscience cleaves contrite
And stubborn alike, for the truth must win.
Evil is Evil and Right is Right,
And that which points to the infinite height
Makes of the other no dim surmise.
All that is has its opposite,
Hell is real as Paradise!

Loud the clamour, but midst the din
Heard whatever our woeful plight,
That still small voice with its prick of pin,
Evil is Evil and Right is Right.
Wouldst thou stifle it, wretched wight,
Purchase a peace that no man buys?
Nay, for the adder uncharmed will bite,
Hell is real as Paradise!

Envoi.

Prince, for whatever cause you fight
Evil is Evil and Right is Right,
And wrong, immortal as good, must rise;
Hell is real as Paradise!

"AND though we can never see them (the spirits) with our bodily eyes, except they assume, as they sometimes do, a bodily shape, yet they are always as evident to our faith as anything can be to our sight."—BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

* *New Verse in Old Vesture.* By JOHN CAMERON GRANT. (E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, E.C.)

WHY MRS. BESANT BECAME A THEOSOPHIST.

A correspondent writes:—Mrs. Besant faced a large audience last Sunday evening which had assembled to hear why she became a Theosophist. Half an hour before the doors of the Hall of Science opened there was a crowd half-way across Old-street; and by the time the chair was taken there was scarcely standing room. The assemblage was composed of Secularists and Theosophists, with a fair sprinkling of Spiritualists; and each cheered her to the echo as some favourite point came to the front in her oration. That oration was a clear and lucid exposition of the mode in which she had arrived, *vid* Freethought, at Theosophy as her goal. Of the two possible answers to the great problem of existence she had simply exchanged the Atheistic for the Pantheistic. She still acknowledged nothing supernatural—no miracles, and, above all, no personal God. But the elaboration of her recent change has already been made in the *Star* and elsewhere. In passing, however, she alluded respectfully to Spiritualism. She had tried it, and it failed to satisfy her. But, then, Mrs. Besant has tried several systems which satisfied for a season and then ceased to do so. She tried Anglican orthodoxy in that country vicarage to which she made such touching reference in her peroration. For fifteen years she has been in the van of Freethought, and now flies off at a tangent to Theosophy. Will that afford her the staying power she requires? Who will venture to prophesy with the canon of Artemus Ward in his recollection? It must be conceded, however, that her unfoldment of her adopted system was lucid and eloquent. The Theosophical Society has secured a champion before whom some of its greater lights will pale; and the Secularists have lost the foremost occupant of their platform, though she says she will never leave that rostrum until she is driven from it. Will they "excommunicate" her?

LIFE AND DEATH.

FROM THE *Tocsin*.

Of course it is sensible reasoning to say that death is the natural sequence of life, and its relation thereto depends upon the way in which we conduct our lives—that, in fact, if we take care of our life death will take care of itself. But this is not satisfactory to people who are disposed to think out problems which concern themselves. Moreover, if we lived in a natural state, in which, excepting accidents, old age was the usual preparation for a peaceful end, the subject would perhaps admit of less speculation. But considering that a vast proportion of people die of disease, and are likely to do so as long as we live in a state of pinchbeck civilisation, where the evils of unnatural social conditions are intensified by unsound principles of medicine, the subject assumes greater importance. Death to most people is an evil to be avoided, a devil to be cheated, a horror too great to be contemplated, instead of being a legitimate and desirable termination of a completed life, in the same manner as sleep is the looked-for end of a day's work.

This horror of death and the relegation of any discussion thereof to the shelf of forbidden topics are the natural outcome of its association with disease. In a natural death there is no disease. The flame of life has done its work so far as the individual is concerned, and peacefully expires. We believe that the elder Pliny, from much observation, made the remark that the moment of death was the most pleasurable moment of life; and certainly if we may judge from the expression of a face after death, there is much to lead one to think that the opinion is justified.

People would do well to arrange for their death as part of the plan of their lives. One makes one's bed in the morning in order that one may sleep there in the evening. There is no sorrow in this; it is part and parcel of a normal existence. But if one's bed and one's sleep are associated with disease thence comes a horror thereof. If there is one principle which more than another one would like to see revived, it lies in the old Brahminical tenet that all disease was impurity, and was to be regarded as such. All disease, doubtless, is impurity, or rather is due to non-purity of the blood. The fault, the responsibility for this, lies somewhere, though not necessarily with the individual affected.

Death in itself has nothing dreadful or sorrowful—at least to the person principally concerned—about it. The deaths of those who have passed away quietly, in full possession of their faculties, are characterised by a peaceful calm and resignation, not the calm or resignation of one who has made up his mind for the worst, but the acceptance of what is right and proper—a condition no more unpleasurable than, and very comparable to, the intelligent semi-consciousness which precedes sleep.

BIRTHDAYS TO THE HIGHER LIFE.

A new form of "Birthday Book," the very title of which recommends it to the notice of Spiritualists, is about to be published by subscription; or rather it should be said a small *edition deluxe* will be issued to subscribers only at the price of one guinea a copy; most of the subscribers preferring to possess a volume which is not likely to be hackneyed. The compiler, who has been at work on the book for some years, has found a name of some notable man or woman for every day in the year, the day selected being that on which the passage to the Higher Life was made. An account of the last scene, parting words, &c., is given, and the opposite page is left blank, with the exception of a suitable quotation, for recording the deaths of friends. The volume thus consists of more than 700 pages, and will be printed in antique type on toned paper, with appropriate binding. The specimen pages, which can be seen at the office of this paper, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, contain an account of the death of Archbishop Tait, who made use of the remarkable expression, "If this be death, it is not so bad after all!" And the opposite page for December 3rd is headed appropriately with the following quotation from Wordsworth:—

"But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—
That man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?
Such ebb and flow must ever be;
Then wherefore should we mourn?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

Pre-existence.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The letter of Mr. Newton Crosland under the above heading shows that some elementary exposition, which I supposed to be superfluous at the present stage of the discussion, is still necessary; for he asks, "Does 'C.C.M.' wish us to understand that the human soul before it is born into this world exists as an absolute individual, as a person equipped with all its faculties, consciousness, intelligence, and power?" And he adds, "Because, if so, it enters this life in a very forlorn and helpless condition, and such a kind of progress or evolution is a retrograde step with a vengeance." The confusion between the faculties of the soul and the instrument by which, and the material upon which, they are exercised here stands plainly confessed. Has it ever happened to Mr. Crosland to have had to learn a new language, to make his way about a new place, or, generally, to acquire a knowledge of new things after he had attained intellectual maturity? Has he, on such occasions, felt that he was taking a retrograde step in his development, when in the new study or pursuit he was at first laboriously picking out words in a dictionary, or blundering at every turn? Now let him imagine how the case would stand if, besides the unfamiliarity of the new particulars of experience, the soul, though already fully competent to use an appropriate instrument of perception, knowledge, and expression, was not yet in possession of such instrument, but had to *grow* it. If Mr. Crosland were a materialist or an agnostic, I should of course have to argue that the soul, with all its subjective faculty of knowing, is distinct from the physical organism, and that the latter really stands in this relation of an instrument, and is not the very faculty itself. Being a Spiritualist, who holds that the mind, with all its faculties, survives its instrument, the brain, he will not impose this task upon me; but then I fail to see his logical position, if he still objects to the statement that the powers of a Bacon, for instance, were before the brain of Bacon, and that just therefore the brain of Bacon became such an instrument as it was. But the profession of Spiritualism seems not to exempt us from the materialistic prejudice which confounds expression, or manifestation, with existence, and the growth of an organ with the production of the spiritual entity. Incarnation is just the production of a medium or instrumentality relating the powers of the soul to the earthly environment, and there is absolutely no other reason for holding that the powers of the soul begin with this earthly life than just the fact that the activity of those powers here is conditioned by an instrumentality of which we see the beginning and the end. I can understand the materialist who says "I have no evidence of the existence of a soul distinct from the organism, and I don't even know what you mean by it," but that the Spiritualist who believes in the soul and its survival of the body should fail to

see that this belief, for him who holds it, shifts the *onus probandi* as to the beginning of the soul at physical birth, is to me logically incomprehensible. And this is the answer to Mr. Crosland's demand for "facts." If he thinks that he has evidence that the soul is distinct from the body, and survives it, it is for him to find the evidence that it nevertheless is born with the body, not for me to furnish evidence that it is not. The rational presumption is enormously against him. And yet I could, if necessary, reinforce that presumption by facts belonging to transcendental psychology, in which I can hardly suppose Mr. Crosland to be a disbeliever, showing that the soul has powers which not only do not originate with the body, and could not have been derived from the earthly life, but which only come to manifestation in the abeyance of bodily functions and earthly interests—facts which certainly seem to me to bear out a belief justifiable upon more philosophical grounds, that the soul only partially incarnates.

Mr. Crosland does not know what I mean by "election" without "volition." Does he not understand the distinction between voluntary and spontaneous, that there can be a spontaneous tendency without a conscious and deliberate act of will? Has he never heard of "elective affinities," psychical as well as chemical? I should like to be "lucid," but I fear I cannot be so on the condition of avoiding all reference to distinctions perfectly familiar to students of philosophy and psychology, if not to most educated persons.

I should unduly prolong this letter were I to animadvert on Mr. Crosland's two paragraphs about theories and facts. I have already expressed in "LIGHT" my view as to the relative priority for intelligence of these two elements of our knowledge; which is that our recognition of facts is conditioned by a theoretical direction of discernment rather than that our theories are first constructed out of facts.

August 9th, 1889.

C. C. M.

"Colenso" and his Critics.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—There are some objections which I have to make against the reply of "Colenso" to his critics in your issue of August 3rd. I do not agree with him that either intermittent or cumulative heredity will account for the irregularities of mental endowment in a family, and although the introduction of a new element in the physical constitution of the lineal progeny may be accounted for by intermarriage, there is no satisfactory evidence to prove that this change of basis results in a uniform change of faculty. Do the laws of heredity, *i.e.*, such as are *proven* (not assumed), cover the numerous cases on record of the prodigy, the genius, the eccentric? In the case of little Hoffmann, who knew more than his father and tutor could teach him of the laws of harmony, it has to be shown that his talent is the sum total of unexpressed musical ability in the direct line of ancestry, and also why the accumulated latent power found expression in his instance. Until "Colenso" can show his knowledge of the laws of heredity to be something more than the law of *psychic affinity* operating within the greater law of *Karma*, he had far better leave the subject and not multiply commonplace assertions which prove nothing. We are all conversant with the effects called "heredity," what we want is *causes*.

Mr. Sinnett's assertion, made on the authority of Koot-Hoomi, that there must be at least 1,500 years between each re-birth, is only the *general* law and applies to such as die a natural death, from the inability of the *Lingasharira* to cohere any longer in the physical body, thus preventing the further union of the pranic ray with its physical centre. What will "Colenso" say if I tell him that some pass from death to rebirth without going into Devachan at all?

Mr. Keightley is quite right in denying that "an executed criminal can awaken in Devachan in fifteen seconds in a state of super-angelic purity." The mere fact of his criminality affects nothing of itself; it is but a name for that state into which society is for ever driving its unfortunate members. There is something, however, in the fact that *execution* only terminates life in the physical body. The *Lingasharira* and *Kamarupa* still cohere, and all the unsatisfied desires of the individual will seek out the means of satisfaction until the cycle of change brings about dissolution in the astral body by which life is united to the physical plane. Hence it is no marvel that such unfortunates should continue to manifest in the sphere of material life from which they were unceremoniously expelled, or from which they violently extracted themselves. All the horrors of vampirism, obsession, and of many forms of madness

are referable to this class of creature when, as is often the case, they are impelled by revengeful motives towards persons still in the flesh.

The "criminal," *per se*, may not be conscious of crime, but only of the injustice he may have suffered, and happily for him the verdict of society does not affect by one hair's breadth the working of the law of Karma. I fail to see how "Colenso" disposes of the doctrine of Re-incarnation upon the truth of that of "Shells." We never attempted to identify the self-conscious Ego with any one of the numerous "shells" through which at different times it has manifested. It is not the "shells" that Re-incarnate but the Ego, and therefore there is nothing against the "shells" having it all their own way within the limits of time and place prescribed by the laws of their being.

W. R. OLD, F.T.S.

Drawing Mediumship.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I say a few words with reference to the facsimile of a spirit drawing, which appeared lately in "LIGHT," and Madame de Steiger's remarks thereon? It was to me, and perhaps to others, like feeling a current of fresh air in an overheated room to see this instance of real *bond fide* Spiritualism in the midst of Theosophical squabbles and bewildering disquisitions on Oriental doctrines. The drawing is beautiful and ethereal, the explanation of it is touching in its straightforward simplicity, and there is something fresh and *innocent* about it altogether. If this is "astral confusion," and the quarrels and the wearisome controversies are celestial harmony, by all means let us keep to the astral, and leave the "celestial" to the Heathen Chinese.

It has frequently occurred in my experience of automatic writing that sentences have been written which appeared like nonsense at the time, while further study showed that they had a deep symbolical meaning. The same thing applies, no doubt, to spirit drawing. Madame de Steiger says: "If anything appeals to the physical eye, if it has any value it will have certain properties, which are also orderly to the physical eye, and as such can be recognised." But could a little child see any meaning or beauty in a geometrical design, or could an Australian savage appreciate an illuminated MS. of the fourteenth century? It is a mere case of "eyes and no eyes." I do not profess to have any clearer insight in the matter than Madame de Steiger, but here are some impressions produced on my mind by the drawing. It seems possible that the wavy ornament to which Madame de Steiger takes exception represents Sound. (Perhaps the lines resembling piano keys may have led indirectly to this conclusion.) The size of these peculiar cells, which I have compared to piano keys, increases towards the right-hand side of the drawing; and starting from the middle cell, with a small cross in the midst of it, is a further projection of cells. I take these to mean spheres of spirit-life, represented by an ascending musical scale. In one of these spheres is a spray of tiny forget-me-nots. Each cell is distinct, and divided from its neighbours by a power resembling the law of gravitation on earth, but which is probably connected with sound. It is worthy of note that the cell containing the forget-me-nots is the last visible, but there is an indication of another beyond.

LEO.

Slate-writing with Mr. Husk.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Perhaps the following fact may be deemed worthy of record.

At a private séance recently held with Mr. Cecil Husk, at my house, an ordinary double slate was carefully secured by a strong cord (a tiny piece of pencil having been previously placed inside) in the presence of four or five of the sitters. This preparation was made *before* the arrival of the medium; and at the commencement of the séance, the slate was placed upon the table without comment. Towards the end of the sitting one of the spirit friends took the slate and requested my father to hold it. Whilst so doing all in the circle heard the scratching inside. He was told to hold the slate until the light was obtained. Upon examination the cord was found intact, and a communication was written to my father, requesting him to convey a message to the wife of the invisible writer, and signed "Archibald R.—d." I must here state that my father resides in a West country town, and was spending his holiday with me, and that in the said town a horrible murder had been committed, of an individual bearing the same name as the signature upon the slate. I requested him to take home the slate, in order to

ascertain if the writing would be recognised as that of the murdered man, and I am pleased to state that I have had a letter from him informing me that the writing was identified as being similar to that of the person alluded to.

4, Clifton-road, South Norwood, S.W. GEORGE DAVIS.

"A Mysterious Disappearance."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—While thanking Mr. J. G. Speed for his valuable reference in "LIGHT" of the 3rd inst., I wish to observe that there is no "discrepancy" in my own narrative. "The tale was told me by the chaplain nineteen years ago," and my relative was then chaplain, about 1825 to 1839, that is, *at the time he saw or was told this tale*. I would only add, were legal proceedings of the same character in 1687 as they now are, and judges as materialistic as now, Mr. J. G. Speed's solution would pass; but, unfortunately, this is not the case, as appears from many records. The times are changed since then; for example, women are no longer burnt with fire, as was the case even so late as the beginning of the eighteenth century.

I.O.

The Coming Slavery.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent "Alpha" quotes Mr. Herbert Spencer with seeming approval in the following passage:—

"Mr. Spencer shows us to what most of our specious legislation is tending. Philanthropy sees an army, idle, starving, houseless, without clothes, without education, without religion. With the very best intentions it at once proceeds to provide this starving army with food, clothes, School Boards, industrial dwellings, &c., not pausing to think that that is making the industrious poor pay for the idle. . . They (Socialists) propose that production should be carried on by agricultural and industrial armies under State control, apparently not remembering that armies presuppose grade, of officers, by whom obedience would have to be insisted on, since, otherwise, neither order nor efficient work could be ensured."

"Alpha" then says: "This is the slavery that looms in the future, the State Socialism that has already made such great strides in Germany. Every country is threatened with it."

There are two fallacies in the above extract so plain and yet so misleading that I think every true Spiritualist, having the welfare of humanity at heart, would wish to see them exposed. One is that true democracy objects to grades, to officers, and the rendering of obedience to such. The other that because the State may think proper to provide this starving army with food, clothes, and education, therefore the industrious poor are made to pay for the idle, and that to this there is no remedy. True Socialism, whether taught by Jesus, Paul, or persons living at the present day, insists that if a man will not work neither shall he eat. This is Bible Socialism; but, supposing a man is not only willing but anxious to work, and, try how he will, can get nothing whatever to do? "Aye, there's the rub!" Is it not a fact that for one wilful idler there are probably fifty—or 500 it may be—deserving men and women who are without employment during a great portion of the winter at any rate, and yet men require food and clothes at that time more than any other? True Socialism, as I understand it, teaches that all such persons are entitled as members of one great family, having God for their Father and the world for their home ("the earth hath He given for the children of men")—*are entitled as men* to the food, and clothes, and education which the State thinks it right to provide them with already so far as it goes, but which is only an earnest of that which will have to be done for them in the not far distant future, let Mr. Spencer and "Alpha" object as they may. If any person wishes to learn what can be done in this direction, and with the happiest results, let him read the new novel, *Looking Backwards*, which is making such a sensation both here and in America, and having done this, then let him purchase a book by Laurence Gronlund, called *The Co-operative Commonwealth*, and read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the same. If he will do this, I promise that he will take a far higher view both of the mercy of God and the high destiny awaiting humanity than he has ever done before. As for Socialists of the right sort—and you have no more right to judge of Socialism by its worst members than you have of Christianity)—as for Socialists refusing to serve under officers and so forth, see how they obey them in our Trades' Unions, as Mr. Gronlund points out. I have no sympathy with mere frothy declamation, nor with the miserable misrepresentations of some of our newspapers. When I vote, I support the Conservative cause, but I believe that true Democracy or Socialism is in the highest degree Conservative, and through the

efforts of such men as the authors of the two books I have alluded to, I look to see the Millennium an accomplished fact, and that before some people now living have passed away.

T. L. HENLY.

[This letter travels somewhat out of the scope of "LIGHT," and we cannot open our columns to a discussion on Socialism.—ED. OF "LIGHT."]

A Spirit Rap.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Can any of your readers inform me with respect to a spirit rap; giving the precise scientific description of the process by which it is produced?

Amidst tremendous clashings of intellectual armour on such subjects as pre-existence, Re-incarnation in periods of fifteen hundred years, astrology, &c., this simple question reminds me of the old remark, *Parturiant montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*; but again I remember that it was to a mouse the noble lion owed its freedom; so I hope I may be excused for intruding this little question.

Corfe Castle, Wareham.

J. HAWKINS SIMPSON.

"John King."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—During my connection with the Davenport Brothers, extending over several months, I had frequent opportunities of conversing *vid roce*, with "John King" and "Katie," the two principal spirits that controlled these mediums. I was, therefore, quite familiar with their voices, &c. I also attended at the Marshall's sésances, and heard their "John King" speak at length, but I failed to realise any resemblance between the two, either in voice, style, or character, and expressed this opinion to Mr. B. Coleman, who had the idea that they were one and the same personage. I could never understand how he came to the conclusions he did on the subject, but I do not think he heard much of the Davenport "John King's" "talk."

I have also heard and seen Mr. Williams's "John King," and consider him to be a very different individual from either of the others. The name "John King" is, therefore, probably generic and used, as the Davenport "John King" told me, as symbolical of power.

Eastbourne,

ROBERT COOPER.

August 12th, 1889.

A Correction.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—By printing "dethroned" instead of "enthroned" in a sentence contained in my letter of your last week's issue, the meaning becomes ridiculous nonsense and places me in an entirely false position.

The passage runs, "It is hardly worth while to notice 'Colenso's' absurd interpretation of R. Harte's letter to 'LIGHT,' namely, that the Theosophical Society has thrown Koot Hoomi overboard and dethroned me (I was not aware of ever having been dethroned)."

I wrote, however, "I was not aware of ever having been enthroned," which gives quite a different meaning. I hope you will give publicity to this correction and remove the very false impression caused by this unfortunate error.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

SOCIETY WORK.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—In consequence of the united meeting of London Societies at Epping Forest, our audiences were small on Sunday last. Next Sunday Mr. Lees will give addresses in aid of the organ fund, at 11 a.m., and 6.30 p.m. Solos will be given at both meetings.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

NOTTING HILL GATE.—ZEPHYR HALL, 9, BEDFORD-GARDENS, SILVER-STREET.—Mr. Clack gave an interesting lecture on Sunday on the "Phenomena in Nature," relating some of his own experiences, which were of a remarkable character. The chairman, Mr. Earl, also made a few remarks. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Yeeles. Next Sunday, at 3 p.m., near the Marble Arch, Mrs. Yeeles and Mr. Emms.—PERCY SMYTH, Hon. Sec.

THE ANNUAL OPEN-AIR SERVICES of the combined London Spiritualist Societies was held on Sunday last at Epping Forest. Meetings were held at three and 5.30. At the latter, and despite a heavy rain, some 350 friends assembled and participated in a splendid meeting, presided over by Mr. Drake, of Notting Hill. Addresses were given by Messrs. Towns, White, Emms, Rodger, Yeates, Darby, W. E. Long, and others. Mrs. Yeeles gave an

excellent address. Large numbers attended from King's Cross, Peckham, Marylebone, Notting Hill, Stratford, &c.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

CLAPHAM JUNCTION, 295, LAVENDER HILL, S.W.—On the 11th inst., Mr. Iver Macdonnell gave an interesting lecture on "Faith Healing" to a good audience. We have also had excellent open-air meetings in Battersea Park the last two Sundays. Donations of literature are much wanted. The third annual meeting of the Endyonic Society will be held on Sunday next, 18th inst., at 3.0 punctually; Tea at 5.0 (tickets 6d. each), and meeting resumed at 6.30. All friends are invited. Subjects suggested: "Best means of promoting the cause;" "Individual responsibility;" "Lyceums;" and "Federation."—U. W. GODDARD, 295, Lavender Hill, S.W.

MARYLEBONE LYCEUM AT 24, HARCOURT - STREET, MARYLEBONE-ROAD, W.—Some of the members and friends held an afternoon service on August 11th in Epping Forest, when the following friends addressed the children, Messrs. Long, Towns, Rodger, and Drake. The speeches were interspersed with singing; musical reading by the conductor, and suitable recitations by M. I. and A. Cobb, A. Goddard, and M. J. White. On August 18th it is intended to commence the reading and study of Mr. Kitson's *Spiritualism for the Young*, and take the text as a subject for consideration among the groups. I wish to acknowledge the receipt of the following sums towards the Lyceum outing: Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, 8s.; Mr. Mason, 2s.; Mr. Goddard, 1s.; Two Friends per J. B., 2s.; Mr. Hopcroft, 1s.; Mrs. Goddard, 2s. 6d.; Old Friends, per J. B., 2s. 6d.; Mr. Hawkins, 10s.; Mrs. Smythe, 1s.; Mrs. Bushby, 2s.; Mr. Burton, 1s.; Mr. Drake, 1s., and Mr. Swindon, 1s.; total, £1 15s. Expenses of tea, travelling, &c., £1 6s. 3d. Balance, 8s. 9d. towards purchasing books and other necessaries.—C. WHITE, Conductor, 75, Balcombe-street, Dorrel-square, N. W.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

It will ensure despatch if all matter offered for publication is addressed to the Editor of "LIGHT," 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to any other name or address. Communications for the Manager should be sent separately.

It seems desirable to make clear that any facts previously published in transactions of any Society or in any journal cannot be printed as original matter in "LIGHT," and should not be sent to us except for our private information. All records sent, moreover, must be accredited by the name and address of the sender, and will gain in value by the attestation of witnesses.

SEVERAL CORRESPONDENTS.—The Editor is sorry that he cannot reply directly to many letters that reach him. He is moving about daily and finds it hard to get any leisure for writing beyond what "LIGHT" necessitates. In answer to several kind inquiries he is happy to be able to give a fair account of his health, which is decidedly improved by rest.

COUNTESS ADELMA VAY WURMBRAND.—We have satisfied ourselves that it is impossible so to adapt your MS. as to make it available for our columns. We are, therefore, having it returned to you. This we do with regret and with a sense of the value of your work.

GILES B. STEBBINS.—Greeting to a valued worker. We had already marked your article for use, it being a concise presentation of our views. We trust you and your wife may benefit by the change. We shall be absent from London, on a similar search for health, till the end of next month, and may, we fear, miss your friends.

COLENSO.—We have received a long rejoinder to the letter of Madame Blavatsky, which goes over old ground and does not advance us beyond personalities, which, however controversially effective, are irritating and without general interest. In the exercise of our discretion we respectfully decline to pursue this line of criticism, though our contributor is effective and vigorous in his rejoinder. We have no concern with personalities, being desirous only of elucidating the relations between Spiritualism and kindred forms of speculative belief. Our correspondent refers "C.C.M." to the reply to Mr. Bertram Keightley, and adds:—

"In *Esoteric Buddhism* are two conflicting theories of man's after-life amelioration copied apparently from Eliphas Lévi by some illogical person who failed to see that the doctrine of 'Shells' was an afterthought of the eccentric Frenchman, and that it stultifies the whole of his book. 'Nothing,' says this writer, 'can enter Heaven but that which comes from Heaven. At death, then, the Divine Spirit which animated man returns alone to Heaven.' An airy corpse (*Cadavre aérien*) remains behind, revelling in the scenes of his old wickedness, disturbing the dreams of young girls, and, by-and-bye, perishing for ever. It is this 'airy corpse' that can alone be brought back to earth by necromancy. (*Dogme de la Haute Magie*, Vol. I. pp. 261-263.) The French writer calls the airy corpse a 'Shell,' an 'elementary.' But elsewhere he gives a second sketch of the fate of man after death differing *in toto* from this, and contradicting it everywhere. He announces that men's souls for millions of years will wander in search of perfection from sun to planet and from planet to sun. But if the good half of a man's soul is thus completely severed from its evil instincts at the moment of death, the Buddhist Reincarnations which have been grotesquely tacked on to Eliphas Lévi become unjust in the extreme. A man without a single evil quality would be as perfect as God Almighty. Why should he have a fresh batch of imperfections tacked on to him and be plunged again into the earth-life?"

(Several Letters have reached us too late for this week's issue.)

TO THE DEAF.—A Person cured of Deafness and noises in the head of 23 years' standing by a simple remedy, will send a description of it FREE to any person who applies to NICHOLSON, 21, Bedford Square, London, W.C.