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"THE SOUL AND FUTURE LIFE."

BY EPES SARGENT.

IN relation to the "symposiac" discussion on the subject of "The Soul and a Future Life," which has recently appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*, and in which Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. Hutton, Professor Huxley, Lord Blatchford, Mr. Roden Noel, Lord Selborne, Canon Barry, Mr. W. R. Greg, Rev. Baldwin Brown, and Dr. W. G. Ward have been the interlocutors, a friend writes me as follows:—

"In all the protracted and certainly able discussion of the subject, there is little more than an allusion to the modern spiritual phenomena; but the general tone of the arguments favourable to a future life is of hardly higher cogency than that of the speculations in Plato's *Phædo*. Mr. Harrison closes us with the strongest possible exhibition of the difficulties incident to the supposition of a future life, drawn mainly from the position that a functional relation has been established by philosophy between every fact of thinking, willing, or feeling, on the one side, and some molecular changes in the body on the other side.

"What deplorable prejudice it must be that has prevented the writers from even looking at the great mass of phenomena tending towards a solution of their problem offered by Spiritualism! It reminds one of a coterie of deaf and dumb men inquiring into the possibility of such a thing as music."

Mr. F. Harrison has been very arrogant and very contemptuous in his expressions towards Spiritualism. He has called it a "disgusting subject," and he has charged the investigators into the Slade phenomena—such men as Dr. Carter Blake, Serjeant Cox, A. R. Wallace, Dr. Wyld, Rev. Wm. Stainton-Moses, Mr. W. H. Harrison, and others, gentlemen more or less connected with science or literature—as "grovelling before the trickery of a Yankee conjuror." It will not, therefore, be pleasant to Mr. F. Harrison to learn that in emphasising and exposing as he does the insufficiency of the current arguments of theology in favour of a future state for man, he is unwittingly helping this "disgusting" Spiritualism, for which he can hardly find words to express his scorn, to emerge as the rock of the future, as it has been of the past, on which men must mainly found their rational convictions of the soul's immortality.

All other arguments for immortality come in with new and unexpected force when this one basic principle, demonstrable, consistent, harmonious, and contradicted by no fact of science, whether chemical, mechanical, or biological, is conceded, as it soon must be—the principle, namely, that there are supersensual faculties in man which point to a duality of organisms, the one coarse and visible to sense, the other subtle, ethereal, invisible—the spiritual continent of man's entire individuality, and which, by the dissolution of the physical body, is freed for continuous life, with high corresponding faculties and powers, in a world invisible to our present sensual limitations.

Mr. F. Harrison is very fond of characterising this belief as a gross and hideous materialism. But the question is not precisely whether it suits his fastidious æsthetic demands, but whether the facts, some of which he so angrily repudiates as the "trickery of a Yankee conjuror," are true and demonstrable. I happen to know that they are, and in this knowledge I am upheld by the concurrent testimony of chemists, physicists, astronomers, lawyers and men of letters: by Hare, Crookes, Wyld, Wallace, Butlerof, Wagner, Perty, Flammarion, Fichte, Denton, W. H. Harrison, Buchanan, Cox, Stainton-Moses, C. C. Massey, Gerald Massey, Brittan, Watson, F. Tennyson, and many more, some of the most noted of whom I may have unintentionally failed to mention.

There are many fastidious persons who chafe at some of the coarse facts and processes of our physical nature, and

wonder why a highly intellectual person should have to submit, like a dog or cat, to the base requirements of the body. Mr. F. Harrison would seem to be of this class, so far, at least, as the notion of a spiritual organism, successor of the physical, is concerned. To his mind it is a brutalising conception; and he has a sneer at Isaac Taylor's *Physical Theory of Another Life*, published long before modern Spiritualism appeared, and which incidentally prompts him to utter, with his *de haut en bas* air of complacent superiority, these ejaculations: "This is the true materialism; here is the physical theory of another life; this is the unspiritual denial of the soul, the binding it down to the clay of the body."

And the end of this vaunted "soul," according to the teachings of Mr. F. Harrison, is in the charnel-house and the grave. "Mr. Harrison's striking discourse on the soul and future life," says Professor Huxley, wittily, "has a certain resemblance to the famous essay on the snakes of Ireland."

These æsthetic objections to "the physical theory of another life," are anticipated and met by Isaac Taylor, who seems to have foreseen precisely such a class of malcontents as Mr. F. Harrison represents; for Taylor aptly says:—"The prejudices of a somewhat morbid spirituality might perhaps lead us to distaste the animated world around us as God's work, and impel us to be scandalised by some of its conditions; and thus it is conceivable that the realities of the upper world, when first they open upon minds imbued with prepossessions of this kind, may excite a recoil and amazement such as may try the principles of piety. . . . Nothing is more dangerous than to indulge notions which tend to make us think our tastes and principles more refined and elevated than those of the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Something of this infatuation very commonly besets ardent and abstracted minds."

"Infatuation," it would indeed seem to be, that incites Mr. F. Harrison to ring the changes as he does upon the "materialism" of the system of truth deducible from the known facts of Spiritualism. If "materialism" it indeed be, how are we going to help it? Had we not better set about reconciling ourselves to the facts in the best way we can, and trust to the "nature of things" for coming out right? Dryden says:—

"Reaching above our nature does no good,
We must sink back into our flesh and blood."

An ignoble sentiment if ignobly construed, and yet a salutary one, if construed aright.

Precisely the same assertions that Mr. F. Harrison uses to belittle the Spiritualists' conception of an ethereal, trans-material organism in man, could be used against all his own notions of a possible moral "spirituality" in this life. Why should the "materialism" he denounces be any more incidental to the spiritual state of being than to the terrestrial and physical? If a man can be morally "spiritualised" in his material body, why not in his trans-material? All this rant about the "disgusting" character of Spiritualism, and its tendency to moral "materialism" is simply the objurgation of ignorance and misconception. Assuming that the subject of our phenomena is despicable, Mr. F. Harrison has never investigated sufficiently to encounter a few of our stupendous and staggering facts, any one of which would carry force enough to knock the wind out of his philosophy, and show him that he is battling with the inevitable.

The Rev. Mr. Voysey is another representative of this class of æsthetic objectors. He "hopes most earnestly" that our facts may not be true; and he stigmatises as a "morbid craving" the natural desire on the part of human beings to learn something of their immortal prospects. But may there not be a morbid apathy as well as a morbid craving?

"Indifference to the question what and where we are to

be after our short career on earth," says John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States, "is the swift and too often fatal step to the disbelief that there is any future state of responsible existence for us in reserve."

And this indifference is getting to be quite the fashionable thing in literary and scientific circles. Mr. F. Harrison speaks with what Mr. Hutton justly characterises as an "accent of hauteur" of the vulgar aspirations to continuous life. Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us that "Christ never preaches the personal immortality;" which announcement, seeing that Christ reappeared in person to prove His personal immortality, would seem to be deliberately intended to convey an erroneous impression.

What powers of intellectual acclimatisation are there in the soul of man! Miss Martineau and Mr. Frederick Harrison find comfort and warmth in the arctic zone of utter unbelief as to a future life. Indeed, the sentiment, as it waxes stronger, gets to be something more than mere unbelief; it swells to a contemptuous repudiation of all hope in immortality as something derogatory and vulgar. And at this state of mind Mr. F. Harrison would seem to have arrived. Hence the frantic expressions of hate which he has for Spiritualism—the most portentous of the shadows of coming events that threaten to annihilate his godless creed.

But see how, in the gradual evolution of truth, even "the wrath of man" against it is made to work in its favour. As I have already intimated, Mr. F. Harrison is doing a good and needed work for Spiritualism. We have given the names of ten well-known writers who have taken up the gauntlet which he so defiantly flung down, and all of whom, except Professor Huxley, have brought forward such arguments as they could to prop the declining belief in immortality. Omitting, as they have, all reference to the proofs, direct and palpable, that are given, and have been always given by Spiritualism, how unsatisfying, except to a small class of intuitive and imaginative minds, their reasonings and their proofs must seem! In exposing this barrenness and insufficiency, Mr. F. Harrison is doing the good work to which I have referred; and I cannot but admit and admire the ability with which he is doing it. It is only when he touches on Spiritualism that he loses his head and begins to rave. That is but natural, since neither argument nor rhetoric can counteract a fact; and he must fully realise that if our facts are, as we claim, real and demonstrable, his ingenious writings, so far as they conflict with the truth, must go down the stream of oblivion as exploded rubbish.

No. 63, Moreland-street, Boston, U.S.A.

Review.

The Soul, and How it Found Me. By Edward Maitland. Tinsley Brothers. London: 1877.

THIS is a book that every Spiritualist should read. Its effect on the large circle of general readers which Mr. Maitland's literary reputation can command will probably be bewildering. From the vulgar critics who repeat the phrases whereby they have been taught to ascribe every supersensuous experience to morbid conditions, the author can of course only expect misrepresentation and insult. All the more prompt and cordial should be the expressed sympathy of the better informed with the accomplished scholar whose high quality of unselfish courage has given to a hostile public the avowals contained in this remarkable volume. Nor will their appreciation be limited to the testimony thus forcibly and fearlessly given. The facts recorded are of transcendent interest, some of them being strikingly and profoundly suggestive. Such is "the Vision of the Tree," at p. 60, of the possibility "that there subsists between all living beings a bond of sympathy to which, if only the desire on one side reach an extreme degree of intensity, the other side may be forced to respond by disclosing to view its animating idea;" as also, in the developed thought of the author, that this "idea" has an essential correspondence to and takes the form of personality. So, at p. 86, we have an account of a case of "transfer of thought" as remarkable as anything of the same nature ever recorded. Especially interesting and instructive is Mr. Maitland's account of his transition from

intellectual labour to spiritual receptivity. No abbreviation, no description at second-hand of this vivid picture, can do anything like justice to its force and impressiveness. But we may note two stages in the author's development—the ideal and the personal. And it is worthy of remark, as showing how little an enthusiastic or "prevenient imagination" was concerned in the results, that Mr. Maitland seems not to have conceived the extraordinary and spontaneous access of ideas distinguishing the earlier stage of illumination to have been due to personal inspiration, until it was unmistakably impressed with the characteristics of a second intelligence in the later.

The book is an account of the production of the larger work, *England and Islam*, published by the author in the spring. Many, perhaps, will be of opinion with the present writer, that that work contains a mixture of much that is sublime and true in spiritual philosophy with political fallacies which seem strange in such a connection. Even if we were to accept, on the authority of this revelation, propositions involving very questionable assumptions, we should still revolt from the conclusion that it is the duty of England to aid in perpetuating cruel and oppressive misrule for a high and spiritual purpose. It may be that it is the mission of England to mediate the harmonious union of the eastern and the western peoples—of the masculine and the feminine elements of the human race; though it is not easy to see that in her long connection with India she has hitherto shown the least sympathy with, or influence over, or tendency to fuse the genius of her Oriental subjects. It may be that the passage of the Danube, by Russian armies, was the first step in a march to India, though it looks more like what it professed to be—the sympathetic junction of two members of the Slavonic race against the alien oppressor of one of them. But if England's action is to be determined by moral considerations, is it not better that she should fight the battle, even at conceivable disadvantage, when and where those considerations are all on her side, than at a time and place at which her interference would mean the support of political wrong and injustice? We are left in some doubt as to the source from which Mr. Maitland believes himself to have derived his inspiration on this subject; but even if, as seems to be implied, he represents the soul of England (is it not rather the soul of Islam?) he may be reminded of his own teaching (*England and Islam*, p. 167), that there is yet a higher and a higher soul: that the soul of humanity is nearer to God, and therefore to right, and truth, and justice, than the soul of one of its collective members, and that the "Eastern Question" may be viewed from a higher standpoint than that represented by the tutelary spirit of one people.

Passing gladly from topics of political controversy, we come to the fundamental principle of Mr. Maitland's philosophy—the doctrine of the soul. "It was by a process purely intellectual," he tells us, "that I had come to regard the pantheistic hypothesis, which involved the reality and indestructibility of the soul, as a necessary truth." His is not the Pantheism that negates the personality of God, sinking and exhausting the soul of the universe in its sensible activity and manifestation. He holds, on the contrary, the belief of all philosophical "mystics," that the ideal is the real, and, with Spinoza, that God is the only substance. Not in the identity of God with Nature, but in his identity with man, does the author discover at once the fountal idea of religion, the proof of individual immortality, and the explanation of existence itself. He insists, of course, on that important distinction between the true and apparent self, without regard to which the idea would either be unintelligible, or would have no other significance for idealism than the impersonal Pantheism of a *natura naturans* has for Materialism. The recognition of this distinction has always accompanied and characterised the escape of the religious consciousness from dogma and formalism into the spirit. The new birth is nothing else or less than this recognition in experience.*

* The writer cannot refrain here from a deprecatory reference to the materialistic perversion of this essential idea of religion by the Reincarnationists, who see in it only an explicit confirmation of their belief. This degradation of a sublime spiritual truth is the great blot in Lady Cathness's otherwise very interesting and instructive book, *Old Truths in a New Light*.

How little of true personality there is in the ordinary consciousness will be apparent to any one who reflects on the preponderating influence of the external over our lives, and on the fact that even the opinions and sentiments which we regard as most truly our own, and characteristic, are for the most part held in obedience to moral and intellectual forces, which individual minds can neither determine nor resist. The theory of human automatism has much to say for itself in the sphere of the outer life. We find this outer life of sensibility and impotence constantly referred to by Behmen, St. Martin, and other theosophists, under the significant designation, *Astral*; whether it was that they were imbued with astrological ideas, or, as is more probable, that the science of astrology is derived from a deeper knowledge of man and the universe, which has never been wholly lost. Certain it is that the fatalistic element in life, which is the theme of much contemporary writing, was fully recognised in the old spiritual philosophies. Its recognition by modern thought is without any perception of transcendental freedom and personality. Nevertheless—and notwithstanding the train of materialistic consequences—logical and practical, which such a half truth necessitates, it prepares the conditions of spiritual insight. It is better that for a time we should be taught to regard personality as an illusion, than that we should continue to confound the true and the apparent self, thereby inevitably accepting the phenomenal sphere of the latter as equally real and limitative. Of all the clergy and good people who speak familiarly of the soul, few probably have any other idea of it than as the subject of their temporal and habitual consciousness. To how many, for instance, would it seem other than a startling paradox to assert that a bad soul is a contradiction in terms? The great truth proclaimed by Mr. Maitland is the substantial indifference of the Universal Soul (God) and its manifestation in man. But in how many men is it manifested? How many men have other than potential souls?

This doctrine of the soul is perfectly familiar, though under diverse expressions, to the religious consciousness, and is in accordance with ancient religious and philosophical systems. It is inevitably implied in the attempt to escape from limitations. We should not have the sense of limitation if our whole being was comprised and expressed in any moment of its development—in a word, if we were not conscious of an affinity to the infinite. We may represent this to ourselves in the sphere of finite things by supposing the germ of a tree to be endowed with self-consciousness. The true being is not the germ but the ideal tree, which has to come, in time, to its phenomenal manifestation. Its phenomenal consciousness, during the germ stage, would reveal only the germ as a completed existence, but would be accompanied by a real consciousness, which would, however, appear only as a sense of limitation, and a struggle for development. But when the limit of its capacity was attained, and the phenomenal tree fully expressed the ideal, this sense of limitation would disappear, and would be succeeded by a perfect contentment and satisfaction. This state can never be permanently attained by the human soul, because it is none other than the Infinite and Universal Being in temporary and partial manifestation. The ideal of religious aspiration is to have done with the apparent self, and to be so united with God as to have no desires, no interests, no passions—in a word, no will apart from His. So the ideal of the philosopher is to think in universal forms, and to escape from the partial categories that are peculiar to himself or to a school. No wonder that speculation sometimes confounds this ideal with absorption, or that Nirvana has been supposed to imply the privation of individual consciousness. Yet the revolution of the planetary bodies round their true centre, the Sun, is not inconsistent with the secondary motion about their own axes. In the revelation received by Mr. Maitland respecting the spiritual origin and meaning of the Zodiacal Planisphere, we have the idea, familiar to the student of Swedenborg (to go no further back), of the exact correspondence between the spiritual and the natural, as between the macrocosm and the microcosm. This doctrine, if scientific men would avail themselves of it, is an organon by which knowledge

and discovery might advance with gigantic strides. Nor has it been wholly neglected. Nothing in his writings stamps Mr. Herbert Spencer so distinctly as a man of genius as his independent discovery of the fact that the processes of evolution are the same in moral, social, and physical phenomena. But this pregnant idea can only receive its full application to the sphere of existence when the intellect has fairly grappled with materialistic assumptions, and idealism has attained its victory in thought.

The significance of this doctrine of the soul with reference to the question of human immortality will be partly apparent from what has been already said. If the true soul is that which links us to the universal, and is alone immortal, then must it vitalise the individual consciousness in order that the latter may be perpetuated. The doctrine of individual immortality, in short, implies that the infinite and universal shall be active and conscious in the finite and particular. It may be expressed again, in religious language, by saying that the Divine Will has to take the place of the individual will *in the individual*, to convert the latter to itself, so that the individual shall be the conscious energy of God in a sphere of particular manifestation. The theological alternative, as we all know, was hell. The philosophical alternative is death—the annihilation of individual energy and consciousness which have in themselves no value, no claim to persistence, and no ground of it. Why, forsooth, should “I” be immortal, if the “I” means nothing more than an individual centre of pleasures, pains, passions, and self-regarding energies of thought and action? The very hope of such an immortality is inexpressibly degrading; the very conception of it, so far from being spiritualistic, is a consequence of that other false and essentially materialistic conception of existence, which makes the individual the atom, the reality, and the universal a mere abstraction. Those who would go more deeply and particularly into this subject of conditional immortality may be referred to that recently published marvel of erudition and research, Blavatsky’s *Isis Unveiled*. At present let us hear our author, “Though the soul is in its nature indestructible, the individual is not, therefore, necessarily immortal; for the soul is a loan and not a gift. It is a flame which, tended and fostered, burns up into God; but which, rejected or ignored, burns out and becomes extinct in respect of its possessor, but only after many trials and opportunities of recovery, when the individual perishes, and the soul returns to its Divine element,” p. 240. And we find the same teaching in a trance communication, at p. 253, entitled, “A Vision of Creation.” It presents no difficulty when once we have ceased to regard the distinction between the soul and the apparent self, as a mere religious figure of speech, and are able to perceive in it a profound metaphysical truth.

Of the force and lucidity with which its leading conceptions are inculcated in the book before us, no isolated passages can give an adequate impression. The most striking are involved in such streams of cogent and connected thought and narrative that to quote them out of their context, even if space permitted, would be mere mutilation. It must be assumed that every reader of this journal, who cares to know what Spiritual Pantheism is, will read Mr. Maitland’s book for himself. Some of the “spirit messages” given through the hand of the lady whom Maitland calls “the Seeress,”* are of exceptional excellence. One specimen must be given. “We would have you know that there is no such thing as purely spiritual evil, but that evil is the result of the materialisation of spirit. If you examine carefully all we have said concerning the various forms of evil, you will see that every one is the result of the limitations of matter. Falsehood is the limitation of the faculties of perception—selfishness is the result of the limitation of the power to perceive that the whole universe is but the larger self, and so of all the rest. It is then true that God created evil, but yet it is true that God is spirit, and being spirit is incapable of evil. Evil is then purely and solely the result of

* One word here of disgust for the vulgar insolence of a reviewer in *The Academy*, who could describe a lady, of whom he could know nothing, except what Mr. Maitland tells us, viz., that she is of a “bright intelligence, cultivated mind, indomitable spirit, and eager sympathy with the pursuit of perfection wherever discernible,” as a “hysterical woman.” It is, however, fair to add that this has since been retracted by the Editor.

the materialisation of God. This is a great mystery. We can but indicate it to-night," p. 152.

Other topics, less transcendental, are comprised in Mr. Maitland's book, which cannot be adequately noticed here. A practical result of the prevalent materialism is traced in the horrible practice of vivisection; and an analogy is drawn between the theological dogma of sacrificial atonement and the slaying of animals for the sustenance of life. To Spiritualists, the former atrocity is deprived of its poor and doubtful plea of indispensable utility by the knowledge that mesmeric clairvoyance, cultivated and developed, would probably render a truer account than an instrument of torture.

From one so fertile in thought, and so powerful in expression, as Mr. Maitland, we may hope that the literature of Spiritualism will be further enriched by his pen. He is a welcome ally to the movement, over which he cannot fail to exercise an elevating and instructive influence.

C. C. MASSEY.

SPECULATIONS ABOUT REINCARNATION PROBLEM.

BY J. T. MARKLEY.

AM I somebody else? Is my individuality a transfusion of olden soul-force; a latter-day effusion of some personage who shone, or was defamed, in the days which have now become history? This train of thought suggests itself in the speculative confusion of the revived Reincarnation controversy. Although I am "intelligently slow" to accept this fast-spreading Continental doctrine, yet I must, in all fairness, admit that the Reincarnationists include in their ranks not a few of the most refined, intellectual, and faithfully religious folk in Europe. A belief which has attracted, and is attracting, many of the most influential and gifted thinkers in Roman Catholic countries, is not to be hastily sneered at by those of us who incline to contrary opinions in questions of speculative theology. Having said thus much to indicate my Dean-Stanleyite love of truth, wherever found, or in whatever direction it beckons the reverent understanding, I shall not be likely to fall into old-groove prejudices in pursuing, briefly, this inquiry—Are we really ourselves?

Ruthenpharl—a sweet poet, in all conscience—addressing the Blessed Dead, remarks:

Say, are we still as dear
To you as then—when you were here?

But to what angels do we speak? May not the departed rise again to quick life in the person of our neighbour's latest child? And possibly the Janet of our schoolday rambles—who died in a pale consumption ten years ago—is now, in altered form, the Juliana with whom we commune so lovingly during the mutual rapture of the "musical evenings" at home, or at the semi-detached villa over the way? There is surely much in our new favourite to recall the loving personality of the half-forgotten buried Beauty of long ago. Was it not Sir Walter Scott who testified rationally to the "sentiment of Pre-existence," which often becomes a widely circulated experience among persons of deep thought and culture? And how often do we feel the bewildering sense of "history repeated," when voices startle us with echoes once dearly familiar, and forms of facial loveliness bring back the past with a vividness which makes us almost afraid?

This "second edition" of some one we have known in the days of the fond grandfather's blessing, seems to share the "surprise" with which we are pushed back into uncontrollable dreams. Are we both renewing a friendship which once took other forms, say a generation back? If not, why this dual recognition of previous companionship amid other scenes, and on other dates? We somehow fall at once to the Poetry of Sadness. We cannot do less than love each other; but still we are not comfortable. Two distinct worlds seem to be "ill at ease," although the conference of *spirituelle* reflection is so welcome and so joyous. We neither of us have courage to express this "sentiment of pre-existence" in homely talk, so that poetry must come to the rescue. Cautiously we ask—

Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind
That makes thee stare thus?
Wherefore breaks that sigh?

But the enchantment is short-lived; and the noise of the madding crowd reduces the illusion to a commonplace event.

Perhaps this question of personal identity and pre-existence, can be best noticed by studying the characteristics of Genius. It is well-known among literary and press writers, that the productions of a person's pen, when afterwards perused by the writer himself, seem to be as new to him as to the great vulgar public which waits in the streets to devour the contents of this apparent brain effort, be it in books, or the rapidly composed morning newspaper. Who can read the works of our deepest thinkers without feeling the mysterious *afflatus* of some abnormal inspiration? To say that it is mechanical and incessant practice, which causes this masterly flow of ripe thought, and this power of all-conquering rhetoric, is only to half explain the phenomenon of the literary understanding. How about the variations of style and expression? Is there not a type of fatalism in the language of the fluent scribe?

Is it absurd to infer that some great and grand, so-called "dead" Macaulay, overshadows the apt and wonderful penmen who compose—with lightning speed and splendour—many of the most conscientious newspaper "leaders" in the middle-watch of the night? Ask any writer, of original gifts to explain the "irresistible outflow" of his best thoughts, and he will mostly tell you that he feels guided rapidly to the moods of his eloquence by an "influence" only to be realised by personal experience. It is the same in front-rank oratory. The golden stream of instructive speech through and by the lips of Gladstone, Beaconsfield, or Bright, and the rare sermons of Punshon, Gillfillan, Canon Liddon, and such men, suggests the possibility of "other forces" acting outside and upon the famous speechmen. Are these men really themselves? Are they olden senators and pulpit orators re-incarnated? or do they receive abnormal help and training from "congenial souls" now departed?

This inspirational individuality in men and women of genius seems to prove that writers are helped by "ministering spirits," or that they are historic characters working again on earth in new forms, and under new conditions of personal experience. May not Swinburne, in the intrepid splendour of his muse, be under the spiritual control of Lord Byron. All religious reformers too, may be thus "inspired" by ghostly minds of similar caste, motives, and sympathies. Does Wesley still live in the person of some holy toiler in our midst? and may not Keble brood over some hallowed pen now busy with new songs of the Christian year? We may almost assume, at any rate, that the bitter theologians of the dark ages have a little to do in the editorial management of many of our modern "religious" newspapers. Moreover, did we not detect the "ghost" of cruel Judge Jeffries, the other day, telling a living magistrate to give a child-prisoner "three weeks" for playfully stealing a common house-leek?

The examples cited in this short article might be also extended to the productions of art, the pursuit of science, and the less pretentious features of common domestic life. But it is in the case of crime, and in the domain of everyday temptation, that we are most led to ask, Are we really ourselves? Fashionable ladies have been known to steal; noble fellows have become sots; church deacons—when from home—have sworn like gallant cavaliers; and circus clowns, under temptation, have become Gospel preachers! Wherefore this change? Old drunkards tell us that they dread the "melancholy period" when beer takes them by storm, in spite of their better selves. The political demagogue often repents of his eloquent "aspersions," and says that some "awful inspiration" prompted him to defame his best friends. Many a man also makes a fool of himself because he tries to sing operatic solos, without any sign of a musical voice, in a crowded private gathering of the *élite!* And it is well known as a fact in comparative psychology, that nearly all suicides are the result of uncontrollable and secretly fought lunar impulse.* I might write a book rather than a single article upon this momentous theme. But from this fragmentary examination of the

* Where is the evidence of this?—Ed.

question—Are we really ourselves? we seem to be on the track of some unexplained outside force of “inspiration” in things good and bad. We may not haughtily solve this problem of life and destiny, but phenomenal facts may help to make its solution possible even before—

“Death shall re-unite
The severed branch unto the parent-stem.”

From certain cardinal impulses in men's nature, and from the almost fatal pre-destiny of their daily actions, we may reasonably infer the theory of abnormal inspiration. This doctrine is compatible with the free exercise of the human will. Why may not the “old Masters,” now in the land of souls, try to influence great congenial minds within earthly experience. And the same principles may hold good in reference to the sway of “bad spirits” over persons of negative and naturally carnal disposition. If Keble was not really old George Herbert, reincarnated for further poetical and ascetic development; and if Mr. Spurgeon is not really Calvin “humanised,” or Dr. Blair reset, and quickened with new humours of rhetoric, it is not unfair to assume, that the “blessed dead”—as popularly understood—may overshadow their counterparts, and guide to effectual issues the worthy deeds of similarly constituted minds of later birth and experience. This psychological fact may help to explain wicked temptations, and the fearful criminal deeds of many, in unlettered society. Old dots departed may mysteriously “influence” enfeebled drunkards in the flesh. Ask any debauched cobbler of otherwiser excellent parts, and he will confess to a “dread of certain awful periods” in his domestic experience when he is led, against his better self, to frequent the lowtap-room hells which slowly work out his moral and social ruin. The unfortunate suicide, in all ranks of life, secretly battles for weeks, months, and years, it may be, with the “temptation” known only to himself. Is this temptation a preternatural, a bad spiritual influence, acting through the *aura* of interlinked soul-life? Or are the erring ones only undeveloped spirits once again in the bodily throes of a needful, and possibly a merciful, reincarnation? To my mind, the first hypothesis is the most feasible, as the “inspiration” theory will cover all forms of intellectual effort, and every variation of good and bad predisposition. Following out this argument, Keats may have felt the guiding grandeur of Milton's “soul in glory;” and the united spirits of both those sublime poets may even now be “hovering about” and educating some all-commanding Nineteenth-Century genius. Sir Christopher Wren, as an inspiring and restless ghost, might, perchance, influence the finishing touches of hallowed beauty which give a dreamy splendour to the fane just free from the active creation of the architect, and the busy cunning of wonderful workmen. Other abnormal powers, less majestic, may possibly strive, with half-developed mortals, against holy thoughts and honourable aspirations; whilst the world—divided in motives, interests, and passions—is mostly ignorant of the mysterious spiritual revolutions which affect mankind, or play into the daily processes of our eternal destiny.

3, Crawthorn-street, Peterborough.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

INQUIRERS' SEANCES.

ON Tuesday, the 6th November, a *séance* was held at 38, Great Russell-street, London, with Mr. C. E. Williams as medium. There were thirteen persons present besides Mr. Williams. We sat with joined hands round the table for about an hour and a quarter, in the dark. Nothing occurred, except a number of faint raps, apparently produced by blows on the lower surface of the top of the table, which were felt as well as heard at various parts of the table, sometimes far from the medium.

Those familiar with *séances* will know how to appreciate the bearing of the following facts on the poverty of the manifestations:—

1st. The atmosphere was close and damp, and the barometer low.

2nd. A discussion had occurred immediately before the

séance, in the presence of the medium, as to whether he should go into the cabinet or we should sit round the table.

3rd. Some half-dozen strangers among the sitters seemed shy and reserved, and scarcely joined, if at all, either in the general conversation or in the singing. This naturally had a somewhat depressing effect on the medium, which, as is well known, tends to weaken the manifestations.

A. Joy, Member of *Séance* Committee, in Charge.

A GRIEVANCE RECTIFIED.

IN *The Spiritualist* of November 2nd was that part of a letter by Mr. Mould, of Newcastle, which defended Miss Wood. The other part was not published, because, as we stated, it consisted of “somewhat personal remarks about Mr. Stone.”

Although this letter was signed only by Mr. Mould, a document has been published by Messrs. J. Mould, W. C. Robson, W. Hunter, John Miller, F. Pickup, H. A. Kersey, E. J. Blake, M. Patterson, W. Armstrong, T. Ashton, J. Coltman, J. Haydock, J. Robson, and L. Bristol, stating it to be their letter. They call our suppression of personalities the suppression of a “defence,” and raise the question whether this journal is edited by a Jesuit.

The best thing we can do is to print the suppressed part of the letter, to the publication of which so much importance is attached. Here it is:—

To the Editor of “The Spiritualist.”

DEAR SIR,—In your last week's issue a Mr. J. B. Stone writes to correct a report, made by your correspondent “X,” of the movement in Blackburn. Further than what I read in the spiritual papers, I know nothing of the progress or otherwise, anywhere than Newcastle, of Spiritualism; but I am inclined to think, from Mr. Stone's own letter, that “X” has more accurately gauged the state of affairs than “even one of the earliest adherents.”

Mr. Stone has investigated this subject to little purpose, and—per inference—his methods must have been very crude, otherwise he would not have displayed such gross ignorance of the nature of mediumship; and, as to the “cause being too sacred to be trifled with,” before assuming Miss Wood has done any such thing, I would suggest to Mr. Stone to qualify himself first as an observer before burlesquing the functions of a judge.

If Spiritualism has no broader and better foundation than Mr. Stone's own personal and family experiences, he may, if it suits his own crabbed and confined soul, bow down to the mongrel fetish his untutored imagination has conjured; but he must excuse the people of the North if they decline to have any such “god to reign over us,” or to imbibe such a spiritual atmosphere as surrounds his saintly presence.

If Mr. Stone had recognised the equal importance for honesty among inquirers, such as he insists should obtain among mediums, he would not have indulged in such shameless and reckless charges as those he prefers, but cannot substantiate, against Miss Wood, and probably he would have learned, from a little introspection, induced by the exercise of such a duty, that there are still heights of honesty to which even the “earliest adherent of the movement in Blackburn” may aspire; and until he reaches that exalted pinnacle of purity, and has given us the requisite external evidence of such lofty attainments, we decline to think of him otherwise than of the earth earthy. It may be he is a well-meaning man, but he is assuredly a most willfully ignorant Spiritualist.

Having removed the grievance by printing what was desired, our readers are in a position to judge for themselves, whether or no the public interests of the movement and of the authors were supported by us in withholding the above from publication.

We will not print any more letters on this subject. Those of the past have been exceptionally violent and inharmonious. Mr. Stone had no right to measure by his own, the experiences of others who had tested Miss Wood well for years, and superabundantly proved the genuineness of her powers. On the other hand, the authors of the above letter had equally no right to judge by their own, Mr. Stone's experience of the seizure of the medium dressed up as a spirit. Such logic would be but equivalent to that of the indignant Irishman, who when told that three witnesses said they saw his friend shoot his landlord, indignantly replied that it was not true, as he could bring thirteen other witnesses to swear that they did not see the said shooting. What takes place in one locality in one time, is no evidence as to what takes place in another locality at another time.

Miss Wood claims that at Blackburn she was an unconscious instrument in the hands of an evil power. As there can be no proof to the contrary, and she is known to be almost daily subject to abnormal influences, we suggested in these pages that she should have the benefit of the doubt, but that in future none but test manifestations through her mediumship should be accepted. Indeed, for purposes of publication, this would be a good rule to adopt with all physical mediums.

We presume that no Spiritualist wants it made easy and pleasant for mediums to appear as ghosts, or to bring down upon the movement here the blows which uncritical credulity have brought upon it in America.

A LETTER from the Hon. A. Aksakof informs us that he expects Dr. Slade to reach St. Petersburg about the close of this month.

MR. STANTON-MOSES's paper on slate-writing, to be read before the Psychological Society, is postponed from Thursday, November 15th, to Thursday, December 6th, at 8.30 p.m.

THE GHOST OF MOHAMMED.—In the *Daily Telegraph* of Monday last is the following telegraphic announcement:—“Great excitement prevails at Constantinople, which has been increased by a rumour that the Prophet has appeared to the Sultan commanding him to conclude peace.” It would be interesting to know under what circumstances it is alleged this appearance took place.

THE SUPERIORITY OF EXPERIMENT TO CONTROVERSY.

MR. SERJEANT COX'S opening presidential address to the Psychological Society on the 1st November, printed in last week's *Spiritualist*, is a model of precision and sharply defined outline. Its perusal made me feel as if I had walked into daylight and fresh air, after wandering about among catacombs of dead bones, built up into all manner of fantastic shapes by materialists and metaphysical non-materialists alike.

Since thought, whatever it may be, began, have we not had endless controversy for and against the existence in man of aught but phenomena due to the collocation of molecules in certain order and in certain ways conditioned? If evidence on either side had been within reach, would discussion ever have arisen, or at all events been perpetuated to this day, and is it not manifest to the most ordinary reflection that inference, deduction, argument, opinion, wishes, and expectations are alike vain and useless as applied to the subject?

Has any one ever seen his own or any other person's consciousness of existence and individuality, or any entity present with it or acting as its abode, save the body so-called in this life, or any entity claiming to be the abode of this continued consciousness after death? Modern and ancient literature and history, I say, abound with stories of appearances claiming to be the spirit sometimes of the living man, sometimes of him whose body had been returned to the dust, from which it came, in some instances, thousands of years ago, in some, the last century or year, nay, even yesterday or to-day.

The Psychological Society has been organised, we are told, to collect and patiently scrutinise such evidences, statements, and records—past, present, and to come—as the only conceivable means of giving us, as presently constituted, the slightest hope of any knowledge, whether or not this life is the be-all and the end-all here and here-after.

Is there anything derogatory to the dignity either of philosopher, or man of common sense, in calmly prosecuting such inquiry, especially at this time, when grave serious men are asserting that they have seen, heard, and touched things quite outside our ordinary experience, speaking, walking, and acting on matter around? When students of the Ptolemaic doctrine believed in cycles and epicycles, in crystalline spheres in which constellations, stars, and planets were set and carried round with the revolution of these spheres, the one outside or above the other, Tycho Brahe did not believe or disbelieve, dispute, assert and argue, but he built himself an observatory at Uraniburg, and studied the apparent movements in the heavens for himself; he observed and recorded, measured and computed.

Copernicus afterwards dealt with these recorded facts, and evolved from them, and not from dogma and theories, the true story of the firmament. Kepler and Newton followed, filling up the volume of which Tycho had prepared the frontispiece, and Copernicus written the preface.

Is it of less moment to us to deal with these appearances—"apparitions," if you please?—and find out, if we can, whether they are realities, however strange and contrary to previous experience or prejudice, or discover the fraud, delusion, or trick, and expose them to the world, throwing us, in such case, no further back, however, than the point whence we started, waiting for things still hoped for, for evidence of things not yet seen.

If any one desires to study the dicta of the materialistic school on this question of human origin, destiny, and capability of knowledge, he will find the argument clearly stated and exhaustively treated in Professor von Nagele's address *On the Limits of Natural Knowledge*, delivered recently at the meeting at Munich of the German Association. A translation is given in *Nature* for October, Nos. 416, 417. The perusal of it, after Serjeant Cox's address to the Psychological Society, has prompted this slight attempt on my part to improve the occasion.

My inquiries have been for many years eagerly and nervously towards some resting-place for a persuasion that there is life beyond the grave; but, unhappily for me, my mind, brain, intelligence, or whatever else my consciously-

thinking faculty may be termed, turns painfully to the conviction that any evidence afforded by our senses tends to negative my hopes, and drive my aspirations to the wall. I see the mind, so-called, begin life with the body, feeble and flickering, ready to be blown out by the veriest breath of air thoughtlessly let in on it. I see it grow with the growth of the body, reach maturity of power and activity with it, and then, like it, begin to decay, to lose with it its faculties, without even there being, so to speak, any mind's dentist or oculist to supply intellectual teeth or spectacles, until we find ourselves "with a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams," "sans teeth, sans sense, sans everything"—ready to totter, in a second childhood, to sometimes a not unwished-for grave.

With such unwelcome persuasions, what would I, or any one else with my aspirations, not give for one plain satisfying appeal to one's sense of touch, sight or sound, on the part of one living soul outside the body with which we had been once familiar? Can such things be *in rerum natura*, or are they merely in part such stuff as dreams are made of—in part fraud, delusion, and a snare? I wish to find out, and so, like the drowning man, I cry for "help."
B.

DR. SLADE IN BERLIN.

To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."

SIR,—We have been here a week. So far there has not been a single failure. Yesterday the President of Police, with a German Baron, both fine, elderly gentlemen, brought their slates and got writing on them. The Baron held the slate alone when it was written upon.

After the sitting they left to dine with the Emperor. On the Baron being told that Professor Helmholtz had declined M. Aksakof's invitation to be present at a *séance*, he seemed quite surprised; he said he would take his slate with him and call on the professor, and tell him what he thought about it.

This morning Slade sat for Dr. Wittig and a representative of one of the chief Berlin newspapers. They were highly interested.

Spiritualists are working like beavers, in order to make the most of the opportunity while Slade is here. We are likely to remain here till the first of December. As soon as the time of our departure for St. Petersburg is fixed, I will let you know. The manifestations have never been so good since we left New York as they have been since we came here; slates are filled with writing one after another in German, French, and English.
J. SIMMONS.

Berlin, Nov. 8th, 1877.

M. AKSAKOF writes from St. Petersburg that the "Strange Story" which we quoted from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, and the truth of which we asked him to ascertain, is "all humbug." He says, also: "There is no Professor Orlof here."

A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.—Mr. Epes Sargent writes, from Boston, U.S.: "Your remarks (Oct. 19th) on 'What is a Trustworthy Medium?' seem to me timely and just. Let us be sure we are right, before we sweepingly repudiate powerful mediums through whom tricky spirits may sometimes have operated. I think some of our American *purists* are disposed to carry the thing too far. I had heard all sorts of bad things about Watkins; and yet see what I got! When a pious member of the Church can give me the same, perhaps I will give the pious member the preference."

MR. WILLIAMS' SEANCES.—Mr. C. E. Williams usually obtains such good manifestations when he is held hand and foot, that the National Association of Spiritualists has relaxed its rule of permitting no *séances* on its premises to be held in darkness. Dr. Carter Blake and Mr. Harrison recently had a dark *séance* with Mr. Williams, in his rooms. The manifestations were of the ordinary description. But at one moment, when a form was talking loudly behind Dr. Carter Blake, and at the same time touching him on the head, the cabinet, which nobody was touching, was rattling and vibrating violently, although Dr. Blake and a good-sized table were between the living form and the cabinet.

MISS KISLINGBURY'S DEPARTURE FROM AMERICA.—Miss Kislingbury, secretary to the British National Association of Spiritualists, left New York in the steamship *Italy*, on the eighth of November, so may be expected in London on Monday or Tuesday next. The weather has been exceptionally boisterous during the past week, and the Atlantic is the most stormy ocean in the world, so it is to be feared she is having a rough passage. A fortnight before she left New York she was entertained by Mr. Newton, President of the New York Society of Spiritualists, who invited sixty friends to meet her. The December *soirée* of the British National Association of Spiritualists will be held in her honour, when doubtless an interesting narrative of her experiences will be given.

THE SPIRIT LAND.

BY BABOO PEARY CHAND MITTRA.

TRANSMIGRATION was not known in India during the *Rig Veda* period. The conviction of the immortality of the soul was most vivid at that time, and was the subject of the Upanishads and Darśanas. The recognition of the intervention of disembodied spirits, and the offering of funeral cakes to the Petries, presuppose the existence of the spirit land. According to the *Rig Veda* the mission of the disembodied spirits is to "protect the good, to attend the gods, and to be like them." "On the paths of the fathers, there are eight-and-eighty thousand patriarchal men, who turn back to sow righteousness, and to succour it." A soul entering the spirit land is "guided by spirits of the intermediate stations in the divine realm which it has to pass over." These early teachings of the Ayras clearly show the belief that spirits hold communion with mortals, for the purpose of gradually spiritualising them, and thus extending the spiritual kingdom of God. This is man's mission too, but with souls not emancipated and purified, we can but very imperfectly carry out the object.

Some of our Upanishads speak of the "true heaven" being in the soul. Those who possess such souls find progression easier in disembodied states. Subsequent to the *Rig Veda* period, the transmigration doctrine was largely adopted in India, as it was thought to be absolutely necessary for the requirements of those who had not attained the spiritual state, and who through the imperfect splendour of their souls had not known the Infinite God. The light which we, in modern India, have received, inclines us not to accept the doctrine of transmigration or reincarnation, because we know psychically—through our own souls—that progression in the spirit land is more natural, and more to the advantage of the spirits, than progress through transmigratory existences. Besides, we find spirits of different spheres existing in the spirit land for years. *The Ramayana* bears testimony to the spirit land. When Sita passed through the ordeal, and while Rama was considering what to do, the spirit of his father Dasaratha appeared, and testified to Situ's purity, then "home to heaven exulting flew."

In *Mahabharat*, our other great epic poem, Narada delivered a message to Yudhishthera, from the spirit of his father Pandu, that he should perform the *Rajsuya Yajna*. After the great war on the plain of Shansaur, and the destruction of all the combatants except a few, Dhrotashtra, the father of Duryadhana, was exceedingly grieved at the losses, and being desirous of ending his life by intense meditation on God, he, accompanied by his wife, Kimti, mother of the Pandavas, and his half-brother, retired to a thick forest on the bank of the Ganges. There Yudhishthera, his brothers, Drowpadi Sobhadra, and all the widow ladies of the royal family, came to pay their respects to the old Maha Rajah, and those who, like him, were leading the life of ascetics. Vyas, a rishi, and other saints, happened to be there. Dhrotashtra confessed that he felt still much grieved at the death of his sons, grandsons, and friends, and his sorrow would not be mitigated until their spirits appeared.

Vyas was a medial saint, and asked all the persons present to come to the bank of the river. It was twilight; men and women sat in perfect serenity. Vyas put the limpid water of the river on his body, and as he invoked the spirits of the heroes, there was a tumult in the river, similar to what had been heard at the battle. Shortly afterwards, the heroes, dressed as before, and with the forces at their command, appeared. The only difference was that they were devoid of pride, enmity, and selfishness. They had garlands on their necks, ornaments on their ears, and shone with upsards.* The gaudkar was sung before them and the rhapsodists chanted minstrelsy. Vyas then, by force of his spiritual powers, gave to Drothorashtra, who was born blind, *inner vision*. The Maharaja saw his sons. His wife, Gaudhari, seeing her sons from whom she had been separated by death, thrilled with boundless joy. The spirits, sinless and free from pride, spoke with the

mortals—with father, mother, brother, cousins, wives, as devas (gods). This dispelled all selfish and antagonistic feeling, and the spirits and mortals revelled in an ocean of felicity. The night was spent happily. There was no grief, no fear, no discontent, no humiliation. As soon as the morning dawned, the spirits embraced their mortal friends, and, taking leave of Vyas, disappeared. Some went to (1) *Denaloka*, some to (2) *Brahmaloka*, some to (3) *Barunloka*, some to (4) *Kuveraloka*, and some to (5) *Surjloka*, which clearly implies that the spirit world is composed of different spheres.*

The king, to whom the *Mahabharat* was read, asked, "How is it that persons who die can appear bodily?" The answer is, that the soul is immortal, and does not at once entirely forsake the material elements. As long as the effects of the acts done in this life do not die away, the spirits live in earthly forms. When the acts die away, there is a change in the forms.

Another important question is—Is every one who dies and enters the spirit world in a spiritual state? Does the liberation of the soul from the body make it thoroughly immaterial? If such were the case, there would be no room for progression, and the teachings of all spirits would be alike. But we find that they vary, and it is quite clear that the higher will be its destiny the more attenuated the soul is, and the more it is free not only from the nervous system, but from all thoughts and feelings emanating therefrom and from all that is earthly.

In the last book of *Mahabharat* there is an account of the ascension of Yudhishthera to heaven while in the flesh. The first person he saw was Durgodhona, seated on a throne, shining like a sun, and surrounded by gods. This exasperated Yudhishthera, as Durgodhona was his greatest enemy, and had done him all the mischief conceivable. Narada reproached Yudhishthera, and said, "There is no enmity in heaven. It is true that Durgodhona is your greatest enemy, but he was free from fear, and bravely died: you should now receive him as a friend." Yudhishthera solicited the gods to allow him to go where his brothers, wife, and relatives were living. A heavenly messenger was ordered to show him the place. He was brought to a dismal region where he heard the weeping of his brothers. He was moved, and said, "I will live here, and do not seek for heaven." "God virtue" instantly appeared before him, and said, "I have tried you several times. You have remained unshaken; come with me, near the Mundakini river, and bathe in it." As soon as Yudhishthera bathed, his natural body left him, and he assumed a spiritual form. Grief and enmity left him. He then met Durgodhona and his other cousins in a different way, and saw the spirits of his brothers and others, living in different spheres.

Calcutta, October 4th, 1877.

WE expect the book of choice samples of Spiritualistic literature, very handsomely printed and bound, and which we are about to publish, will be one of the most popular works ever issued in connection with Spiritualism. It is rapidly approaching completion.

THE Baron and Baroness von Vay contemplate revisiting England during the next London season, so Spiritualists in this country are likely to have the pleasure of again seeing these warm and true friends of the movement, sooner than was expected. They will find many friends to welcome them who during their visit last autumn were out of town.

SPIRITUALISM IN HOLLAND.—A circular from Mr. A. J. Riko, The Hague, informs us that a lady there, in private life, has developed as a powerful physical medium. Spirit lights, raps, "heavy bumps," and the moving of solid objects, occur through her mediumship. She falls into a deep trance during the *séances*, and is awakened only by mesmeric passes. Mr. Martheze recently witnessed the manifestations, and expressed interest in them.

BRIXTON PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—A well-attended *séance*, with Mr. Morse trance medium, was held at Mr. D. Fitz-Gerald's, 6, Loughborough-road-north, Brixton, on Thursday evening, November 1st. The subject of the discourse selected, after the entrancement of the medium, was one suggested by the hon. secretary: "The Relative Value, in an Educational Sense, of the Objective and Subjective Phenomena of Spiritualism." The controlling power then poured from the lips of the medium a remarkable composition of subtle analysis, logical deduction, and convincing argument; there was no hesitation from first to last.

* Celestial sphere; 2. God sphere; 3. God of Water sphere; 4. God of Wealth sphere; 5. Sun sphere.

* Aerial beings.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

SOIREE MUSICALE AND AN ADDRESS BY MR. CALDER.

ON Wednesday, last week, the first of the series of winter monthly *soirées* of the National Association of Spiritualists took place at 38, Great Russell-street, London. The rooms were well filled on the occasion.

Mr. Alexander Calder, President of the Association, opened the proceedings by delivering the following address:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It has been suggested that I should offer you a short address this evening, and I have chosen for a subject something touching the heart of Spiritualism, an aspect which should at all times commend itself to us; and although we are assembled chiefly for music, recitation, and song, I am persuaded you will not think it inappropriate to listen also to some thoughts concerning the inner life. We may properly take great pains to investigate physical phenomena, but you will readily concede that it is more important to consider phenomena appertaining to spiritual affections, for the first has a transitory interest, while the last pertains to both earth and heaven. The formation of a high standard of morality is the chief justification of Spiritualism. It is a study requiring the exercise of the highest refinement. It is the grandest of arts, for it comprises the conquest of self—the rarest of achievements. As those who have chosen the path of eternal progress, you will receive with indulgence any suggestions from a wanderer on a difficult and dangerous road.

"Spiritualism is eminently calculated to develop our higher nature. Such was the design of primitive Christianity; but the introduction of dogma spoils the scheme. To be satisfied of this, we have only to remember the ruptures in the Romish Church, and the numerous divisions among Protestants, and we shall not fail to perceive that their methods are erroneous. Their narrowness suppressed freedom—the parent of all true excellence. Hence Spiritualism, long neglected, springs up again before the world with its marvellous potent verities. The position of the Spiritualist is pregnant with peculiar significance. He declares that he possesses knowledge of a remarkable character. He is acquainted with powers and forces to which the outside world are wholly strangers. He possesses gifts which surpass everything to which they can pretend. Such being the fact, what a serious moral responsibility rests upon us, for the question naturally arises, What use do we make of these powers, advantages, and gifts? In what manner do we employ these extraordinary materials for improvement? Are we looking at the phenomena as so many things to amuse? or do they strike us with sufficient awe to create a wholesome influence on life's course, causing us to fulfil our duties with increasing fidelity and cheerfulness, so as to produce a larger measure of satisfaction, and thus advance the aim of the great spiritual kingdom. The Spiritualist, above all others, should know the nature of the property he possesses in the soul or spirit. He should never resemble the prodigal, of whom it is recorded that after a period of extreme destitution and misery he "came to himself," and then hastened to his father. He had been such a stranger to the voice within, that he lost sight altogether of that light which guides, and no wonder he was famished, and reduced to beggary and wretchedness. Nor should the Spiritualist be governed by the strange notions of the Jews regarding sacrifices, to attain purification and safety, ideas adopted by the Christians in their great sacrifice, which they announce as once for all. To convince you that the product of a sacrificial system does not free its votaries from evil, we have only to reflect on the numerous instances of persecution set on foot by the good people supporting these systems. For belief in any sacrifice, however exalted, as a remedy is delusive; a lulling the soul into false security; a deceptive habit of ease, full of unprofitableness, for how is it possible that trust in another can save? And yet the lines on which the Spiritualist may safely travel were nobly laid down by that greatest of historical teachers, the medium Jesus Christ. If belief in His method is meant by the Church, then we hasten to agree, for it cannot reasonably be doubted that the instruction of Jesus Christ is well able to influence conduct for good. But to draw closer to our point. We all know that physical health is best maintained by the observance of hygienic laws. It is not belief in any person; it is not faith in a physician that cures. In like manner it is true as regards spiritual life; the well-being of the spirit depends just as much on scientific treatment as the well-being of the body. Right doing is a high art. It is the chiefest of arts, seeing how much it has to accomplish. The culture of spiritual life is the highest occupation, exalting the whole man. How is this work best accomplished? Meditation is a powerful aid to spiritual growth. Like water to a plant, or as the dew of night is to the grass on a sultry day, so is meditation to a soul in the whirl of this busy world. If we stand apart each day from the noise and tumult around, we commune, as it were, with ourselves. We come more in contact with the unseen, and we appeal to their aid. We experience by this very abstraction and silence, a deepening effect on the soul. We obtain a better opportunity for fixing our hearts on important truths. The seed of life requires to sink deep into the soil of our minds before it can take root, so as to bring forth something more than leaves. Knowledge of the right sort must be grounded into a firm base. I refer not to such meditation as leads to senseless reverie and asceticism, but to that established on intelligence, and which arouses the spirit to activity, quickening it into life, ever improving and progressive. Pythagoras well knew the value of such study, when in his golden rules he says, "Never yield thyself to sleep till thou hast gone over all the doings of the day, and asked thyself, 'In what have I transgressed, what have I done, what good have I left undone.'" He would test every action by bringing it daily before the light of conscience, the constant monitor within. The solemn, ever-living power, and representative of truth, with which each one is furnished, and which, if we only took pains to obey, we should soon discover the immensity of its value and importance. Its usefulness increases with its employment; for in the conscience lies the light to guide and shape our conduct, truth being the oil with which it should be fed. If we would but

follow that light with sincerity, it would prove a divinity to educate, protect, and lead into the way of safety. It imparts a joy richer than the possession of wealth. A satisfaction sweeter than all things, and with which nothing can compare—more enduring than all, for it carries us beyond this life. And this light burns brighter and more powerfully as it is used. It increases in beauty, strength, and excellence, endowing us with the requisite power to carry us through the world by brightening and illuminating our whole existence. Having, then, this invaluable instrument for our guide, let us steer clear of the things which make for evil, and which may be recognised as soon as they are placed in the light of conscience. Avoiding all such impediments to progress, let us set our minds and hearts diligently to the cultivation of qualities which brighten our spiritual health, the chief elements for this condition being kindness, humility, moderation, industry, sobriety, charity, purity, peace, and love. The culture of these great principles, decisive in their nature and bearing, is the most interesting side of Spiritualism. An active daily introspection, a careful questioning of the soul, an unflinching scrutiny into its thoughts, words, purposes, and acts; a weeding-out of the evil, and a steady strengthening of the good. By this process of cleansing and maintenance, honestly and sincerely pursued, the spirit obtains that self-control so necessary for safety. It attains a vigour which combats successfully with evil, and finally receives its reward in heavenly wisdom, the true dignity of spiritual life. This, I humbly think, is the phenomenon we should prize and study to promote, for it concerns the construction of character. It aims at the wealth we should acquire for our souls, it constitutes the true riches for our spirits. The patient searching for, and on all occasions practising these virtues, assimilating them into our souls, nourishing our spirits with them, keeps us in spiritual well-being. We should have a clear and distinct knowledge of the path of duty, and invest our minds with the discipline of obedience to that duty. We should persevere and strengthen ourselves in it, so as to attain unto that higher life, and thus make real progress towards a superior nature. We live in times of tremendous hurry, in which there is great confusion and moral laxity; but amidst all the bustle, it is a consolation to feel that the Spiritualist enjoys abundant evidence of spirit-life; not by hearsay, but by personal experience, he knows that there is a Holy Spirit, and, knowing this, he should at all times, and under all circumstances, keep close to that divine and sacred agent. Does he flag and weary, does he doubt and feel dejected, let him strengthen the union with the good Spirit, and his courage will revive. All this implies not indifference, but a strong conviction of the profound importance of the subject. We who know something of the reality of the unseen may reasonably be expected to strive earnestly in the pursuit of spiritual-mindedness, ever doing that which is good and true, undisturbed by corrosive cares, which are prolific of evil. In a word, loyalty to the Father of Spirits, and love to man—his spiritual children—comprise our whole duty: real, pure, modest, humble, and quiet working of the will of God being our rule; and the sooner religion is freed from all the mystery of creeds, fashion, and forms, and the simple constituents of moral and spiritual culture are directly applied to life's daily occupations, the better will be the condition of mankind—for they will then become the possessors of a plain and uniform process for self-government, and not be subject to feeble opinions and equally frail fancies, whereon, finding no foothold, they are pretty sure to drift from duty, and perhaps are precipitated into dire mischief, if not irretrievable ruin."

At the conclusion of his address Mr. Calder sat down, amid loud applause, after which those assembled were favoured with some excellent singing, music, and recitations, by the Misses Withall, Mr. Ernest A. Tietkins, Mr. Dietz, Miss Ella Dietz, Miss Younge, Mr. Kitcat, and Mr. W. Edmiston.

FORTNIGHTLY MEETINGS.

The first of the fortnightly winter meetings this season, of the members and friends of the National Association of Spiritualists, was held last Monday night, under the presidency of Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, M.S.Tel.E. There was a large attendance.

The Chairman congratulated the listeners that Mr. Stainton-Moses had undertaken the management of the winter meetings for the Research Committee. (Applause.)

The Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, M.A., said that good papers might be expected; for instance, there would be one from Mr. Massey, and another from Dr. Wyld, both vice-presidents of the Association.

The Rev. Thomas Colley, late Curate of Portsmouth, then read a paper on "Recent Developments of Form Manifestation." He said that they were more than form manifestations, they were true "materialisations." He then gave an account of phenomena as previously published once or twice by him, to the effect that he had on three occasions seen living, materialised spirits, coming from and returning to Dr. Monck's body. He added that a letter placed near Dr. Monck was carried to a friend of his seventy miles off in five minutes.

Mr. Thomas Shorter, late editor of *The Spiritual Magazine*, said that at one of the *séances* spoken of by Mr. Colley three persons were present, and at another four. Although nobody questioned Mr. Colley's good faith for a moment, the facts were so transcendent that all the others should have given their testimony, and without previous mutual comparison of notes, since small agreements and divergencies would be alike interesting. The fullest possible evidence should be given about the carrying of the letter, by means of the written and signed statements of the witnesses at both ends of the line, and the exact times should be given.

Mr. Tapp wanted to know the amount of light in which the forms were evolved.

Mr. Colley said that the light was worst at the second *séance*, but better at the first one, when he could have read the smallest newspaper print. At the last *séance* it was best; they had then the full light of the lamp.

Mr. Tapp asked what lamp.

Mr. Colley said that it was a new small kind of paraffin lamp, which had just appeared in the ironmongers' shops. By the light it gave at the last *séance*, a newspaper could be read in any part of the room.

A listener present said that he had recognised one of these spirits as the late Samuel Wheeler.

Dr. Carter Blake, while not pretending to be a scholar in any Arabic dialect further east than Morocco, would be very glad to learn from Mr. Colley the precise signification of the word Mahédi or Mâhedi (Maheda plural), which had been frequently used in the discussion; and also whether any "form" called himself the Mahédi, or was called so by others.

Mr. Colley replied that he did not understand Arabic, and did not know the meaning of the word.

Mr. Stainton-Moses announced that he would read a paper on the same subject at the next meeting.

The proceedings then closed.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

Last Tuesday night a Council meeting of the National Association of Spiritualists was held. Present—Mr. A. Calder, in the chair; Mr. H. Withall, Miss Withall, Mr. Dawson Rogers, Mr. E. T. Bennett, Mr. R. Pearce, Miss Houghton, Mr. Fitz-Gerald, Mr. Pearson, Mrs. Maltby, Mr. Mawson, Mr. Walhouse, Mr. A. Joy, and Mr. Morell Theobald.

Most of the business transacted related to the internal affairs of the Association.

Mr. E. T. Bennett moved—"That a committee be appointed to take into consideration any means of increasing the usefulness and efficiency of the Association during the coming year, and to report."

This was seconded by Mr. R. Pearce, and supported by Mr. Dawson Rogers, who, however, suggested that the resolution should be thus amended—"That a committee be appointed to take into consideration the financial prospects of the Association, and any means of increasing its usefulness and efficiency during the coming year, and to report."

Mr. Bennett agreed to the resolution as thus amended, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. Bennett then proposed that the committee should consist of Mr. Fitz-Gerald, Mr. A. Joy, Mr. Mawson, Mr. R. Pearce, Mr. Morell Theobald, and Mr. Dawson Rogers.

Mr. Dawson Rogers then proposed that Mr. Bennett should be added to the above committee.

Mr. Fitz-Gerald said that of course the usual clause giving them power to add to their number would be added.

Mr. Dawson Rogers said that it had better not be added. If Mr. Fitz-Gerald wished to propose anybody else he could do so there and then.

Mr. Fitz-Gerald said that he had nobody in his mind to propose at the moment.

The committee was then appointed, including Mr. Bennett, and without power to add to its number of members.

Mr. Walter Moseley was thanked for his presentation of interesting books to the library.

It was resolved to authorise the holding of dark *séances*.

The report of the Finance Committee showed that when the remainder of the Guarantee Fund was paid up, the receipts and expenses of the year would about balance each other.

After the consideration of various other matters the proceedings closed.

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SPIRITUALISM AT WANDSWORTH.—(From our own Correspondent.)—*Apropos* of the report in last week's *Surrey Comet* respecting the recent "extraordinary phenomena" at a *séance* held in Richmond, I am authorised to give the name and address of a gentleman—Mr. Alex. Thorn, Yew Cottage, Wandsworth—at whose house a weekly *séance* has been held for several months past, and to which I, as an "unbeliever," was invited to attend. The number in the circle was generally six—four gentlemen and two ladies. No professional assistance whatever was engaged, and the sole object of the sitters was to inquire into the truth or absurdity of what are known as spiritualistic phenomena. For the first few sittings nothing of particular interest occurred, but after this time the hands of two of the sitters were spasmodically convulsed, and described peculiar and rapid gyrations on the table—and sometimes in the air—which all agreed could not have been "performed." Indeed my own hands were at times so violently moved as to produce at first a noise that could have been heard at any part of the house. Sometimes it gradually died away, while at others it stopped instantly. Although not yet a Spiritualist, but only an examiner as to cause and effect, I must admit that these phenomena, or manifestations, were not produced by natural means—or, rather, mechanical means—nor were they the result of nervousness; for on one occasion, just prior to some of the loudest demonstrations, I passed several jokes upon Spiritualists and Spiritualism, and suggested that if any taps were heard, they would probably proceed from the spirit of Mrs. Tappin. At another time, while my hands and those of another sitter were upon the planchette, the signature "Edw. Rawlings" was clearly written. One of those present then stated that he had a letter that morning from a Mr. Charles Rawlings, and that as the letter had a black border, the signature was probably that of his brother (deceased). At present I am far from being convinced that the phenomena I have named are due to Spiritualism, or that spirits had anything to do in the matter; but of this I am certain, that whether they be assigned to animal magnetism, electricity, or other scientific cause, the time is not wasted in making an investigation. Now that Spiritualism is exciting so much interest, some remarks concerning it may be acceptable, and at some future time I can furnish some interesting notes on the subject.—*Surrey Comet*.

#### MR. AND MRS. BLISS.

FULL details of the imposture practised upon Spiritualists by Mr. and Mrs. Bliss, of Philadelphia, in consequence of too much credulity in accepting so-called manifestations presented only on the premises of the medium, have recently been printed in these pages. The following is the charge of Judge Briggs to the jury, and is a model of impartiality in dealing with a spiritualistic case, such as we should like to see imitated by English legal functionaries:—

This bill of indictment contains two counts. The first alleges that the defendants, with Capt. Harrison and Miss Snyder, conspired to cheat and defraud Diesinger and Wolf and others to the grand inquest unknown, and, in pursuance of such conspiracy, actually did cheat and defraud them by false pretences, without setting out what the pretences were. The second charges the same thing, and, in addition, specifies particularly the false pretences resorted to to accomplish the fraud in obtaining the money mentioned in the indictment. You have patiently listened to the unfolding of this case for nine days, and perchance now have fixed conclusions with reference to the guilt or innocence of the defendants; yet it is proper, before you put your convictions in legal form, that I should define the crime charged against the defendants. Criminal conspiracy is a combination or confederation of two or more persons to commit an illegal act, or to perform a legal act by illegal means, or in an illegal way. The crime is effected the moment the confederation is complete, though nothing be done pursuant to the conspiracy. For the purpose of repressing crimes of this character, the law moves upon the criminals the moment they jointly form the criminal purpose. But this bill goes further. It alleges that the defendants not only conspired with Capt. Harrison and Miss Snyder, but they executed the conspiracy by cheating and defrauding Diesinger and others, by the false and fraudulent contrivances and pretences specially mentioned in the bill of indictment. Now it is for you to determine, from all the evidence in the case, whether the defendants are guilty or not.

The testimony is fresh in your minds, and doubtless more vividly impressed on yours than mine. Then take the concurring and conflicting statements of the witnesses, and extract the truth from them. Your duty is to reconcile them, if possible; if that cannot be done, you must cut the tangle by your verdict, in determining which is true. I ought to refer to two of the witnesses for the Commonwealth, for they are self-convicted conspirators, and because they are criminal in one respect the law supposes they may be in another. The law requires me to say that you should scrutinise their testimony with great circumspection. Having done so, and you find it to be true, you should accept it, though it comes from the lips of confessed criminals. For truth is truth, without reference to the source from which it emanates. In referring to these witnesses, I do not desire to draw your attention from the other testimony, for you should take the evidence in its entirety, and if you are convinced the Commonwealth has sustained her accusations, you should, of course, convict the defendants. Let us, then, inquire whether the defendants, by their advertisements and representations, have in any way falsely and fraudulently represented themselves as being gifted with the power of bringing back here the spirits of those who have passed beyond the grave, and if so, whether Diesinger and Wolf, and those who witnessed the exhibitions, believed in them, and were cheated and defrauded by them.

Were these alleged spirits real or illusory? Strange as it may seem to you, I am compelled to submit that question for your determination in point of fact, like any other question raised by the evidence. The defendants and their witnesses claim they were real, and this claim the witnesses for the Commonwealth deny. In passing upon this the law raises no presumption in favour of such a claim. The law only presumes those things to be true which are presented by men in the various relations of life. He who claims more than this must prove it; presumption will not help him. The defendants' claim is based upon supernatural power; before you accept this, the testimony should be clear and convincing to you. I repeat, it cannot be presumed. If the defendants have not proved it the pretence is a false one, and they should be convicted if by it their victims were defrauded. Nor does the fact that those who were defrauded believed the illusion to be true, and still believe it, make the least difference. They still are entitled to protection. The Commonwealth sits like a merciful mother over her children, and protects those who err alike with those who do not. It is not a question whether Spiritualism is true or not, but whether the expedients resorted to by the defendants were true or false. Spiritualistic belief to the sincere believer is just as precious in the eye of the law as yours is to you. Nor is he to be denounced by bigotry, nor ridiculed by the sceptic. For four centuries heresy was a crime, and history informs us that in the Netherlands alone during the reign of Charles the Fifth fifty thousand were hanged, beheaded, buried alive, or burned for religious opinion. Our laws are founded on the rock of religious toleration—religious tests are prohibited. We have no Church of State. The organic law of commonwealth protects all men in the worship of Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Hence I say I have no more right to denounce the sincere Spiritualist than I have to denounce the sincere Catholic, Protestant, or Jew. It is claimed that there are five millions of Spiritualists in the United States. If this is so, what a field for the operation of the impostor! Their very numbers make them respectable, and appeal to us for protection against the imposition and frauds of unscrupulous men.

What have we on earth so valuable that we would not give it to bring back to us in sure communion the spirits of our departed relatives? How precious the thought to those who believe such can be done? The enormity of the crime charged against the defendants can only be appreciated in the light of the incontestable proof that there are those who have this faith and the Commonwealth's accusation that the defendants

have trifled with feelings so sacred. Any man or set of men committing such a crime should be punished without mitigation.

Distinguished men have given their adhesion to this faith. The late Judge Edmonds, of the New York Court of Appeals, was its outspoken advocate. So was the late United States Senator Tallmadge, from the same State, and no criticism could abate his zeal. Robert Dale Owen was a firm believer. The late Professor Hare, of this city, whom we all respected, gave it the support of his learning, intelligence, and character. Others might be mentioned—indeed, names of our citizens whom we all respect have been given during the trial as converts to Spiritualism. I repeat, we should not ridicule the sincere believer, however much we may differ with him. The enjoyment of religious opinion is a man's absolute right, and he must be protected in it. Hence I say to you that Spiritualism is not on trial, but the sole question is, have the defendants, with Captain Harrison and Miss Snyder committed the crime charged against them? If they have, you should convict the defendants, though their victims were Spiritualists, and some of them even now believe that the representations were real. It may be that some of you believe in this faith. If so, you should not hesitate to convict, if the evidence satisfies you of the defendants' guilt, because they, too, profess the same belief. Should a Catholic juror hesitate to convict a guilty defendant because he, too, is a Catholic? or a Protestant juror to convict a guilty Protestant? I present this feature of the case to you in this light from a desire to impress upon you the fact that the sole question is the guilt or innocence of the defendants, and not whether Spiritualism should be accepted as a rational religious belief.

You have before you the dress which it is alleged that Miss Snyder wore in these exhibitions; also the wig, moccasins, wreath and jewels, which it is alleged that Captain Harrison hastily brought away with him. Are these the paraphernalia there used, or have they been made to be used in evidence to strengthen the Commonwealth's theory in order to convict these defendants? If the latter then Miss Snyder and Capt. Harrison are, indeed, the worst people at large. Was the trap-door cut, too, after the exposure by Capt. Harrison in order to give colour of guilt to the defendants? This is the contention raised by the testimony, and which you must solve by your verdict. But the defendants allege that the visitors were duly informed at these *séances* that they were merely exhibitions, and no pretence was made that the powers exercised were not natural. If that were so, and the visitors understood them in that light, there was no deception, and the defendants are not guilty.

Gentlemen, I have presented this case as fairly as I can. I have spoken with some warmth to protect these Spiritualists from the hands of impostors. I would be false to my oath of office and to my manhood if I did not. Now, do not be moved a feather's weight by the excitement surrounding the case. It is expected that you will reach your conclusions alone from a careful analysis of the testimony. Justice, in her chosen temple, must be administered without fear or favour. If you have a doubt of guilt acquit the defendants, for so long as there is a doubt they may be innocent or they may be guilty. The law never speculates with liberty, and when she has to guess she guesses in favour of innocence: But the doubt to acquit must be a manly doubt, one springing from the testimony and which cannot be gotten rid of; not specious or manufactured to rid you of an unpleasant duty, but such a one as would cause an intelligent, cautious man to hesitate. When such a doubt arises then, and not till then, should you acquit on account of the doubt. Now, gentlemen, take the case, and if you find the defendants guilty, so say without hesitation; if not guilty so declare with equal determination.

The jury in the Bliss case, being sent for Monday morning, came into court, and announced that they could not agree. Judge Briggs then said:—

"Gentlemen, this case is one, in view of the evidence, to which you ought to have no difficulty in agreeing. Its weight, to my mind, is overwhelming, but I cannot determine questions of fact.

"The value of the evidence, its weight, and the credence of the witnesses are expressly for you, but I am not a figurehead. I have convictions quite as positive as yours, and I have duties quite as positive and infinitely more responsible than yours, for mine are varied, while yours relate but to this one case. In presenting the case to you I was as impartial as I could be.

"In view of the overwhelming evidence, as it appeared to me, I did not feel it necessary to refer to the testimony of but two witnesses—Captain Harrison and Miss Snyder; but a point has been reached when I must, in order to prevent another trial and corresponding expense, exert the power the law clothes me with.

"The law permits me to express my opinion of their evidence, but my opinion does not bind the jury. All that they are required to do is to give them respectful consideration, and if they cannot agree with them, they will manfully in their verdict say so. The proof in this case is incontestable from every aspect of it that these *séances* were held at No. 1027, Ogden-street, under the supervision, management, and control, of Mr. and Mrs. Bliss.

"Equally incontestable is it from every aspect of the case that certain representations were there made purporting to be materialised spirits; the debatable question in the case being—Were they real spirits or were they illusory? I must say to you, as a faithful exponent of the law of this Commonwealth, that he who asserts that these representations were beyond the natural, beyond that which is received in the common acceptance of men, must prove it by testimony satisfactory to the jury.

"The law presumes that it is not so; the fact is that it is believed by a sect; while that sect may be as much entitled to respect as ours, yet their belief does not bind you and me, as ministers of the law.

"They are entitled to protection from imposition. In passing upon this question, take for instance 'Swift Water.' The defendants represented that character to be there; the defendants' witnesses believed

it to be a character there; it was the character of an Indian; was it real, material, personated by some live person on earth, or was it presented through a spiritual agency?

"Mr. Hays, an intelligent gentleman, said it was, and he doubtless believed it; others believed it; but it is not what they believe, but what you believe. If this principle were not to be maintained, we might as well dispense with juries, and take the beliefs of witnesses as conclusive. Witnesses are to be protected in their private conviction, but you are not to be guided by that, unless the testimony makes you believe it was a spirit.

"In passing upon it, you have before you the moccasins and the wig. Were they used in the representation of this spirit, or were they manufactured for the purpose of convicting these defendants? Now, who is Harrison? He may be an adventurer, and is a self-convicted conspirator, but if you believe what he says is true, you are not to throw it out because he has been self-convicted.

"He says he has been among the Cheyenne and Ute Indians, and there learned the smattering of Indian language which he was enabled to use in the representation of 'Swift Water.' Indian words were used. You must take all these into consideration. You heard what the Wolffs said about their sister, Clara Wolff, and what Diesinger said. You have the wreath presented to her, and other things worn by her. Was all this paraphernalia manufactured for the purpose of convicting these defendants?

"If not, then you have reached a point where the Commonwealth completely annihilates the defence. If you believe these defendants are not guilty, you will say so; if you believe them guilty, you will also say so, and thus preserve those who believe in Spiritualism from the ravages of the imposture. Now, gentlemen, I have exhausted my power. Retire again and consider these matters. I will be here at one o'clock, or before, if you agree."

The foreman: "Have I the power to explain the trouble here? If I have, I think we will be able to settle it at once."

Judge Briggs: "You must not tell me how you stand. If there is any difficulty in any point of evidence that I can enlighten you upon, you can state it."

The foreman: "Not at all. This is a very curious thing."

Judge Briggs: "Will you never be able to agree?"

The foreman: "Never."

Judge Briggs: "Take the sense of your colleagues, now, and report to me truthfully what they say."

The foreman then consulted with his fellow jurors.

Judge Briggs: "Can you ever agree?"

The foreman: "Never."

Judge Briggs: "Well, gentlemen, you have certain rights which I must respect. I will discharge you, but, wait a minute, if ever a guilty man walked into this court-room, the defendants are guilty."

The jury stood for conviction, eleven; for acquittal, one; the one juror being James Dundass, hatter, No. 1321, Frankford-road. The other jurors say that Dundass said: "If there ever was a guilty man on the face of the earth, it is Bliss, but I will never send him to jail on my verdict."

Bliss was subsequently arrested on a charge of bigamy, and bailed.

## Poetry.

### ALONE.

DARKNESS above, below,  
Darkness around,  
No ray of light to pierce  
The black profound.  
Hither and thither tossed  
On life's rough wave,  
No hand stretched out to guide,  
No arm to save.  
Oh! for some spirit-star—  
Some beacon bright,  
Pointing through trackless wastes  
To realms of light.  
Oh! for some spirit-voice,  
Cheering my way,  
Whispering sweet hope to me  
Of coming day.  
Drear must my journey be  
Till it shall cease,  
And death may bring to me  
Light and release. R.

## Correspondence.

[Great freedom is given to correspondents, who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this journal and its readers. Unsolicited communications cannot be returned; copies should be kept by the writers.]

### WHAT TRUTH IS THERE IN ASTROLOGY?

SIR,—“Aldebaran” and “Raphael” have fallen into an error in their endeavour to correct the calculations of Mr. Massey. Indeed, the gentleman who writes under the *nom-de-plume* of “Raphael” makes confusion worse confounded by adding 14m. 14s. to the mean time given (11h. 55m. a.m. of October 15th), for equation of time, after expressly stating that it “is not necessary to be used with his Ephemeris or Zadkiel's.”

The true method of calculating the figure of the heavens for the given moment of time is to subtract five minutes from the sidereal time at noon, which was 13h. 36m. 29s., hence we find the right ascension of the meridian to have been 13h. 31m. 29s.

"Astronomers, with a view of obtaining a convenient and uniform measure of time, have recourse to a 'mean solar day,' the length of which is equal to the mean or average of all the apparent solar days in a year. Sidereal time at mean noon is the angular distance of the first point of Aries, or the true vernal equinox, from the meridian, at the instant of mean noon: it is, therefore, the right ascension of the mean Sun, or the time shown by a sidereal clock at Greenwich, when the mean time clock indicates 0h. 0m. 0s." (Hind).

The time given being mean time, and the Ephemeris being calculated for mean time, it follows that the figure should be cast for the mean time given, and not for apparent or solar time. This is the method taught by Zadkiel in his *Grammar of Astrology* (published in 1840), and again in his *Handbook of Astrology* (published in 1861). At page 27 of the former work we are instructed to "correct the time also for the equation of time, if the Ephemeris be not calculated to mean time"—a rule which "Raphael" reverses by adding the equation of time, notwithstanding that the Ephemeris is calculated to mean time, and, moreover, after stating that this correction "is not necessary." Again, at page 128 of the same work, in explanation of equation of time, Zadkiel says, for "example, the Ephemeris gives the equation of time for November 1st, 1840, clock slow 16m. 17s.: hence, if the time of birth by a watch was Nov. 1st, 1840, at 6 o'clock p.m., the apparent time would be 6h. 16m. 17s. p.m., to which time all the planets' places, &c., and the figure of the heavens, must be calculated. But this rule applies only to Ephemerides, which are calculated to apparent time. In my Ephemeris they are calculated to mean time, and do not require this correction."

Zadkiel's works are acknowledged as the standard authorities on astrology, and they were written by a gentleman who distinguished himself as greatly in astronomy as in astrology. I enjoyed the privilege of being taught the science by Zadkiel, and possessed his unintermitted friendship for the space of fourteen years. I have calculated and examined many hundreds of nativities and horary figures, and I have always followed Zadkiel's method, and also have proved its correctness and reliability to my own satisfaction.

Thanking you, sir, in the name of the hundreds of thousands of believers in astrology, for opening your valuable journal to a correspondence on this ancient science, I am, sir, yours obediently,

ALFRED J. PEARCE.

November 10th, 1877.

SIR,—Allow me through your columns to acknowledge my obligation to your correspondents "Aldebaran" and "Raphael," for their friendly and helpful letters. As it happens, I had originally drawn my scheme nearly right, and (within a minute or two) in accordance with the corrections made by them. Afterwards I fancied I had made an error in method, and put it all wrong by alteration. "Aldebaran" may be assured that I will profit by his admonition, and will for the future keep my blunders to myself.

C. C. MASSEY.

PROVINCIAL NOTES.—NO. V.

SIR,—As the numbers of Spiritualists in the provinces are in excess of their cobelievers in the metropolis, so the movement of Spiritualism has larger proportions, as a whole, outside London than in it. It may not be out of place, then, to consider in this letter a few of the methods employed to further the progress of Spiritualism in provincial centres. I will only deal here with the propagandist machinery which exists for the dual purpose of placing the facts of spiritual phenomena, and the teachings of the spirit-world, before the general public, on the one hand, and Spiritualists on the other.

For the first-named purpose the private spirit circle has always been, and will remain, ever the best method to pursue. Experimental investigation in private is an easy and safe road to tread. To obtain, however, the highest results, it is important that mediumship be cultivated under the most enlightened circumstances. Incipient mediumship should never be paraded before strangers, or used for the purposes of convincing the sceptical. Where mediumship exhibits distinct varieties of action combined in one person, that part most easily manifested is likely to be the most satisfactory. Better to cultivate one department well, than have two or three, or more, phases indifferently developed. All noted mediums have been made such through some well-defined specialty. Also it should be borne well in mind that different forms of spiritual manifestation require their own peculiar conditions. The higher forms of seership, trance, or inspiration can hardly be expected in the conditions suitable for physical phenomena, and if manifested therein, they will lack the sharpness they would have under their own conditions. The spirit circle is the first method employed, and when used aright its success is great. As "inquirers," through experiences had at the circle, become "believers," the number of Spiritualists increases in any given town, and generally the next move is to form a local society, institute public *séances*, and establish Sunday services. Of the wisdom of the first step there can be no doubt, since "union is strength," and such societies give the cause a local habitation and a name. Concerning the propriety of the second measure, grave doubts may be adventured. Unless conducted under the most rigid regulations, and great discrimination in admitting visitors be exercised, public *séances* at times do as much harm as good, especially if held in the dark. Upon the value of the third step, much depends upon the view one takes of Spiritualism. If it is admitted that moral, intellectual, and spiritual food can be derived from the teachings of the spirits, and new light can be thrown upon old truths by the facts of Spiritualism, then Sunday services of a religio-philosophical character are requisite and useful. But should it be thought that Spiritualism is yet too young, and its teachings too chaotic, for any systematic teaching to be deduced, of course Sunday services could not be considered necessities of the movement.

Turning to another subject, for a moment, let it be noted that Spirit-

ualism has been liberally abused, in whatever guise it has been presented, by nearly all classes of society. At one time the strong arm of the law was invoked to put it down, and most provincial Spiritualists have encountered much unpleasant local experience in the form of social ostracism, pulpit denunciation, and press abuse. So long as they were scattered sheep, with no fold, they encountered the above treatment. As soon as they united, and presented a solid front, their opponents tried the "letting alone severely" policy. But, unless organised, the power of the local Spiritualists would not have been felt. The advantages of local societies are apparent, and it is only those who ignore the best interests of the movement who denounce them. Local self-government is a principle most valuable, and its good effects are patent. Spiritualists are right in applying the same principle to their movement, and declining to surrender their local rights and privileges to any dictator, impersonal or other.

Returning to the main purport of this note, attention can be called to one other method that has been and, limitedly, is in use. It was styled the District Conference Committee, and was first introduced at Manchester, afterwards appearing in Halifax, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Chester-le-Street. Its originator and promoter conceived it a valuable organic method; but, alas! it was not so. In Newcastle and Halifax the Conference Committees for the North of England and Yorkshire respectively are dead. In Manchester, the Lancashire District Committee lives, and works in quite a different style to its first labours; while in Chester-le-Street there is a certain amount of life still left. But, if conference committees, why not local societies? Ah, well, Shakespeare (was it not?) is right in saying—

What in the captain's but a choleric word,  
Is, in the sailor, flat blasphemy.

Why then have these committees languished? *Simply because the existing local societies were sufficient for the work.* The practical lesson is that the present societies ought to be strengthened and encouraged, rather than weakened and depressed, by their legitimate energies being depleted or perverted. In Spiritualism, as in all other causes, there is a normal ratio of extension that can never be successfully accelerated for any length of time.

It has been stated that societies are breaking up all over the kingdom. Is it to be wondered at, when such things are discountenanced and declared useless by the very people who profit most by their existence, but who fail to see that every society is a solid nucleus for a more perfect extension of the field of Spiritualism?

Take Manchester, where for many years a society has existed, or Newcastle-on-Tyne, or Glasgow; in these places, and in others, where this anti-society policy has not prevailed, we find that Spiritualism is most known, its literature best circulated, and the cause the best respected; while local funds are, in such cases, disposed to the best advantage of the work; for national purposes, or even purposes of all kinds, beyond the limit of local action, liberal funds are always forthcoming when required. It may be, then, justly concluded that permanent local societies are of more use, in a propagandist sense, than fleeting ephemeral action, that is but born to die, and dying, leaves no useful record.

With such permanences, Spiritualism becomes an organised army; without them, the cause is but a rope of sand. It is true, individual labour can do much, but associated enterprise can accomplish far more. In all cases where societies have failed it has been because the rules were subordinated to personal egotism. Then, not only has the society died out, but Spiritualism has followed suit. It is ridiculous to say organisation killed the cause in any place—personal ambition is the guilty factor. Despotism ever leads to reaction, which, for a time, sweeps away all landmarks. Presently order is evolved out of chaos, the powers of the movement are again organised, and, if the past has succeeded in teaching us, there is no fear of history repeating itself, for, with right and order on our side, success must be ours. X.

AN ARBITRARY EDITOR OF TOMBSTONE LITERATURE, AND THE LATE WILLIAM DAVENPORT.

According to the following enclosed extract from a Sydney paper (*The Morning Herald*) of September 21st, poor William Davenport (medium), though deceased, is not to "rest in peace," if judged by the decision of a Mr. Pearce, a man dressed in the brief authority of the Church of England cemetery, at Sydney, who "refused to have the Church of England cemetery *deseccrated*" by the presence of the words "May he rest in peace," on a tombstone of that hallowed spot:—

To the Editor of the "Herald."

SIR,—On reading Mr. Pearce's letter in this day's *Herald*, one would imagine that I had gratuitously uttered a number of false and groundless statements on the subject, without a shadow of justification. Mr. Pearce sums up my offence as follows:—"The honourable gentleman charges me with scandalous behaviour towards Mrs. Davenport, and also of acting with great vulgarity and rudeness towards that lady; and in support of these remarks he states that Mrs. Davenport wrote to the Colonial Secretary detailing the circumstances—that the matter came before the Attorney-General, and that he had characterised my conduct as unwarrantable, and also, that the Minister for Lands had joined in condemnation of my conduct." He then says that I made these charges on "insufficient grounds." As I do not wish to lie under any such imputation, I will resort to the proofs of the truth of all I said in my place in Parliament, which proofs were not given in the published report of what I said, and the first witness I call will be Mrs. Davenport. She says, in writing to the Colonial Secretary, "In arranging for the erection of a tomb over my husband's remains, I have met with the most insulting treatment from Mr. Pearce." Again, "Nothing could justify the insults to which I was subjected on visiting Mr. Pearce at his office." Now, in order that the public may judge what grounds this lady had for so charging Mr. Pearce, it is necessary to state that she proposed to have inscribed upon her late husband's tomb—"May he rest in peace." Mrs. Davenport says—"At the line 'May he rest in peace,' Mr. Pearce sneered, and said, 'We can't allow this;

we don't believe in praying for the dead,' and, in the rudest and most offensive manner, drew his pencil through it." Now, this is admitted by Mr. Poaree himself, namely, that he drew his pencil through the line, and although he may see nothing rude or offensive in such an act, still, to people who look upon this line as the expression of an unhappy woman's deepest and holiest feelings towards her dead husband, a little more refinement and delicacy in dealing with this lady would have been far more satisfactory, and, above all, the cavalier act of drawing the pen through a few words so inoffensive and so innocent, just as if they had been an overcharge in some grocer's account, should have been religiously avoided. The other lines that came under the ban of Mr. Pearce were as follows, written by Mr. Ira Davenport, the brother of the deceased:—

"To William, from his brother Ira,—  
Dear brother, I would learn from thee,  
And hasten to partake thy bliss;  
To thy world O! welcome me,  
As first I welcomed thee to this."

What offended Mr. Pearce in these remarkably inoffensive lines it would be very difficult to imagine. He, however, struck his pencil through them, and refused to have the Church of England Cemetery desecrated by their presence there. I have before me the memo. of the Attorney-General to the Colonial Secretary, in which he says—"I desire at once to express my opinion that the course pursued by the trustee in question (Mr. Pearce) is utterly unwarrantable." I have also before me the letter from the Minister for Lands to Mr. Pearce, in which the same language is used in censuring Mr. Pearce's conduct. These were the grounds on which I publicly condemned Mr. Pearce's conduct, and I leave it to the public to say whether or not they are "insufficient." Mr. Pearce, in his letter to you, reveals something new, to the effect that besides the lines already mentioned, Mrs. Davenport wished to have "something resembling a box or cabin" placed upon the tombstone. Well, now, in the name of all that is rational, what earthly harm could come if Mrs. Davenport had been allowed to carry out this simple and most innocent notion? Is it not amusing to see Mr. Pearce snuffing up heterodoxy in every tainted breeze, and discovering it at last in this poor box of Mrs. Davenport? Mr. Pearce wanted to know what the box meant. Well, if it did not itself disclose its meaning further than that it was merely a box, what is the moaning of all this perturbation on the part of Mr. Pearce? I see, when I occasionally visit the fields of the dead, at Rookwood, all manner of things on tombstones—sex-tants, compass, triangles, and even urns, which is the nearest approach to a box that I have observed. They are all, I suppose, more or less emblematical of something, and seem to me very innocent and inoffensive, if not beautiful, and, in some degree, poetic. But the mere box of Mrs. Davenport would appear to be a sort of simplifying of those things, and bringing them more within the bounds of commonplace. What, therefore, can be Mr. Pearce's objection to this innocent device is entirely beyond my comprehension, and probably will remain a mystery even when the cemetery and all its monuments have crumbled into atoms invisible. DAVID BUCHANAN.  
Sydney, September 19.

[We have received also from Mrs. N. E. Davenport a letter, in which that lady takes exception to the statements made by Mr. Pearce, and expresses opinions similar to those entertained by Mr. Buchanan.—Ed. S. M. II.]

I am glad that a member of Parliament, as well as the widow, have taken up the question on the other side. What has the Church of England out there come to, if it has come to this? What a falling in this from early Christian charity! Why, a Christian monument has, I believe, invariably, this very prayer for the dead, or a similar inscription, on all the tombstones of the early Christians found in the Catacombs of Rome. I have seen the Latin for this very prayer—"Requiescat in pace," or its initials, "R. I. P."—on a vast number of tombstones, if not on every ancient Christian monument I looked at in Rome.

This prayer for the dead marked the Christian tomb from the Pagan in all that early season of the Christian Church when it was under persecution. Happily affairs are not quite so bad here. This very identical narrow action was attempted at Ryde in 1871, but the late Bishop Wilberforce soon put a stop to that, and insisted that the prayer:—

"Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord,  
And may perpetual light shine upon him!"

should not be erased.

I have only lately received a memorial card of a deceased clergyman, containing the same prayer, so I hope we are looking up.

I have published proof that "good" Bishop Heber showed that modern Protestants were about the only people in the world who did not pray for the dead. As I have before remarked, prayers for the dead, as well as the doctrine of purgatory, or future cleansing, imply future progress, otherwise they would be chaff. M. A. (CANTAB.)

A LADY on the Continent, a Spiritualist, who paints Alpine flowers from nature, writes to us that she is under the necessity of wishing to find a market for her artistic work in England. Can any of our readers help her?

DR. SLADE is now in Berlin, in which intellectual centre he has so many applicants for sittings, that on some days he cannot receive all those who come. He has not had such success anywhere else on the Continent.

MR. EPES SARGENT, of Boston, U.S. informs us, that some interest is felt in England about the slate-writing phenomena through Mr. Watkins' mediumship, described in this journal, since he has had several letters from England on the subject.

ON Sunday morning next, Mr. W. J. Colville will deliver an inspirational discourse at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street, Regent-street, London, on "Methods of Promoting a Practical Knowledge of Spiritualism." A poem will follow the discourse. Spiritualists are desired by Mr. Colville to favour this service with their presence, and to bring their friends with them. The service will commence at 11.15 a.m. precisely, and occupy about an hour and a half. On Monday evening he lectures at the Langham Hall, Portland-street. Admission free.

## THE DALSTON ASSOCIATION OF INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM.

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

ON Monday evening next the second of the winter series of fortnightly discussion meetings of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism will be held at the Association Rooms, 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston-lane, London, E., when Herr Christian Reimers will open a discussion on "Points Connected with Production of Casts of Hands and Feet." Chair to be taken at eight o'clock; admission free.

Dr. Carpenter's recent lectures and writings will be discussed at one of the fortnightly Monday evening meetings of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, in December next, and the hon. secretary will be glad to hear from those who may be disposed to take part in the debate.

### MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council of the Dalston Association met on Thursday evening, last week, under the vice-presidency of Mrs. W. E. Corner; Mrs. Wood, Messrs. J. Tozeland, J. Rouse, and T. Blyton, were also present.

The minutes of last session were read and confirmed. Letters of general interest, received since, were read from Mr. James Burns, Mr. J. Regan, Miss Mancell, and Anna Blackwell.

After the unanimous passing of a resolution relating to some utterances of Dr. Monck,

Letters were read from Mr. H. D. Jencken, M.R.I., resigning office as president. The resignation was accepted with regret. It was resolved to invite Captain John James to accept the presidency of the Association.

On the motion of Mr. T. Blyton, seconded by Mr. J. Tozeland, it was resolved that seats upon the Council be offered to Messrs. Edwin Dottridge, Richard Pearce, and R. A. March. Applications for election as ordinary members were submitted, and accepted, from Mr. and Mrs. J. Regan, Mrs. Harcourt, and Mrs. Macauley. Letters of resignation of membership were accepted with regret from Miss Thomson and Mr. W. H. P. Makeham.

Presentations, received since last session of Council, were laid upon the table, and accepted with a cordial vote of thanks to the respective donors, viz., Mr. W. H. Harrison, Mr. Edwin Dottridge, Miss Anna Blackwell, and Mr. J. J. Morse.

Mr. Edwin Dottridge wrote drawing attention to the earlier custom of Scripture reading, and suggesting prayer at the ordinary weekly Thursday evening *séances*. On the motion of Mr. Thos. Blyton, seconded by Mrs. W. E. Corner, it was resolved to amend *Séance* Regulation No. 2, by addition of the words, "In such manner as the circle president may deem fit and proper."

Communications having been read from Dr. C. Carter Blake, in reply to an invitation, consenting to read a paper entitled "Passage of Matter through Matter"; and from Miss F. J. Theobald, with reference to Dr. Carpenter's misrepresentations, the hon. secretary was instructed to include Dr. C. Carter Blake's paper, and Miss Theobald's suggestion, in the arrangements for the fortnightly Monday evening discussion meetings during December.

Arrangements for the last Thursday evening *séance* in December were referred to the hon. secretary.

On the motion of Mr. Thos. Blyton, seconded by Mr. J. Tozeland, a committee was appointed "To consider and report upon a scheme for obtaining evidence affecting advanced phases of the phenomena of Spiritualism."

A suggestion for a New Year's entertainment, early in January next, proposed to be arranged under the auspices of the various metropolitan Spiritualist and Psychological societies, was referred to the hon. secretary, with instructions to correspond with the several societies and to report further at next session of the Council.

The Council then adjourned.

BIRTH.—BLYTON.—On the 8th November, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston-lane, London, E., the wife of Mr. Thomas Blyton, of a daughter.

MR. COLVILLE'S usual inspirational address, at 38, Great Russell-street, London, will not be given next Saturday afternoon.

MR. HARRISON'S paper on "The Mesmerising of Animals," will, after its completion, be issued as a small book, because the facts are a death-blow to nearly all the theories in Dr. Carpenter's last book, about the influence of the imagination, expectant attention, and dominant ideas of mesmeric sensitives. Can any of our readers send in reports of recent experiments at once?

ON Sunday next Mr. J. J. Morse will deliver a trance address in the Mill-lane Schools, Stockton-on-Tees; subject—"Spiritualism: its Religion." The service begins at 6.30 p.m. On Monday, at 8 p.m., Mr. Morse will deliver another trance address in the same place; subject—"The Spirit Land: its Nature." On Tuesday evening, in the same rooms, he will, in the trance, answer questions upon Spiritualism.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. VAUGHAN, Williamsport, Indiana.—You can get it of Messrs. Colby and Rich. We believe that the impediments to the obtaining of English Spiritualistic books in America are nearly removed.

R.—Yes, we think greater freedom for women the most urgently necessary social reform of to-day. In the less well-to-do classes they are cut off from nearly all means of earning a livelihood, because men are doing much work they could perform. Among the higher classes they have no freedom, and are commonly driven to the matrimonial market by the other members of the family, for the highest price they will fetch.



