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THE ROSTRUM.

THE LAST OF THE MERLINITES:

A CHRISTMAS EVE NARRATIVE.

Founded on fact, and compiled by EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

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IN a remote district of the North of England, in the wildest part of the border, hill, and glen country, there existed, nearly a century ago, a small sect of religionists of a strange, gloomy, and fanatical character. They were but little known, and arose and disappeared like the phantoms of a fleeting dream; but the memory of their brief term of existence is rescued from oblivion by the researches of a few still-living descendants of their order, from one of whom, together with certain local traditions which attach to the scenes of their transient sphere of influence, the following items of history are gathered up.

The "Merlinites" derived their name from their founder, Mr. Reuben Merlin, a man of wealth and position, who first became distinguished by establishing a club, of which he was the ruling spirit. We shall speak of this association by the same title as that of the sect, namely, the "Merlinites," the real *sobriquet* by which the said club chose to announce itself, being one not tolerable to ears polite, and giving rise in the peculiar sphere of its influence to the now familiar proverb, so specially applicable to Mr. Merlin's two opposite movements, namely, "that the foundations of heaven are laid in hell."

One thing is certain, that whereas the motto of the club was "Women, wine, and wickedness," their acts of outrage, aimless mischief, and daring licentiousness fully justified the worst appellation that could be bestowed upon them, and rendered their association the terror and abhorrence of every scene in which they were known.

One of the most orthodox practices of these human fiends was to celebrate Christmas Eve by a mock solemnity, which they called a wedding, wherein the bridegroom was one of their own number, whilst the bride was to be *one of the people*—"young, fair, virtuous, and unwilling"—the latter clause, of course, rendering it absolute that she should be *abducted* from her home. Our narrative commences at the weekly meeting of the Merlinites which preceded a certain Christmas Eve, when the next nuptials of infamy were to be celebrated. The society, which met periodically at the houses of the different members, were in session at the

splendid residence of Reuben Merlin. The wine and wassail had done their work, and the party had already elected Rufus Rushton, the worst and most unscrupulous of their number, to procure the *victim* who was to *make sport* for them on the ensuing Christmas Eve.

To the clamorous demand for information touching the bride elect of the new orgie, Rufus Rushton maintained a contemptuous silence. He was a young man of noble family, with the stamp of intellect and genius on his brow; but the iron of early dissipation had passed its hot fingers across his worn face, and the once lofty inspiration of a crushed soul looked out from the wreck himself had made, like the light which shone through Milton's "archangel ruined."

"Tell us her name, where she lives, who she is to be. If you expect us to help you, you must uncover your game, Master Rufus!" shouted the revellers in noisy chorus.

"I neither ask nor require your help, gentlemen," coolly replied the rake; "my conquests are my *own*, and I generally fight my battles single-handed. The rules of our order require the presentation of a fair bride; that she should be young is only natural, considering that most of our society are lacking in the element of youth themselves—that she should be *unwilling* is only worthy the illustrious name we bear. Fear not, gentlemen; Madam Rushton shall not disgrace the scene of her honourable initiation——"

"By Heaven, he is chaffing us!" cried the fierce founder of the club; "but we will know who the dame is, and that without crossing swords either, Master Rufus," he added more mildly, as he noted the dangerous flash of the young man's eye; then, rising, he whispered to one of the grooms in attendance, and continued—"We will have rare sport, too, comrades. We have here an old blind beggar, the most notable prophet that ever figured out of Jerusalem. He sees more of the future without eyes than any of us could do with telescopes. Bring him here, Jacob, and he will tell us who Rufus Rushton's fair one is, and something of her after-life to boot."

"Blind Sandy!" cried one of the club. "By all the saints, Reuben, you had better introduce Beelzebub, our master, amongst us. That old Gospel Shop, Sandy, will prophesy nothing but evil about such choice spirits as us."

"Never mind!" cried the master of the house. "Evil we are, and to the evil we must all go. What matters it, whether Blind Sandy or Reuben Merlin tells you so."

As he spoke, a tall old man came feeling his way into the room. He was thin and meagre; his dress was poor but scrupulously clean, and the number of neat patches it bore, evinced the work of some tender and careful woman's hand. A little shaggy dog, almost as threadbare and lean as his master, led him forward by a string, while a little basket at his neck bespoke the calling of the blind beggar.

"Come, old Sandy!" cried the rough master, "give us a touch of your conjuring craft. We want to know what you see hereabouts of consequence to this noble company."

"What do I see, sir?" meekly responded the beggar, raising his sightless orbs towards the speaker, "alas, I see no sun, no moon, no stars!—all is dark, dark for ever!"

"Here, can ye see that, old Simeon?" chuckled one of the company, holding up a shilling before the beggar, who mechanically reached out his hand to take it, while the other, winking to the rest, jerked it away, remarking, "The old trader is no such fool after all—feeling is as good believing as seeing, any day."

"You shall have half-a-crown, and all the bones the hounds can't pick," interrupted the master, "if you can tell us the name of Rufus Rushton's new leman."

The young man, thus unceremoniously alluded to, moved restlessly in his seat, but kept silence, while the helpless mendicant, knowing, by bitter experience, the ruthless nature of his tormentors, turned deprecatingly from one to the other, as they reiterated taunting offers and dangerous threats, in the hope of inducing him to exercise a gift for which he was highly famed, namely, that of "second sight." In vain the poor creature declared the visions which occasionally unclosed his prophetic lips were beyond his own control; the fierce revellers became the more determined as their victim manifested his impotency to gratify them. At length Rufus Rushton contemptuously advised them to send the impostor away. "For," added he, "he has never yet been known to prophesy aught but evil, and that is why what he says comes true."

It seemed as if the sound of Rushton's voice had broken the spell that held the prophetic lips enchained. Raising his sightless eyes to heaven, and erecting his thin bent form with a force and dignity that held his listeners awe-struck, he said in a deep impressive tone, "I stand within an ancient castle's hall. I hear the loud tempest roar, the thunder crash, the livid lightning speeds its awful flight! There's bonny work within that ancient fane! There's mirth, and revelry, and wassail loud. A dainty wedding, too, is forward now, and only waits the coming of the bride.

"List to the tolling of the castle bell! It booms the death of night! Slowly and sad the midnight hour proclaims another day is dead—another born; and woe are they who see its mournful birth! But stay! who are the revellers? Wait! I'll count. For every hour that tolls I see a face, bearing some well-known name. An altar there is raised; a gibbering ape, in gown and cassock, takes the place of priest. An open book and wedding ring he holds, and all stand ready waiting for the bride. She comes! she comes! Room for the wretched dove, with broken pinions, ruffled plumes, and soiled! Behold her dragged along by vassal hands, to play her part enforced in this foul scene! O God, why beats my heart? My feeble knees, why do they bend and totter 'neath my weight? My eyeballs are on fire! O, how they burn! I'm blind again! I'm blind! Ah me! all's dark! O God! in mercy, one short moment more suspend the doom, and let me see her face!

"It may not be; the night has fallen indeed; the curtain's down, the pageant is played out. And yet, what means that mighty rush of waters sounding in mine ears? Hark to those shrieks! They're raised by thirteen lost and dying creatures. Twelve deserve their fate, but she, the innocent, the guiltless, save, oh save her! 'Tis all in vain! The castle clock tolls one! It is its death knell. It sounds the requiem note of thirteen perished victims, and lo! its iron tongue is now forever hushed!" . . . Thrust forth from the awe-struck yet indignant group, the beggar groped his way from the place of guilt, murmuring a prayer to Heaven to bless and save his own ewe lamb, his child, his fair and gentle daughter from the hands of those remorseless spoilers.

"I will show you how to cheat the wizard and his prophecy of evil," cried Reuben Merlin, long after the beggar had been

expelled from the door. "All assemble *here* on Christmas eve; come by the road, and avoid the river. Do not even cross the ford above Brooke's Mill. *Don't go near Rufus's old Castle above all things*; and do you, Rushton, bring your bride along, with help or without, as it pleases you; only swear, one and all, on Christmas eve, one hour before midnight, to be in this very place, and we'll set defiance to flood and fire, though old Sandy, old Ocean, and Beelzebub himself were thundering at our gates. Do you swear?"

"*We swear, living or dead, we, thirteen Merlinites, will meet in this place at half-past eleven o'clock, December 24th, 17—.*"

The winds sung a wild and mournful requiem; the pelting storm descended in heavy gusts, and the genius of desolation swept with the icy scimitar of the bitter north wind the half-savage mountain region in which the dwelling of Reuben Merlin was situated, when, two days before the Christmas eve on which the orgies of the Merlinites were to be celebrated, at five o'clock on the day of a storm long, long remembered in that wild region, the old blind beggar, Sandy, stood in the porch of Mr. Merlin's door, claiming admittance and *demanding* an interview with the master. Storm-beaten and dripping in every rag with the pelting rain as he was, there was something in the tone of the beggar which, combined with his fearsome reputation as a prophet, overawed the trembling servants, and compelled them to lead him to the master's presence.

Arrived there, however, and suddenly confronted with the haughty owner of the house, his fortitude and unnatural strength forsook him, and sinking on his knees in an agony of tears and grief terrible to witness, old Sandy implored the master, in broken terms and with choking sobs, to give him back his daughter.

Had the blind suppliant been able to note the effect of his words on his auditor, he would at once have acquitted him of any participation in the cause of his grief, so astonished and affected did Merlin appear to be at the nature of the appeal.

At length he succeeded in raising the unhappy beggar, and in kind and earnest tones besought him to give him an account of the loss he thus deplored. Then it was, amidst heavy sighs, and in accents choked by sobs, that the mendicant explained his case. He had, it seems, one only child, a blossom of summer beauty, the only stay of broken fortunes and ruined hopes, the prop of his age, the sun of his waning life. So beautiful was this solitary ewe lamb, that the old man, terrified at the thought of subjecting her to the rude glances of a sensuous world, had secluded her in a remote hut, and actually went forth to beg their daily bread, and ply his art as a ballad singer, rather than expose his gem to the eyes of men. He told how she wove baskets, which he sold; how craftily she knit and spun; and above all, how, with her fairy footfall and joyous laugh, "*her sound*" went forth in his little hut like the echoes from a world of angels. He told, too, how on the fatal night, when he had appeared with the dark mantle of prophecy thrown around him, the hour being late and the night stormy, he had sought shelter in an adjoining barn, and returned to his hut the next day to find it empty; hour after hour he had waited to hear the sound of Marian's approach, but he waited in vain. The hearth was cold, the embers extinguished—the light of the place had gone out. The wild winds bore no whisper from his lost one; and though his trembling feet and groping hands had gone over every inch of his little dwelling, and scoured every bush or hollow in the district, he could *feel* no trace of his Marian. He had shouted her name until his parched throat refused its office; then, recalling in wild agony the vision of the veiled female whom he had seen but could not recognize in

the prophetic picture of Rufus Rushton's unhallowed bridal, the dreadful conviction forced itself upon his mind that his kidnapped child was to be a partner in the shameful Christmas rites he had described.

Long and earnest was the conversation that ensued between the broken-hearted father and the strangely-moved founder of the Merlin Club. As they parted, it was with these words from the now *changed* master of the house—

"I have sworn to you, old man, and I will keep my oath. Your wrongs in this matter shall be my own."

"*Living or dead*, the twelve men of our order are pledged both soul and body to meet with me in this place on Christmas Eve. A mock bridal is to be performed by the terms of our compact. The lot has fallen on Rufus Rushton to be the groom. The bride we have sworn shall be a maiden, pure as light, young, fair, and *unwilling*. And should I find your Marian is the victim of this foul compact, though Rufus Rushton were the father who gave me life, or the brother who shared it with me, I would tear her from his arms and give her back to you a stainless virgin."

From the time when the blind beggar quitted the mansion in which he had so suddenly converted his worst enemy into his best friend, up to within one hour of the appointed Christmas Eve tryst, a storm, unprecedented in force and desolating effect, raged in that district. Brooklets were converted into torrents, mountain streams into roaring cataracts, the long stretch of ocean beach and sands was obliterated, and beneath the heaving billows which lashed the rugged rocks of that iron-bound coast, lay wrecked villages, ruined houses fringing the shore line, which, with many of their hapless inhabitants, had been swept away in the awful night which witnessed the culminating force of the elemental conflict.

It was whilst the tempest without still raged, amidst the crash of the pealing thunder, and the deafening roar of the tossing ocean, on the very verge of which Merlin's mansion stood, that the master emerged from the solitude, in which he had buried himself for the past twenty-four hours, to attend the appointed place of meeting with his club. It was not the rule of the association for the host to receive his guests, or appear amongst them until the hour of midnight. A secret door, known to all, at every house of meeting, led to their club room; and thus each member arrived without question, and awaited in profound silence the coming of the host to open the meeting.

It was at twelve o'clock to the second, that Reuben Merlin, with a hand colder and more tremulous than he had ever before experienced, touched the secret spring of the door which led to the apartments devoted to the use of the club. These rooms were spacious and handsome, and for the purposes of the profane wedding ceremony, were fitted up as a chapel. This apartment in Merlin's house was splendid beyond any other; and as he entered the room, his eyes for a moment became almost dazzled with the blaze of the innumerable wax lights which shone upon and around the mock altar.

At the grand banqueting table, eleven of his companions were seated in profound silence. By the side of the altar, fitted up in imitation of a Catholic chapel, stood Rufus Rushton; and stretched upon the steps lay what appeared to be a human figure, but so enveloped in a mass of white drapery that Merlin could not distinguish whether the person thus concealed were living or dead. The most remarkable part of the scene was the effect which Merlin found acting upon himself the moment he entered the hall. Not one of the company moved or spoke; they did not even turn their heads or stir at his entrance. They sat and looked rigid as statues, with the spell as of an enchanter's wand chaining them. But apart from the strange immobility of the scene, Merlin felt a powerful and almost tangible vapour arising, he

knew not from whence or how, curdling his own vitality, and locking up his senses in the same rigidity which he beheld around him. How long he stood in this fixed condition he never knew: he was accustomed to say if it were but a minute, there was no such thing as time, for the experiences of a whole life were crowded into the period in which he stood. Beyond this, too, his acute sight took cognizance of a new and still more remarkable feature in the scene. As his eyes traversed the assembled company, he read on each face the entire character, life, actions—ay, even thoughts and motives—of each man's most secret soul. There was the rude fox-hunting squire, whose evergreen coat and huge top-boots seemed to cover up such a world of hearty, convivial good humour. Why did he now recognize him to be a bully, a coward, a tyrant, and a liar? The graceful, courteous aristocrat next to him, whose polished words and courtly smiles won for him the "open sesame" to every heart—why did he now behold in him only a fawning hypocrite, and a time-serving pander to the ruling powers?

From face to face his awe-struck gaze wandered, only to behold in every moveless feature the same awful and mysterious transfiguration. Physical beauty converted into revolting corruption; splendid form and apparel shrunk and faded, every grace gone, and vice, loathsome crime, and hideous moral deformity gleaming forth from every stony face, once the object of his admiration and friendship! It was in the midst of what seemed to him a dream either of the wildest insanity or unutterable horror, that he was startled from his rigid trance-like condition by a chorus of wild, prolonged and terrible shrieks. Roused in an instant by sounds so appalling, Merlin's first impulse was to rush from the hall to ascertain what had happened. In the gallery without, he found a crowd of his terrified domestics, who, shocked by the same unearthly cries, were rushing to the place of meeting, fearing that some terrible catastrophe had befallen their master. Finding that the appalling sounds were not to be explained *without* the hall of assembly, Merlin hastened to re-enter it, but only to discover that every light was extinguished and the place in total darkness.

Yet even amidst the incessant flashes of the lightning, which streamed in at the uncurtained windows, he perceived that the room was entirely deserted by its late tenants. Bridegroom, bride, revellers, all were gone! and he stood in the vast apartment solitary and alone!

To summon the servants, procure lights, and search the house in every direction was the work of the night, and the cold dawn of a desolate and still stormy day found the perplexed inhabitants wholly at a loss to comprehend the mystery of the preceding night. The steward testified to having lighted up the hall with his own hands—to having heard the footsteps of eleven persons passing up the secret stairs which led to the hall from the door of entrance without—to hearing the last person lock the door and pass into the hall.

If Merlin could have conceived the appearance of his guests to have been but a mere conception of his fancy, the evidence of the steward touching the lighting of the hall, the disturbance of the chairs—which were removed from their formal positions, scattered, and some overturned, as if a number of persons had been suddenly displaced from them—the fact that the door of entrance, which his own hand had unlocked at eleven o'clock, was now found locked inside, and above all, the appearance of twelve crosses in chalk, recently made in the accustomed places, all bore testimony to the presence of some mystery, beyond the capacity of Merlin or his household to solve. It was in the midst of their fruitless search and vain surmises that a man appeared before the master, jaded and travel-worn, alleging as the reason why he had not delivered a letter, of which he was the bearer, the previous day, that the floods had risen with such

force that every part of the country was under water, and he himself had barely escaped with his life.

The letter, which was from Rufus Rushton, bore date of the previous morning, and ran as follows:—

“Brother Fiend, Greeting.

“The Merlinites are all here at my poor mansion of Luciferian reputation. The floods are rising so rapidly on all sides that we, in solemn council of Pandemonium, have decreed that it is better that one member of our illustrious order should perish, than that the whole thirteen should be cast into the waters; hence we invite you to come to us, for *here*, and *here only*, shall we abide, and here shall we celebrate our annual ceremony—the altar is prepared; the victim is already bound to its horns; nothing then remains but that the Master Fiend should join us at the appointed hour. Come as ye list; ride, swim, float, or sink, according to your humour; but, *living or dead*, do you meet with us this night at 12 p.m. If we are living we will await you here; if dead, we will join you there according to the terms of our oath.

“Done at our poor ruin, yeleft Rushton Castle, this morning at the tenth hour of December 24th, 17—.”

With a shout which rang through the hall—“Ride, ride for your lives; Gabriel, Thomas, Martin, follow me!”—the master sprang on his horse and dashed forward on his perilous road. Through brake and fence, through torrent and river, across fords now swelled to cataracts, plunged the headlong rider. At length the swelling floods, entirely destroying the landmarks which had once guided his way, compelled him to halt; and partly by offers of large rewards, and partly by desperate threats, he succeeded in urging some fishermen to embark with him in a boat, and make an effort to reach by sea the dwelling of Rufus Rushton. It was a large, solitary mansion, situated on the sea shore, and surrounded by a tract of flat, marshy land.

For the rest of that weary day and night did the rowers ply their oars; and still, when the morning dawned, Reuben Merlin gazed over a trackless waste of waters.

“Pause here, my men!” cried Merlin; “we must have missed the spot. See there! By Heavens! there is the identical castle rock, and the lighthouse which shows we are at the very place; but in the name of Heaven, what has become of the castle and all its inhabitants?” “If you mean Rushton Castle, sir,” replied one of the boatmen, “we are now sailing just above where it once stood. As to the people that lived there—Heaven alone knows their fate; but there, on the village at Craig’s Head, they say that on Christmas-Eve, just at twelve by the church clock, there rang out over sea and land the awfulest cry that ever broke from human lips; if—the Lord save us!—they were human that uttered it—oh, sir! may it not have been Master Rushton drowning, with all his Christmas-Eve party?”

“Doubtless, doubtless;” murmured the shuddering listener. “It must have been so; and that was the echo of their death wail I and my people heard from the far-off regions to which their souls have sped.”

“And so, *living or dead*, they kept their word, and met with me on Christmas-Eve, at midnight!” *Living or dead!* Perhaps both!—“dead, yet living!” . . . Many weeks after this occurrence, and after the subsidence of the waters, two bodies, the only human vestiges of Rufus Rushton’s last carouse, were found. The one was an old silver-haired man, whose tattered garments were supposed to bear testimony to the identity of blind Sandy, the beggar. Clashed tightly to his breast, and still encircled in the arms of the dead, was a female, clothed in white garments; but the sullen waters which had formed her winding sheet had laved away every trace of what might have been once fair and lovely and left no proofs, beyond surmise, that it was Marian, the beautiful fairy of the glen, whom few had seen except in

stolen glances; around whom busy tongues had enwreathed legends of mystery, from the fame of her beauty, the fact of her strange seclusion, and her relationship to the dreaded prophet, Blind Sandy.

Many years after these events, Mr. Merlin reappeared in the neighbourhood from foreign lands, where he had been wandering in pursuit of the lore which old India, Egypt, and Germany alone could give him. The records of “The Merlin Club,” almost its very memory, had passed away in the depths of the fearful floods which had engulfed all its members but this one, and in him, the stern and gloomy ascetic—the scholar of strange systems and unknown lands—none would have ever recognised its founder, until he formed that link of connection between the past and the present, known as the stern, ascetic, and short-lived sect of the “Merlinites.”

MY CHRISTMAS PUDDING, OR THE SCHOOLBOYS’ DREAM.

LISTEN, all! I tell what happened on the night of Christmas Day,
After I’d been eating pudding in a very reckless way.
Just as Christmas Day was dying, as I on my bed was lying,
When to slumber I was trying, when I’d just begun to snore,
I became aware of something rolling on my chamber floor—
Of a most mysterious rumbling, rolling on my chamber floor,
Only this and nothing more!

Partly waking, partly sleeping, all my flesh with horror creeping,
I could hear it tumbling, leaping, rolling on my chamber floor;
Underneath the bedclothes sinking, I betook myself to thinking
If it might not be a kitten that had entered at the door;
“Yes,” said I, “it is a kitten, entered at the open door,
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my heart grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Cat,” said I, “or kitten, kindly stop that rolling on the floor.”
But it was most irritating, for the sound was unabating,
On my nerves for ever grating was the rolling on the floor;
Till at last I cried in anguish, “Stop that rolling, I implore;”
And a voice said, “Nevermore.”

This convinced me of my error, up I rose in greatest terror,
Certain that ’twas not a kitten that had spoken just before;
Then into the darkness peering, shivering, wondering, doubting,
fearing,
I could dimly see a pudding rolling on my chamber floor;
I could see a big plum pudding rolling on my chamber floor;
May I see it nevermore!

From its mouth a vapor steaming, while its fiery eyes were gleaming,
Gleaming fiercely bright, and seeming fixedly to scan me o’er;
Soon it rolled and rumbled nearer, and its aim becoming clearer,
I could see that it intended jumping higher than the floor;
Yes, it jumped upon my chest, and when in pain I gave a roar,
All it said was, “Nevermore.”

Though my back was nearly broken, this reply, so strangely spoken,
Seemed to me to be a token that it wished for something more;
So my thoughts in words expressing, I began my sins confessing,
Saying I had eaten pudding many a time in days of yore,
But although I’d eaten pudding many a time in days of yore,
I would eat it nevermore.

Still in spite of my confessing, that plum pudding kept on pressing,
Pressing with its weight tremendous ever on my bosom’s core,
Till I cried, “O, monster mighty, in my work I’m often flighty,
But, if you will now forgive me, I’ll work hard at classic lore;
At the end of this vacation I’ll work hard at classic lore!”
Quoth the pudding, “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, pudding!” then I shrieked,
upstarting,
“Get thee back—get off my stomach, roll again upon the floor!”
Thus I struggled, loudly screaming, till I found I had been dreaming,
Dreaming like a famous poet once had dreamt in days of yore;
But although ’twas like the poet’s dream he dreamt in days of yore,
May I dream it nevermore!

MAX, without the protection of a superior being, is secure of nothing that he enjoys, and uncertain of everything that he hopes for.—*Tillotson.*

LITTLE THINGS.—Springs are little things, but they are sources of large streams; a helm is a little thing, but it governs the course of a ship; a bridle is a little thing, but we know its use and power; nails and pegs are little things, but they hold the parts of a large building together; a word, a look, a smile, are little things, but powerful for good or evil. Think of this, and mind the little things. Pay that little debt. If it is a promise, redeem it; you know not what important events may hang upon it. Keep your word sacred; keep it to the children—they will mark it sooner than anyone else, and the effect will probably be as lasting as life. Mind little things.

SPIRIT VOICES: OR, WHO SPOKE?

In an unfortunate moment, four or five years ago, I bought a pony and trap. Perhaps some of your readers may wonder where is the misfortune in becoming possessed of a horse. I will explain. I soon found to my sorrow that good living and little work develops the "devil" in a horse quite as soon as the same thing will do in a man; and I had not owned "Fanny" very long before she became so wicked that it was dangerous to go near her, and often have I had to yoke up and drive ten or fifteen miles on a cold day to take the evil spirit out of her. One morning, at the time of which I write, I received a notice to attend as a witness, and give evidence at a lawsuit that was to be tried at Preston. As Fanny had not been working for some days, she had become almost unmanageable, so I determined I would drive to Preston, instead of going by train.

I got the pony and trap ready, and set them to stand at the yard door until I was ready to start on my journey. After seeing that everything was in order, I was just stepping into the trap, when I heard some one speak, and as the voice was clear, distinct, and sounded close to me, I turned round to see who spoke. To my surprise there was no one about. The words spoken were as follows: "Put some string into your pocket!" I looked all about to find the speaker, but there was no one to be found. I then ran into the street to see if some passer-by had uttered the words, but there was no one within 150 yards of where I stood. I went into the house and told my wife what had occurred, when she said, "Well, a piece of string is no great weight, I would take some if I were in your place." I accordingly put a few yards of stout cord in my pocket and commenced the journey. I arrived in Preston, and put up at the Dog Hotel, and after giving the ostler instructions about feeding the horse, I made my way to the Court-house. The trial lasted all day, and was not concluded until after evening. The gentleman on whose behalf I had gone as a witness had ordered tea for us at the "Dog," and we, therefore, were engaged until almost nine o'clock, when I prepared for home. Fanny was yoked to the trap, and after a cheery good night to my friends away we went.

I had driven about four miles, when Fanny suddenly stopped, and neither for coaxing nor flogging would she move another inch; the more I tried to drive her the more stupid she seemed to become, and at last, I suppose out of perverseness, she backed me and the trap into the hedge on the road side. I now thought it was time to see what was the matter, so I jumped out, went to the pony and tried to lead her, thinking she had seen something of which she was afraid. On taking hold of the bridle I noticed that when she pulled, the collar went in a peculiar position, one side up and the other down. I therefore took out one of the lamps and examined it. To my surprise, I found that one of the traces by which she pulled the trap was broken off from the metal ring that should secure it to the collar, consequently the pony could not pull the trap at all. The imperative necessity for the string I had put in my pocket immediately became apparent, and the strange command *to put the string in my pocket* seemed to have been given by some one who knew the exact condition of the traces. I immediately set about making a new trace with the cord I had with me, and it was not many minutes before Fanny was off at a good smart trot and soon landed me home. As a spiritualist, I can give my idea as to how the information to take the string came, and in relating the circumstance to my doubting friends I often put the question I now put to your readers—WHO SPOKE?

R. WOLSTENHOLME,
Blackburn.

The true lawgiver always takes counsel of his heart as well as of his head.

THE BRAMFORD GHOST.

WITHIN the last few weeks the utmost excitement has prevailed throughout Suffolk, in consequence of a rumour that there was a haunted house at Bramford, in which disturbances of the most harassing and unaccountable kind were proceeding. The house, which is inhabited by a Mrs. Parker and her two children, both under twelve years of age, has been visited of late by doctors, lawyers, and hosts of wonder-seekers.

About a fortnight ago one of the members of the local police having visited the place, and threatened the two little children with condign punishment unless they confessed to being the authors of the disturbances;—this official proceeded forthwith to announce that the whole thing was a hoax, and attributable to the two children.

This tale, however, has not only been denied twice by the children, but proved beyond a shadow of a doubt to have been only a "confession" forced from them through fear of punishment.

Quite recently, vigorous and systematic methods of investigating the real truth of the reports have been pursued, and some of the results have been published in the *East Anglian Daily Times* of December 8th, from which we make the following extracts:—

"From the comparatively harmless 'knocking' stage, the spirit, or the psychic force, or whatever it is, has gone on to what is technically called levitation—that is to say, chairs and other solid bodies move about the house of their own accord, and on one memorable washing day the house was turned inside out by some invisible agency. These extraordinary phenomena have been witnessed by scores of residents in Bramford and the neighbourhood.

"Then came the rumour that the ghost had manifested itself at Stowmarket, and whatever may be the outcome of this singular business, the story of what took place there is most remarkable. Let it be understood that Mrs. Parker has a sister at Stowmarket who is married to a respectable working man named Jeffrey. He is in the employ of Messrs. Hewitt & Co., who give him the very highest character for sobriety and truthfulness. Hearing of his sister-in-law's troubles, he invited the little girl Ellen to stay at his house, thinking that a change would do the child good. She came on Monday week, and what happened during her visit is best told in the words of Mr. Jeffrey himself.

"The girl came to my house (he said) on the Monday. My wife and two boys, and my wife's mother live with me, and the little Parker slept with the last-named, who is of course her grandmother. During Monday and Tuesday nothing unusual happened. On Wednesday evening, however, my wife went to chapel, and when I was at the back of the house, the girl came to me and said that some boys were knocking at the door. I had left her seated at a table in the inner room writing a letter. I went back with her, feeling certain that nobody had been to the door, and then I heard a peculiar knocking—on the table, in the walls, and all around. The inner door, which nobody could have reached from the outside, was apparently struck with great violence—just one blow only. At that moment the girl was seated at some distance from the door, with her back to it. When my wife came home that night, she heard the knocks—in fact, we all heard them, the sounds going on around the girl as she went upstairs to bed. On that day, however, the knocking was all we heard. But when Thursday night came, things began to look serious. The girl went to bed in good time with her grandmother, and directly she got upstairs, different articles in the room began to move about. I heard the noise, and went upstairs. As I entered the room the washstand, which stood near the door, fell over against me, and would have pitched on to the floor had I not pushed it back. A chest containing linen—the whole being so heavy that the girl could not have moved it—had been shifted about the floor, the hot water bottle was taken out of the bed and thrown against the wall, and the brush and comb had also been shifted from one place to another. I told the girl to get into bed. When she had done so, I went into the room again, and then I saw the things moving myself. By the side of the wall there was an iron bedstead which I had not put up. That was dancing up and down on the floor; then the washstand was thrown over, and the heavy chest again moved.

All this time the girl was in bed. There was more or less disturbance during the night; it was more than we could stand, and next morning my wife took the girl home.'

"This was, in brief, the account heard from the lips of Mr. Jeffrey himself. The narrative is not, as in most cases of a similar character, removed in the third or fourth degree from the actual observer. 'People may believe me or not,' Mr. Jeffrey said in conclusion, 'I can only bear witness to what I actually saw.' Under the circumstances, therefore, the sceptical enquirer must either disbelieve Mr. Jeffrey or admit that there may be something in the phenomena called spiritualism. Upon the first point, it can only be said that Mr. Jeffrey's absolute veracity is avouched by his frank manner no less than by his high character. It has been said that the ghosts have fallen off a good deal now that people are becoming more sober; but no suspicion attaches to Mr. Jeffrey in this respect, for he is a teetotaller.

"People who are inclined to believe in the psychical element, to use that phrase for want of a better, are much impressed with the extraordinary resemblance which the Bramford story bears to other well-authenticated phenomena roughly classified under the head of spiritualism.

"Having seen Mr. Jeffrey, it was thought that any inquiry would be incomplete without an interview with the "medium" herself. In the evening, therefore, on the way back from Stowmarket, a visit was paid to Mrs. Parker's house—a small tenement situate nearly opposite the Angel Inn, and not by any means easy to discover on a dark winter's night, for Bramford Street must be the worst-lighted thoroughfare in all Suffolk. The door was opened by Thomas Farrington—Mrs. Parker's grown-up son by a former husband—and the good lady herself was engaged in washing up the tea things. Ellen (the 'medium') sat by the fireside with her brother, their ages being eleven and nine years respectively. The girl may be called rather good-looking; but she seemed nervous and frightened, and an old-fashioned arrangement of the hair, combed low down on the forehead, gave a somewhat sullen expression to a face otherwise intelligent enough. She has, in fact, passed the 4th Standard at school. Asked whether she had anything to do with the knockings and so forth, she burst into tears, and was rather severely reprimanded by her mother. To all the questions put, she would only reply 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' as the case might be. Mrs. Parker, however, and the grown-up son were very communicative. They told a most astounding story, of having had all the furniture in the house upset until they were afraid to stop indoors, of extraordinary noises outside the windows and doors, of loose bricks actually following the girl about the house. 'As God is my witness,' said the woman, 'I have seen things rise from the earth of their own accord, and follow my little girl to the door. That kettle has often been shifted from one hob to the other, and the other evening this basin,' pointing to the big bowl on the table, 'was lifted off here and placed on the ground. We have seen sights in this house which we would give anything to have found out.' On the washing-day before referred to, the furniture would not stand upright; a table in one of the bedrooms was thrown down so many times that it was broken; and on several occasions the knives and forks flew out of the cupboard and fell on the floor.

"These are only a few among the many instances alleged of the work of some malevolent influence. Mrs. Parker and the little girl were both asked whether anything could be done to set the spirit moving there and then; would the table turn if she touched it, for example? The woman shook her head, and said that these things might happen at any moment, but that they could not control them in any way. Pressed as to what their explanation was, both the son and Mrs. Parker expressed a profound conviction that the child and their furniture were bewitched by somebody who had a spite against them. They had tried burning the furniture, a table, chair, and even a kettle having been committed to the flames, 'but it's of no use,' the woman added, 'for that new kettle goes about just the same.'

Much more of the same effect was described, but without affording any further clue to the mystery, than the probability that these manifestations, like many others, of which we are now constantly receiving tidings, are fresh efforts on the part of spirits to re-awaken the world's attention to such facts as formerly heralded in the modern spiritual movement.

AN OVERLAND SKETCH.

I RAN across a little fellow eleven or twelve years old, pale and light-haired, in Northern Colorado, who was herding sheep. He was lying by a large rock reading a badly-worn paper-covered book while the sheep grazed in the valley below.

"Don't you get lonesome out here?" I asked.

"Yes, I get pretty lonesome sometimes. I read a good deal when the sheep don't need any 'tending' to, but that makes me all the lonelier sometimes."

"What are you reading now?"

"'Great Expectations.' Ever read it?"

"Yes."

"Charles Dickens wrote it, you know. I don't b'lieve there are many folks 'round here that ever read Dickens much, or any other books, either. They mostly seem to like the *Police Gazette*. I s'pose the pictures are all right in that, but I don't think much o' the readin'. I found this upstairs in an old trunk. I only begun it yesterday, an' I got it more'n half done. I'll finish it to-morrow. Some days I don't have anything to read, an' then I lay and look up at the sky an' think. An' lots o' times when I'm 'way off by myself an' the sheep are off a little ways an' there ain't no noise but just a little wind blowin' through the tall grass I can hear music which sounds as if it was playin' 'way off somewhere solemn and sweet-like. I heard it once when I went past a church on Sunday when pa took me to Denver with him. I hear it oftener since my little brother died—I guess it's 'cos I'm alone so much more since he went away. I used to think it was the wind blowin' through the grass that I heard, but it ain't, 'cos sometimes I hear it when the wind ain't blowin', an' lots o' times I can't hear it when it is—I like to listen to it if it does make me feel sort o' sorry an' sad like. It's 'way off somewhere ever so far, an' kinder rises an' falls, an' rings, an' trembles, an' it most always makes me cry to listen to it; but I like it if it does, an' there ain't anybody to see me 'cept the sheep; an' when I have to get up an' go an' tend to them I feel better after all."—*Dakota Bell Man, in Chicago Tribune.*

WHEN WILL THE WONDERS CEASE?

New manifestations of spirit power, presence, and interest are constantly being brought to light, often unconsciously by those who record them, as in the following from a Virginia paper, which astonishes the editor, but to us is only one of many such blessed signs of the dawning of a new era for mortals:—

"WILLIE COFFMAN."—This interesting and remarkable little blind boy—"the child pianist"—only two years and nine months old, has been on exhibition in this place for several days. This child is not exotic, but is a rare flower which sprung indigenously from the soil of Virginia. Both parents being Virginians, and the child being born also in Virginia, he is a Virginian *intus et in cute*.

The remarkable performances of this little blind child, yet on the confines of babyhood, have excited the wonder, admiration, and astonishment of all who have witnessed them, particularly of professors and teachers of music, who are better qualified to appreciate them. He plays accompaniments to tunes which he never heard before. As soon as a tune is played or sung to him he plays the accompaniment as if by intuition. He is not taught, of course, for a child of his age, and blind, too, could not be taught.

He is the most remarkable psychical prodigy in the world. We suppose that there has not been an instance before in all the tide of time in which a child of his age was able to perform as he does. He plays with fingers, wrists, and elbows, holding his arms transversely across the keys. His manner of execution is as unique as it is remarkable and wonderful. —*Staunton Spectator.*

The Wintun Indians of the Sacramento Valley believe in three worlds, and that each has its peculiar class of inhabitants. The sky is smoke, while to the majority of Indians it is ice, and a few think it quartz crystal. Mountains were made by the burrowing of the mole god. Light and darkness are maiden goddesses. Rocks and other inanimate things were once living, and some rocks now live and speak, this being the Wintun explanation of echoes. Whirlwinds are little spirits seeking water to drink. Diseases are caused by mythical animals.

A BRAVE AND TRUE MINISTER OF CHRIST.

"Let justice be done, though the heavens fall," is a sentiment which the Editor of this paper will ever uphold, and in proof thereof, whilst justice compels us, on many occasions, to protest against the errors and fallacies of Church systems, that same spirit of justice requires that at this period, in especial, the following noble sentences from a Christian minister's sermon, which we only regret we cannot report in full, should be printed in letters of gold and distributed broadcast through the land.—Ed. *T. W.*

THE REV. F. W. PAUL ON THE PRIZE RING.

The Rev. F. W. Paul, vicar of Emmanuel Church, Nottingham, yesterday morning announced that he had no text to take because he was about to preach upon a subject on which it would be merely a matter of form to select a text. He proceeded at once to refer to the revival of prize fighting in this country, as shown by the numerous challenges published in all the so-called respectable newspapers, daily and weekly, except those specially religious. We had also the spectacle of a Prince of the blood royal one day laying the foundation stone of a house of God, and another day shaking hands with a professional prize fighter, who had avowedly come over to this country to break the law. The *Referee* had positively announced that the Prince of Wales was the author of the revival of prize fighting, but if it were so he thought the Prince might well say "Save me from my friends." . . . Various reasons had been assigned for the cause of this revival, but he attributed it mainly to the press and to the publicans who made profit from the encouragement of brutal pastimes. He had read the account in the leading Nottingham newspaper of a fight which had recently taken place in America, and a more disgraceful thing he had never heard of. It was said that prize fights were intended to restore the waning bulldog pluck of Englishmen, but the history of most prize-fights were really displays of cowardice. Yet the leading Nottingham newspaper* published side by side with the reports of innocent sports, such as football and foot-racing, and the contests of Church institutes, —whist, the less of that the better, bagatelle, billiards, dominoes, and such sports—the revolting accounts of encounters between these bruisers. It was put under the heading of "Sporting News," and not one word of comment was made to show any disapproval of it. Such papers silently approved of those practices. What humbug it was for them to hold up their hands with horror when Mr. Gladstone said "Remember Mitchellstown," and for themselves to encourage the breaking of the law in this way. He was determined to protest against such practices, as he considered it the duty of the Church to do so, and he would not be fit for his position if he did not. He for himself would have no report of any harvest festival, lecture, or entertainment, or any leading article supporting his church published by a newspaper which displayed so much cowardice. He said to them, "You have no part or lot in this matter. You are on the devil's side, and I will have nothing to do with you." Rather than the Church should receive the support of such organs, he said let it be disestablished, let the Church go, and he would go with it, and take lodgings in Narrow-marsh before he would be bolstered up by such wretchedly cowardly newspapers as these.—*Nottingham Evening Post*, December 19th, 1887.

[All honour to the Rev. F. W. Paul, and the paper which dares to publish his noble utterances.]

The knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoyment of it—this is the sovereign good of human nature.—*Bacon*.

THE GOOD TIME, NOW!—The editor of the (Newburyport) *Valley Visitor* exclaims from out the depths of an illuminated vision: "There never before was so much of beauty and use and good in the world as to-day, and to-morrow will be much more abundant. Men's power and means of investigation were never before so great, and earth or heaven never so open to study. Lament? Rather rejoice that we were born so late in the new revolutions of matter and mind; in the new earth which is fresh every day; in the new birth of the good and true; in the new heavens opened; and in God himself apparently nearer to us—more wise, more merciful, more loving than he ever before revealed himself to any age, race, or generation of men."

THE CRANKS.

WHAT would we do were it not for the cranks? How slowly the tired old world would move, did not the cranks keep it rushing along! Columbus was a crank on the subject of American discovery and circumnavigation, and at last he met the fate of most cranks, was thrown into prison, and died in poverty and disgrace. Greatly venerated now! Oh, yes. Harvey was a crank on the circulation of the blood; Galileo was an astronomical crank; Fulton was a crank on the subject of steam navigation; Morse was a telegraph crank. All the old abolitionists were cranks. The Pilgrim Fathers were cranks; John Bunyan was a crank; and any man who doesn't think as you do is a crank. And by the by, the crank you despise will have his name in every man's mouth, and a half-completed monument to his memory crumbling down in a dozen cities, while nobody outside of your native village will know that you ever lived. Deal gently with the crank. Of course some cranks are crankier than others, but do you be very slow to sneer at a man because he only knows one thing and you can't understand him. A crank is a thing that turns something, it makes the wheels go around, it insures progress. True, it turns the same wheel all the time, and it can't do anything else, but that's what keeps the ship going ahead. The thing that goes in for variety, or versatility, that changes its position a hundred times a day, that is no crank; that is the weather-vane. What? You nevertheless thank heaven you are not a crank! Don't do that. Maybe you couldn't be a crank if you would. Heaven is not very particular when it wants a weather-vane; almost any man will do for that. But when it wants a crank it looks very carefully for the best man in the community. Before you thank heaven that you are not a crank, examine yourself carefully, and see what is the great deficiency that debars you from such an election.

REVIEWS.

"FROM OVER THE TOMB."

(By a Lady.) Printed by Jas. Burns, 15, Southampton Row, High Holborn, London.

THIS beautiful and unique little volume purports to be a series of communications from a husband in the spheres to his wife on earth, the recipient being herself the medium, and the publisher of the work. In the vast range of our spiritual literature it would be difficult to find a more tender, instructive, and truly practical formula of a religious life, and a living religion, than is contained in the hundred pages included in this valuable little *brochure*. In simple and natural language the whole duty of life is set forth, the relations of the creature to the Creator clearly depicted, and all the vagaries and mysticisms of creedal faiths swept away, and a pure, Christ-like, and thoroughly human life worship substituted in their place. It would be unwise to point to any special representative passages, every line being replete with beauty and suggestion. The *true* methods of salvation; the relations of God and man; the real mission and influence of Christ; practical life on earth, and a singularly rational description of "spiritual existence and the state after death;" these form the basis of the themes treated on, and few, if any, readers could rise from the perusal of this work without their faith in God and immortality being deepened, and their purposes for a life of ever-increasing good and use strengthened. We heartily commend this work to the attention of all thinkers and grades of society. (*See advertisement in this paper.*)

Price 1s., cloth 2s. To be had of Mr. E. W. Wallis, Sub-Editor of *The Two Worlds*, Publisher of Spiritual and Progressive Literature, 61, George Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

CHOICE AMERICAN SONGS AND SOLOS: Compiled by E. W. Wallis.

THIS excellent collection of spiritual songs and solos offers to our English spiritualists, whether in society organizations or social gatherings, precisely that element of delightful harmony and musical inspiration for which the American spiritualistic gatherings have been so deservedly distinguished. It has long been a subject of regret—we might almost say of reproach—to our spiritual gatherings on this side of the Atlantic, that we could offer our beloved visitors from the spheres no other form of musical invocation than the "too too" familiar resort to old-fashioned Psalmody; all very well in its way, but drearily monotonous when it becomes the *only way* in which we can invoke the presence of blessed spirits, especially when we have good reason to believe that music in the higher life "is the speech of angels." Mr. E. W. Wallis—himself an accomplished and highly-sympathetic vocalist—has begun the work of supplying the "long-felt want" of sweet and interesting spiritual music by issuing what we may hope will prove only the initial number of a set of the most popular and pleasing of those American tunes, allied to noble and exalting poems, which must greatly enhance the attractiveness of spiritual meetings. The present collection consists of twenty-four charming part-songs and solos, and eighteen of the most popular and available hymn tunes, to which words from the collections in ordinary use can be readily adapted. When the number and beauty of this fine *racé mecum* of spiritual poetry and music is compared with the trifling price of the work, it must be acknowledged that Mr. Wallis has conferred a boon on the spiritual community which societies and individuals alike should be prompt to avail themselves of. We have only to add that both words and music are finely engraved, and printed on excellent paper.

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EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN, Editor, T. W.

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THE TWO WORLDS.

Editor:

MRS. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

Sub-Editor and General Manager:

E. W. WALLIS.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1887.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

IF we were about to analyse the use of anniversary celebrations, we should define it as an impulse to set the mind thinking, and stimulate enquiry concerning the meaning and origin of the event we celebrate.

As there are probably about the proportion of one hundred persons who celebrate Christmas Day without much interest in, and less knowledge of, its real significance, to one thinker who has full understanding of what Christmas means, we may "improve the occasion" by offering a few suggestions to our readers concerning the Christ-mass so universally observed at this particular season. The 25th day of December is memorable both in a religious and social point of view. Although ten thousand or more sermons will be preached on that day throughout Christendom to faithfully-believing listeners, assuring them that the 25th day of December is the one day of all days sacred and precious because it was the birthday of their "Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," every one of the ten thousand and more preachers will be guilty of telling a falsehood, which, in this age of enlightenment, is known to be such, and therefore it is that we deem it right to remind the people who may not know what their teachers will not tell them, and to say to those who dare to think and reason that, from time immemorial, even so far back as the days which antedate all nationalities, namely the primeval ages, when the only well-known nations were the wandering Aryans, the 25th of December, or midwinter-day, was held sacred as the period when the sun, obscured by the storms of winter, rose again, or was annually born, through the constellation of Virgo (the Virgin), into new life and ascending power for the ensuing year.

On the actual historical significance of Christmas, Child's unanswerable work, "The Progress of Religious Ideas," says: "All the ancients observed seasons of rejoicing when the sun began to return from the winter solstice. Egyptians had two festivals of this kind—one on the 25th day of December to commemorate the birthday of the infant "Horus" (the new-born sun of the year), the other the 6th

of January (old Christmas Day), to rejoice over the lost Osiris found. Persians kept a festival on the 25th of December in honour of Mithra (*the attendant spirit of the sun*). The same day was kept in Rome as the commencement of the famous Saturnalia, when all distinctions of rank were abolished, and the earth was typically filled with abundance.

"On this day (centuries before the Christian era), relatives and friends feasted each other, and interchanged presents. In the 'Saturnalia' of ancient Rome, the 25th of December, or first day of the festival, was celebrated under the name of *Dies Natalis Invicti Solis*, 'the birthday of the invincible sun.'

"It is not definitely known at what season of the year the Christ whom Christians worship was born" (a remarkable proof that Christians have no direct intercourse with "their Saviour," seeing what eternal consequences they attribute to the day); "certain it is, that the 25th day of December was not held sacred by Christians, nor observed as the birthday of Christ, until after the fourth century. . . .

"Manicheans and other heretical sects reproached the Catholics for observing *the birthday of the heathen's sun god*, as that of their Lord and Saviour!" Leo, the Roman Patriarch in the fifth century, complains of this custom, and says, with remarkable prophetic insight, that "the day may come when the world may begin to deny that there ever was any other Saviour of the world than the idol of the heathen's worship, the sun god." . . . Prophetic words, now more than half realized. Devout, bigoted, and interested upholders of the modern Christian scheme of salvation will contend with all the virulence of sarcasm, violent affirmation, and even

rude abuse and sensational fire and brimstone threats, that the 25th day of December celebrates the birthday of "our Lord and Saviour," &c., &c. (For an explanation of salvation see Athanasian Creed and 39 Articles.) And yet the stony voices of the now resurrected East, the unveiled mystery of Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Ninevite slabs; the dumb, yet eloquent sculptures of India's cave temples, and the choral anthems of every Oriental tradition, proclaim, beyond all the logic of desperate partizanship or bigoted fury, that the origin of Christmas is the origin of all salvatory doctrines and Messianic faiths—namely, the eternal triumph of good over evil; light over darkness; warmth, productive life, and growth over cold, famine, and winter, in the re-ascension of the mid-winter Sun from his *crucifixion* in the autumnal equinox, and his re-birth each year, into the triumph and manhood of "Passover" at the vernal equinox, when he redeems the world from the power of physical evil, and begins to work miracles of healing, feeding the multitudes, converting the water of winter into the wine of the grape harvest, and prophesying a coming spiritual kingdom of heaven by the signs and symbols of a physical one. For further proof of the origin, meaning, and significance of Christmas, consult the writings of Volney, Dupuis, Taylor, Kneeland, Gerald Massey and his irrefutable works in especial, Higgins, Sir Wm. Jones, Maurice, Oxley, and every well-informed Eastern traveller. Be prepared to be called fool, blunderer, dunce, heretic, and ignoramus, and to have names, words, dates, and allegations of "authoritative" self-assertive scholarship launched at your head.

Bear it all patiently. Remember the history of the Ephesian worshippers of "the great Diana." Be sure now, as then, your truths are spoiling the trade in image making. Let the idolators shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" But to those who are now thinking people, not ignorant sheep, we confidently say, search, and you shall find that Christmas Day is the reflex of an old heathen festival which from the remotest periods of antiquity celebrated the annual reappearance of the sun of the physical heavens, at midwinter—"Only this—and nothing more!"

But Christmas Day has a social meaning and aspect which presents something more than a subject for ecclesiastical controversy or pedantic dispute. For at least the last eight hundred years, it has been, like the Aryan's "bon-fires," "lighted upon every high hill to celebrate the re-birth of the gracious sun"—a fire of kindness and goodwill lighted up in the hearts of humanity which expresses itself in the interchange of presents, festive entertainments, and offices of mutual goodwill.

It does not matter one jot wherein such customs originated. They are good and kindly, and that is enough. In seasons when the chilling blasts and biting frosts must pierce the ragged forms and half sheltered heads of the poor and miserable, for Heaven's sake! let us light up the Christmas fires of kindness in the human heart.

In the day when the hungry, cold, desperate, and unemployed crowd our city streets, any motor power that will supply soup kitchens, light Yule logs, give little silver boxes to faithful toilers; spread huge tables with meat and bread for half-starved children and aged incapables; give comfortable teas to the old folks, and a temporary gleam of joy and festivity to the comfortless, anywhere or anyhow, is a divine motor; comes straight from the Father of all, who delegates the care of his helpless ones to the fathers of earth, and realizes the true meaning of Christmas Day—namely, “Peace on earth and goodwill to men”—in so full and gracious a measure, that every creature on earth can afford to say: All hail, season of love, hope, kindness, and goodwill! All hail to the day and hour which unlocks the springs of human brotherhood in the hearts sealed up by the locks and keys of care and selfishness all the rest of the year! All hail to the season when every man, woman, and child suddenly feels the impulse to become a ministering angel to some other man, woman, or child! Don't stop, kind messengers of the generous “Santa Claus,” to philosophize on whence your irresistible tendencies to good and charitable acts come from! You know they must spring from the source of all good, and is not that enough? All that makes for love and righteousness makes for Heaven and God. You are in the right path, though the fire worshippers of ten thousand years ago may have been the first to beat it down for you. And so, “Onward and Upward” is the motto of the time, whilst the combined echoes of the Two Worlds—both here and hereafter—unite in the cry,

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL!

SPIRITUALISM, TRUTH, AND DEMONOLOGY.

If the following paper had not appeared in that most veracious of all journals, *The Christian Herald*, of November the 30th of this present year, we should have hesitated to reprint it, feeling confident that the sceptical reader would inevitably deem such an article a mere *ruse* to advertise the truth of spiritualism by the sham of pretended antagonism.

Appearing as above stated in a paper, every line of which must partake of that flavour of divine authority, which the word *Christian* carries with it, all we can say is that it *must* be true—for has not a Christian writer said it? The only question to those who may not be on quite such familiar terms with “Satan” and his peculiar tactics as the writer, is, Where does the demonology come in? The article is as follows:—

SPIRITUALISM SHOWN IN PROPHECY TO BE DEMONOLOGY.

(By a Round-the-World Traveller.)

There is nothing which secures the sympathy and support of the superstitious to such an extent as supernatural phenomena. There is nothing which fosters fanaticism so completely as the opportunity for exciting the imagination and wonder like spiritualism, which is clearly foretold in Timothy and Revelations to be the work of demons (Rev. xvi. 13).

Whilst we deplore the existence of demonology, it is impossible to deny the existence of the real phenomena; and independent of the unquestionable testimony given to its existence by the greatest of men, we may base the strongest proofs on Scripture, for we know it would not expressly forbid what is not possible. Upon this prohibitory law we may build every objection, and denounce this diabolical system of communion with demons, who doubtless personate departed spirits. The testimony of Mr. Theobald is a dangerous one, especially as he is a gentleman who stands high in society. This is what makes the system more dangerous, because the demons succeed in deceiving the best men of our day, and if it should be openly practised by the millions who have intercourse in secret, the admission of the spirits would revolutionise society—the world. If, as Mr. Theobald shows conclusively is possible, the spirits are allowed to step in and operate against natural and known laws, they will convert the world into a veritable Babel.

The writer heard somewhat of the phenomena before leaving England five years ago, but laughed then at what he deemed absurdities. In Australia I first saw the workings of the phenomena, and knew that there was

COMMUNION WITH THE SPIRIT WORLD.

I was staying at an up-country town in New South Wales, where the majority of the population were spiritualists, the town being of fair size. A circle was held in the hotel where I was staying, and being invited to test the truth of the phenomena, I acceded to the request. *No one knew me*, yet at the circle a spirit message was received with the name, address, and designation of the person with whom I should lodge on my return to Sydney. I proved the truth of it, for the first house I went to (not even knowing the name of the street) proved to be the one predicted. After that I saw no more of spiritualism for fifteen months, but crossed to San Francisco, where I had one of the most remarkable experiences of my whole life. I went to a private *séance*-sitting, with a very near relative. The medium with whom we were to consult was a lady, and of course we had arranged some of the most severe tests we could think of. A piano was played softly in the adjoining room, and as we sat at a little table without cover to it, the medium suddenly became very radiant. I may state that we were in a strange city, where it was quite impossible for any one to know us. *Seven thousand miles from Australia, and nearly 7,000 from England—14,000 from our friends.* Quite suddenly, the medium raised her hands, and said,

“OH! HERE COMES A BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT, and his name is Charlie.” I did not speak for the moment, but knew who it was. I had sat up with a young man who was dying, on the voyage from England to Australia. He was a spiritualist, and he died with the belief that he would be able to keep near me, and guard me. “He plays upon the violin so sweetly,” said the medium. He had been very fond of that instrument. “He says he will always be near you.” He had told me this before he died.

The medium then announced departed friends, of whom we had not thought for years. The spirits described, through the medium, what our friends were doing in England. She also showed what were the ailments of some, and the spirits showed sectional views of their bodies in order to do this, *as well as impressing the medium by making her suffer their pains.* The many tests were wonderfully proved, and it is unnecessary to enumerate them. Another medium whom I visited proved all by corroboration. The most remarkable test came. The medium described accurately what my friend was doing at the hotel whilst we were sitting together. *On returning to the room I astonished him by telling him what he had been doing.* He said it was described correctly in every detail. I may say that during the tests I tried in every way to upset them. I pretended not to hear answers to written or mental questions, and the spirits gave great manifestations of anger on the plain, uncovered table. Since then the writer has seen

THE SPIRIT FORMS OF DEPARTED FRIENDS,

the truth being established by others attesting their presence by seeing them simultaneously. Fortunately, the writer has been permitted to test only, and then escape any further connection. That the phenomena is undesirable, that it is spreading in the Church and the world I can attest, and fully corroborate all that Mr. Christmas stated in this journal some weeks since. The great danger now is for us to deny the phenomena. We must not do this, but warn the unwary and show them that the development is one of the signs of the last days, when many shall “wax cold,” and will be “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”

God, in His written Word, forbids intercourse with the spirits—that is the line that is drawn. It is fortunate for the Church of Christ that it is ordered so by an All-wise Father, for there is an element in spiritualistic phenomena which perverts truth, as all truthful investigators must testify. In this case our religion forbids us to tamper with that which has such an awful element of lying and deceit in it, and which is only traceable to Satanic influence. Our homes must not be invaded, our affections must remain unsullied. We must not dive into the supernatural, or delve into a mine which will breed foul intellectual gases. Our religious and intellectual life will be crushed, and the nation crippled, if we do not warn those around of Satan's stealthy approaches. No safeguard Davy lamp exists to guide us amid the sulphureous choke-damp caverns of the dark mine of spiritualism. Till the Divine injunction is received, “Come up higher,” let us rest in peace and content to know that God is, Christ died, and that He hath promised us a rich hereafter, whither our loved ones are gone, and not seek presumptuously to hold intercourse with spirits of the dead,

[Again—GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!!]

PASSING EVENTS.

NEW YEAR NUMBER.—We intend making our first issue (Dec. 30) at the reduced price of one penny per copy specially interesting. Amongst other features of value there will be "The Story of Hinzelmänn," the wonderful house spirit of Hudemühlen; an account of marvellous Materializations in Manchester, and Poetry for recitation, by Lyceum children; "Jim Lane's Last Message." It will be specially suitable for distribution. Just such a copy as can be freely sent to your friends and distributed broadcast. One hundred copies for 6s.; fifty for 3s. Order early.

Early in the New Year we shall give reports of the lectures of as many English mediums as possible, besides introducing new features of general interest, including a complete reply, by Mrs. Britten, to a lecture by the Rev. A. Parker, delivered in Colne, December 11th.

There is quite a stir at Wisbech about spiritualism. A few months since a lecture was delivered against the subject, and a correspondence commenced in the local paper. Mr. E. Wallis challenged the lecturer to debate. He, however, declined. Since then, Mr. Wallis visited us and gave two lectures, and a society was formed to continue the work. The meetings have been conducted successfully by the local mediums and workers. A Baptist minister has told his members that he has had some remarkable manifestations. The Wesleyans are lecturing on the subject, and speaking in its favour. These ministerial brethren must be on Spurgeon's "down grade"—in reality, the "up grade," for they are keeping abreast with the times.

ONE WAY TO HELP.—An active worker writes, "I have made arrangements with the bill posting company to post two of the contents bills every week in the prominent places in the town," and hopes *The Two Worlds* will be a success. Our success would soon be put beyond doubt if such energetic efforts as our friend displays were adopted elsewhere.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.—Such is the keen interest now existing in spiritual and occult subjects, that there is an eager demand for literature dealing with these questions. There is nothing better than *The Two Worlds*, of which a spiritualist of more than 30 years writes, "It is the best spiritual paper ever published in this country," an opinion which is being expressed on all sides. We aim to produce a good, readable, and creditable paper, and are assured of success. Will our readers kindly co-operate with us to their utmost, to secure for it a circulation of 20,000 copies weekly? We mean to reach that number! Many spiritualists by selling *The Two Worlds* can earn a comfortable addition to their incomes (see our terms to agents and societies), and by pushing the sales, promote the spread of the cause they have at heart. Everybody will buy a penny paper. The cry has been "We want a penny paper in the movement." Let us see "how much it is wanted," friends. Who will aid us to push it before the public? Buy it for yourself and an extra copy to give away, and get your friends to do likewise.

A MODERN SCHOOL OF PROPHETS.—The article in No. 5 of this journal, headed "Clairvoyance on the Public Platform," has called forth a number of intelligent communications from various correspondents, all of whom unite in the expression of their earnest wish either to see the partial tests now being given, confined to the séance room, or else enlarged into more definite and satisfactory methods of description. In the meantime these writers have suggested the expediency of endeavouring to promote the better unfoldment of spiritual gifts in partially-developed mediums by means of careful and appropriate training. One of our correspondents, in particular, sends an able and practical synopsis of the order in which there might be organised an efficient college or school for the culture of spiritual powers, and the promotion of those intellectual and moral tendencies so essential to the influence and character of the good medium. Whilst we are not at liberty to refer directly to the personality of our correspondent, we deem his plans of so thoroughly practical a nature, and their tendency of such incalculable benefit to the advancement of true and genuine mediumistic powers, that we should be disposed to publish them in some future issue, provided this notice calls forth any evidence of interest in the proposition in question.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY MR. SCHUTT, AT BELPER, ON MONDAY, DEC. 12TH.—"Is mind, matter, and thought motion in matter? or, is mind separate and distinct from matter?" The control took the latter view, and assuming Newton's law, that "matter is incapable of altering its own state of rest or motion," argued that what materialists call "inertia" is nothing more than the absence of mind from matter; what they call "energy" being nothing more than what the spiritualist calls "spirit;" and what they call "force" is merely spiritual manifestation.

"What influence have the planets on the lives of men?" Every man is born under the influence of a certain planet, and upon the planet predominating at his birth depends the character of every human being. Also at those periods when the guardian planet is acted upon favourably or unfavourably by other planets, the individual will meet with toward or untoward circumstances in the struggle of life. Wise men, however, study their planet and its configurations, and rule them instead of being ruled.

"Are oratorios compiled in spirit life and given through human instrumentality?" Yes, decidedly. Mozart's Requiem, composed at the order of an unknown visitor only shortly before his death, was a beautiful instance of inspiration from the spirit world. Rousseau's Dream was given by a spirit, who, from a caprice of fun, appeared to Rousseau in the form which popular superstition ascribes to his Satanic majesty. Only those whose musical faculties are very highly developed are capable of being made the mediums of sublime musical thoughts, hence great composers are so by virtue of their own superiority as well as by spirit aid.

"Can you describe the sphere in which you dwell, and the occupations which obtain, and how you communicate with each other?" Ours is the sphere of labour. Each spirit passes into the sphere most congenial to its tastes and employments upon earth. Those who love

children pass into the sphere of love and sympathy; those who love knowledge into the sphere of wisdom; those who are selfish and avaricious into a dark, low sphere, almost destitute of spiritual life. Those who would rise must do so by ministering to the good of others, who require sympathy and help.

"Are not shipwrecks, cyclones, and earthquakes positive evils? If not, what are they?" Cyclones are the consequence of those very atmospheric motions, without which, life would become impossible. Earthquakes are mere safety valves, without which, the internal heat of the earth would burst its entire crust. How then could man live if cyclones and earthquakes were absent?

"Can you tell us the best way of investigating spiritualism?" Yes. Purify your own minds from unholy thoughts and wrong desires, then perhaps unknown to yourselves the spirit world will fill your minds with that which is lofty and pure; but do not come to the spirit-circle with selfish hearts and prejudiced minds, expecting manifestations when you yourselves are creating bad conditions.

"What is the difference between the sorcery and witchcraft condemned in the Bible and the spirit communion which is allowed and commended?" Precisely the same difference as at the present day, a matter of motive. Information sought in order to give its possessor an unfair chance in the struggle of life is now, as then, "Black Magic;" but the seeking of information and help from a pure motive, in order to make its possessor higher in spiritual life is the spirit communion always to be commended—it is real prayer.

"Please consider the chief objections which materialists raise on this subject." The control argued very ably that in denying the proofs which were given of spiritual existence the materialist made it impossible to prove his own existence, as the existence of matter is only known to us by our senses, and if they are subject to illusions, all the indications of the presence of the materialist himself may be illusions.—*Cor.*

HOLIDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

IDLE. 2, Back Lane.—On Saturday, December 24th, there will be a Public Tea and Entertainment, also a Christmas Tree and Sale of Work, the object being to raise funds towards a larger building. The committee make an earnest appeal to all friends to help them in this work. All who wish to assist either in money or gifts will oblige by forwarding the same to Charles Brook, corresponding sec., 11, Wood Street, Bradford Arms, Shipley, which will be thankfully received.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. Tea and Concert.—The Executive of the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society, respectfully intimate to all sympathisers in the cause, that a grand tea and concert will be held at Cordwainers' Hall, on Dec. 26th (day after Christmas Day). Tea on tables at 4-30, concert at 7-30; tickets 1s. each, can be had of any of the Committee. As this is intended to be a thorough re-union of the friends, an early application for tickets will be desirable. All friends who feel moved to contribute either a table, half table, or to any extent, will oblige by intimating the same to the Secretary, W. H. Robinson.

FELLING-ON-TYNE.—Saturday, December 24th, tea and entertainment in our hall; tea on the table at 5 p.m. After tea there will be a programme of songs, recitations, &c. We give a cordial invitation to all lovers of truth who will come and help us, particularly our Gateshead, Newcastle, and Shields friends. Tea and entertainment, ninepence.

SOUTH SHIELDS. 19, Cambridge Street.—On Saturday, Dec. 24th, we intend holding a Social Meeting and Stall of fancy goods. All friends of the cause wishing to purchase toys or Christmas presents can be supplied cheaply. Commence at 7-30. We intend holding our Annual Tea and Concert, at which will appear the Mississippi Minstrels, on Monday, December 26th. Tea on the tables at four o'clock. Admission: Tea and Concert, one shilling; Concert, sixpence. To commence at 7 p.m.

OPENSHAW. Mechanics' Institute, Pottery Lane.—On Bank Holiday December 26th, we purpose giving our annual Christmas tea to the aged people of this district, when all who can make it convenient are specially invited to attend. Friends' tickets, one shilling each. A first class entertainment will be provided for the old people. On New Year's Eve, our annual tea party and ball will take place, tickets one shilling each, and the number is strictly limited.—*G. T. Page.*

BELPER.—On Saturday, the 24th instant, the members of the Lyceum will partake of tea at 4-30 p.m. After tea, amusements. On Tuesday, the 27th instant, there will be a public tea in the Jubilee Hall, at five o'clock. Tickets sixpence each. In the evening a mixed entertainment will be given, consisting of music, songs, recitations, &c. Front seats, 6d.; back seats, 3d. Proceeds for the choir fund. Friends are invited to spend a pleasant evening.

OPENING SERVICES.—At Dewsbury, on Christmas Day, Mr. Holdsworth, of Keighley, with Miss Caswell, of Dewsbury, will occupy the platform at 2-30 and 6-0 p.m., at our meeting rooms, Vulcan Road. We hope all friends will rally round us, and give us their practical sympathy.—*P. Green.*

MIDDLESBROUGH.—The Executive of the Middlesbrough Association of Spiritualists intimate that a grand tea and concert will be held in the Granville Rooms, Newport Road, on January 2, 1888 (day after New Year's Day). Tea on the tables from 5 to 6-30. Concert at 7-30. Tickets 9d. each.

WESTHOUGHTON.—We hold our annual tea party on Saturday, Dec. 31st. Tickets: Males 8d., females 6d., children 4d. After tea the meeting will consist of singing, reciting, &c. We give all friends a hearty welcome.—*J. Pilkington, Sec.*

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENTS.—Darwen, Dec. 26th. Manchester, Jan. 2nd. Liverpool, Jan. 3rd, tea party. Liverpool, Jan. 4th, Old Folks. West Vale, fruit banquet, Dec. 31st. Cowms, tea party, Dec. 31st. Macclesfield, tea party, Jan. 4th. Bradford, Upper Addison Street, Dec. 26th. Miles Platting, tea party, Dec. 24th. (See reports.)

LEEDS. Psychological Hall, Grove House Lane.—On Monday, Dec. 26th, we have arranged for a public tea and entertainment, the proceeds to go to the society's debt fund—tea at 5 o'clock, entertainment at 8 p.m. Tickets, tea and entertainment, 1s. each; children under twelve, half price; entertainment only, 3d. each. All friends of spiritualism, whether members or not, will receive a cordial welcome; a special effort will be made to make this tea and entertainment both enjoyable and successful, and we hope our friends will rally round us.—*H. Midgley.*

LANCASTER—Special services on Sunday next, December 25th. Mr. Swindlehurst will deliver two inspirational addresses. Doors open at two and six o'clock p.m. On Monday, December 26th, the annual public tea party and entertainment will be held, tea on the tables at five o'clock. Tickets for tea and entertainment one shilling each, children half-price; entertainment alone, threepence, to be had at the hall, or from any of the members. An early application for tickets is requested. On New Year's Day, January 1st, Mr. Hepworth, of Leeds, will deliver two trance addresses. Doors open at two and six o'clock p.m. Collections taken at the door.

OSWALDTWISTLE.—The committee have pleasure in announcing that they will hold their annual tea party on December 26th. Tea on the tables at five o'clock. All are welcome.—*W. H., Sec.*

NOTTINGHAM.—Friends are requested to remember the annual tea and entertainment on Monday, December 26th, at 4-30. Tickets 9d. each. Front room in the Morley Hall. Sale of work for the benefit of society's funds. Come, and bring your friends to buy the many useful articles.—*J. W. B.*

WEST PELTON.—On Dec. 24th a Christmas tree, decorated with wearing apparel for women and children, also toys and various other articles, will be offered for sale. The ladies have worked very hard to get the arrangements perfected, for which great credit is due to them. Mr. J. G. Grey will give a lecture at 6 p.m., after which supper will be served at 7-30. Admission to the whole, 1s.; children under twelve, 6d. A cordial invitation to all.—*T. Waddle.*

NORTH SHIELDS. 6, Camden Street.—A coffee supper and social will be held on Monday, December 26th, and we heartily invite all the friends in the district to come and assist on this occasion. Tickets 1s. each.

BRADFORD. Addison Street, Dec. 26th.—Tea and entertainment, consisting of songs, duets, readings, recitations, and a dialogue by seven friends of the cause, entitled "Wanting a Wife;" piano solos, &c. Tea at 5 o'clock. Tickets, adults 9d., children 4d. each; after tea, 3d. each.—*J. H. Smith.*

The Sheffield Spiritual Society are removing this week from 82 Division Street to the Central Board School, Orchard Lane.

LATE REPORTS.—Owing to the numerous holiday announcements we regret that reports received from Monkwearmouth, Stonehouse, Pendleton, South Shields (Cambridge Street), Belper (W. P. Adshedd), Walsall, Rawtenstall, and Salford, have been crowded out; all of these came to hand after mid-day on Tuesday. We do our best for you, friends, but cannot promise to insert reports which do not reach us before noon on Tuesdays.

List of Speakers' Appointments next week; also list of agents who sell *The Two Worlds*. We shall be glad of other names and addresses of agents (whether newsagents or not) for this list.

NOTICE TO AGENTS.—Please use halfpenny stamps when remitting, and oblige.—*E. W. W.*

CHRONICLE OF SOCIETARY WORK.

BACUP.—On Sunday last Miss M. A. Musgrave gave two very interesting addresses on "Spiritualism and the Work of the Spirits in the Spheres" to very attentive audiences.—*Abraham Howorth, Sec.*

BELPER. Jubilee Hall.—Dec. 11th: We had a visit from Mr. Schutt, of Keighley. Morning subject, "The Problem of Evil," which was elucidated in a very clever and practical manner. Evening subject, "The Sanctity of Labour." The control showed that all useful labour is honourable, and idleness disreputable. A human being could not be happy unless engaged in some kind of work, while idleness must bring misery. Last Sunday, Mr. W. V. Wyldes, of Birmingham, paid us his first visit, giving two addresses. In the evening, he spoke on "Ancient and Modern Spiritualism"—being, to some extent, a reply to the sermon preached by the Rev. T. Crossland, and circulated in the town. Both addresses were very good and powerful. After the evening address Mr. Wyldes gave clairvoyant descriptions, also a large number of psychometric delineations from articles sent up from the audience, all of which were correct. We were very pleased with his visit, and hope to have him again soon. The hall was full, although it was a very wintery night. In the afternoon, Mr. Wyldes kindly gave a quarter of an hour to the Lyceum, being controlled by a spirit who lived on the Congo River when in this life, which delighted the young folks very much.—*H. Smedley.*

BERMONDSEY.—Mrs. Spring gave a discourse on subject selected, "Spirit Experience after leaving Earthly Body;" concluding with clairvoyant descriptions.

BRADFORD. Spiritual Lyceum, Addison Street.—In the absence of Miss Patefield, owing to her parents' sickness, Miss Illingworth kindly officiated, and spoke very well to a very fair audience, followed by Miss Parker's clairvoyant descriptions, mostly recognised. A very good influence prevailed during the meeting.—*Cor.*

BURNLEY. Spiritual Hall, Tanner Street.—Mrs. Craven was the speaker for the day. Afternoon subject: "Go ye into the highways and hedges, and preach the Gospel to every creature," which was treated in a masterly style. The following questions were dealt with in the evening: What are mediums, and how are we to know when influenced by the spirit? The effects of influence on mediums? If the spiritual and natural worlds are governed by natural law, what is the use of prayer? A splendid discourse was given on these three subjects.

COLNE.—Mrs. Wallis gave two lectures on Sunday afternoon and evening. Subjects: afternoon, "Spiritualism Reasonable and True." Evening, "Some Objections to Spiritualism Considered and Answered;" being a most able reply to the lectures of the Revs. T. Ashcroft and A. Parker, which had been delivered in Colne during the week. The audiences listened with most rapt attention, and seemed to highly appreciate the discourses.—*R. H.* [Mr. J. R. Lees, of London, replied to Rev. T. Ashcroft on Monday and Tuesday. A complete answer to Rev. A. Parker's lecture will shortly appear in these columns, written by Mrs. Britten.—*E. W. W.*]

COWMS.—December 18th: Miss Cowling occupied our platform on Sunday last. Subject—Afternoon, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul;" Evening, "The Outer World." Clairvoyant descriptions given very successfully. We have arranged for a public tea party to be held in the Lepton Board School, on December 31st. Mrs. Clegg will give phrenological delineations and spiritual surroundings. Tickets, 8d. each.—*A. Whitfield.*

CROMFORD AND HIGH PEAK.—Tuesday, 13: Mr. Schutt visited us, and a pleasant instructive evening was spent. The general opinion was that such addresses were matter for elevation, and we regretted no public hall was to be had. We believe many would attend our meetings who are kept back because they are held in private dwellings, but the ground must be broken up by degrees. Sunday, 13: Our meetings were fairly attended, considering the weather and the distance our members reside apart. Morning: "Man, Perfect and Imperfect." Evening: "Higher Culture of Spiritual Thought."—*Cor.*

DARWEN.—The controls of Mr. Mayo gave two good addresses to very fair audiences. On the 24th we hold our Christmas tea party, which we are expecting to be a success, as we have a good programme. On the 26th we hold our children's tea party.—*E. Lord.*

FELLING.—Our platform was occupied by Mr. James Hall, who gave us a lecture from the subject, "Spiritualism, the Wonder of the Age," which was very well received by a fairly good audience.—*G. L.*

HALIFAX.—We had Mr. Postlethwaite last Sunday. He spoke in his usual clear and forcible way. Evening, he took for his subject the chapter read as a lesson, about the woman of Endor describing Samuel, &c., which was handled very well. Our audience was very thin. He also spoke on Monday, 29th, to a good audience.—*S. J.*

HEYWOOD. Argyle Building.—On Sunday afternoon Mr. Wright's controls spoke on "Where are the Dead?" In the evening they took for their subject "Natural and Revealed Religion." In the course of an excellent and instructive address they clearly demonstrated that the so-called Christianity was simply an adaption of the mythology of the ancient pagans, derived from the study and observation of the astronomical signs and constellations of the heavens.—*E. H. D.*

HUDDERSFIELD. Assembly Rooms, Brook Street. Mrs. Groom has rendered valuable service to our cause, providing two most excellent and practical addresses upon "Individual Spirit," and "Spiritualism," concluding with remarkably successful spirit descriptions, giving about twenty at each service, and all were recognised. Notwithstanding the wintry weather, we had a large audience at night.—*J. B.*

HUDDERSFIELD. Kaye's Buildings.—Mr. Johnson occupied our platform to-day. Afternoon, questions were submitted to the guides and most ably answered, especially one on education, it was a storehouse of information in itself; and I should like to suggest, on behalf of my fellow-workers in the spiritual cause, that the guides of Mr. Johnson give the same through the Yorkshire district. Evening, the congregation was highly satisfied with the able manner in which he dealt with his subjects.—*J. Haring, Cor. Sec.*

LEEDS. Spiritual Institute. Miss Pickles gave two very nice addresses. In the afternoon the subjects were "What shall I do to gain Eternal Life?" and "Who is my Neighbour?" In the evening, the subject was "Home," and some very good advice was given for both young and old.—*J. W. T., Sec.*

LEEDS. Psychological Hall.—Miss Wilson, of Keighley, was our appointed speaker, but wrote at the last moment saying she had to attend a funeral and could not come. As we could not obtain a speaker for the afternoon service, we held a large open circle. After some lively singing, our president, Mr. Eddison, answered a number of questions, and, for the benefit of our stranger friends present, he explained the various modes of communication with the spirit world. In the evening we obtained the services of one of our old members, Mrs. Dickenson, who delivered an able discourse from the subject of the hymn we had sung, viz., "Spiritual Worship," and the meeting concluded with clairvoyant descriptions which were mostly successful.

LIVERPOOL. Daulby Hall.—Sunday morning Mr. Schutt read a paper—subject, "Evidence against an Historical Jesus, the Christ." It was well worded, and was an answer to that rev. gentleman (save the term!) who goes about making fun of the only basis for the religion he esteems. We had an interesting discussion relating to surplus population and labour-saving machinery. This is such a large subject that it could not be fully discussed in the time. Evening: A powerful exposition of spiritual gifts was given by Mr. Schutt's control, Mr. Sheldon. The subject was treated so rationally that he that hath ears should ponder over the many profound statements made. It is a pity such efforts are not reported for a larger audience than a wet day produces. On Monday night the same speakers spoke to written subjects. Next Sunday, open meeting in the morning, and at 6-30 Mr. Lamont. On January 3rd we are having our annual tea party and concert, and the following day we intend giving a tea party and concert to 200 *old folks*. They so thoroughly enjoy our catering. Inquiries are constantly made as to when it will be repeated. The times are healthy when a live Bishop (of Manchester) advocates co-operation and land reform!

[We intend to obtain reports of lectures by English mediums and print them in our columns early in the new year.—*E. W. W.*]

MACCLESFIELD. Paradise Street Free Church.—Mr. J. Walsh gave two excellent discourses in the above place of worship. The audiences were somewhat smaller than usual, owing, no doubt, to the extremely inclement weather. The Lyceum held a successful session in the morning, at which six recitations and a solo were given by members. We must not omit the visit of our dear friend Mrs. Groom on Monday and Tuesday, 12th and 13th inst. The lectures given through her were, as usual, excellent, and the descriptions were recognised with one exception. We purpose holding our annual tea party and entertainment on January 4th.—*L. R.*

MANCHESTER. Co-operative Assembly Room.—Mr. E. W. Wallis was our speaker. The morning was devoted to questions and answers. Evening, two subjects chosen by the audience were dealt with. The one subject, "What is the Origin of Spiritualism?" was dealt with at great length and in a manner that seemed to give great satisfaction to all. We had a fair attendance considering the state of the weather. Our president, Mr. G. Hill, presided. Our annual tea party and entertainment will take place on Monday, January 2nd, 1888, when all are invited to attend and help us.—*W. Hyde, Cor. Sec.* The Bazaar Committee beg to acknowledge the following articles, &c.: A Pendleton Lady, 5s., and a parcel of fancy goods, also six yards dress material; Mrs. and Miss Mosley, five cloths, twelve doll's hats; Mrs. Wilks, two pinafores, six tidies, baby's hood and sash, two pairs baby's shoes; Mrs. E. W. Wallis, six lace pinafores; Mr. Wallis, parcel of various spiritualistic publications; Dr. Younger kindly sent four books on mesmerism and massage, &c.; Mrs. T. Cheetham, polished fender and ashpan; W. Hill, of Wisbech, large hamper of plants; Mr. Whithouse, one barrel of grapes; Mr. S. Cockerell, one hundred oranges; Mrs. Smith, fancy pincushion elephant, wool slippers; Miss Chesterton, two fancy pinafores; Mrs. and Miss Hyde, two wool antimacassars, four lady's companions, two pairs of socks; Miss Paddock, baby's socks; Mrs. Ward, two antimacassars; Mrs. Groom, four antimacassars; Mrs. Wilkerson, parcel of fancy toys; A new Friend, pair of fancy beaded cuffs; a Lady and Gentleman, one sterling silver necklet, pair of mats and pincushion. Mrs. Hill tenders her best thanks to all the ladies and gentlemen who so kindly assisted to make the Bazaar a success. The nett proceeds will be published in our next issue.—*Mrs. George Hill, 92, Brunswick Street, Ardwick Green, Manchester.*

MEXBOROUGH.—We had a grand day on Sunday. Mr. George Featherstone was with us, and his guides spoke, in the afternoon, on a subject chosen by the audience, "General Punishment," which was dealt with in a very able manner. The friends were evidently satisfied, as they had not a question to ask at the close. Evening subject, chosen by the audience, "Is Spiritualism qualified to meet the Requirements of the Future?" Progression was shown on this point to bring to the mind that as we come down the stream of time, new ideas came into existence, and the teaching was that men had arrived at such an age of enlightenment that the old book was beginning to lose hold of them and instead of the cramping, curbing, and soul-tying system of theology, spiritualism steps to the front, and offers light and liberty which will serve men in all ages.—*W. Warren.*

MIDDLESBROUGH.—Morning: At the Granville Rooms, Mr. Lashbrook, of Newcastle, gave a thought-stirring and far-reaching address. Subject, "Spiritualism: the Key-note of Universal Harmony." He said spiritualism was (1) the union of the two worlds—the seen and the unseen; (2) a fuller revelation to man concerning the life that now is, and the life which is to come; (3) the angel of eternal progress; (4) the answer to the question—"If a man die, shall he live again?" Evening: At the Cleveland Hall, Mr. Lashbrook spoke on "Spiritualism, or my Defence," which was another soul-stirring discourse.—*J. Corby.*

MILES PLATTING.—The guides of Mr. Ormrod took for the afternoon subject that beautiful passage "Where two or three are gathered together in my name I am in their midst." In the evening, they discoursed on "The Condition of Man in the Present and Future State," showing the absurdity of the Church upholding the unjust doctrine, which is fast losing ground, of eternal punishment.—*J. H. Horrocks.*

MONKWEARMOUTH.—The Lyceum was well attended by children and visitors. Many of the children responded to the call for recitations; two little ones under five years sang very nicely. The children of the Lyceum will give a concert in aid of the Sunderland Temperance Society, on Thursday. I believe that it is the first time that any Lyceum has rendered anything outside of spiritualism. The children's tea will be held on Monday next. All are invited. Tickets 6d. each.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. Cordwainers' Hall, Nelson Street.—Mr. R. J. Lees, of London, occupied our platform in the morning; the subject "Come up Higher" was the theme. In the afternoon Mr. Lees, by his control, gave an admirable address to the children of the Lyceum, and in the evening a crowded meeting heard him deliver a soul-stirring address; "Who was Jesus Christ?" being the subject. Besides lecturing, Mr. Lees has done an enormous amount of good work in healing during his short stay, and I hope to gather together accounts of some of the remarkable cures effected by him for next issue of *The Two Worlds*.—*B. H.*

NORTH LONDON. Wellington Hall.—Mr. Taylor gave an intellectual discourse upon the "Nature and Quality of that Power called God," but which the lecturer preferred to call spiritual energy. The word God, he held, was meaningless, and ought to be no longer used. In the animated discussion which followed, many contended that the old word God was the best name to apply to the force which is acknowledged to exist behind the works of Nature. The attendance was smaller than usual, owing, no doubt, to the inclemency of the weather. Messrs. Mc.Kenzie and Towns are our speakers on Christmas Day.—*W. P.*

NOTTINGHAM. Morley Hall, Shakespeare Street.—Our glorious cause was ably advocated by the controls of Mrs. Barnes. A visitor asked for the 53rd chapter of Isaiah for a subject. It was shown how illogical it was to make these words appear to be (as is claimed for them) a prophecy relating to Jesus. In the chapter was a record of the experience of all such who were "led of the spirit." The evening address, on "The Hope of the Creeds compared with the Knowledge of the Spiritualists," was a spiritual treat. The controls dealt with the subject in a manner that not only interested the listener, but stirred the depths of the soul by its earnest and eloquent defence of our mighty truth.

NOTTING HILL. 33, Kensington Park Road.—On Sunday we had a crowded room to welcome Mr. J. Burns' first visit to our association. The subject for consideration was Phrenology, with delineations. Twelve persons were delineated, whose characters were utilized as texts for short spiritual addresses, bearing especially upon man's spiritual development and unfoldment. Mr. Matthews also described the spiritual surroundings, and symbols of the persons examined, thus making the gathering a very educational success. No meeting next Sunday, it being Christmas.

OLDHAM. Spiritual Temple.—On Tuesday, the 13th inst., we had the pleasure of a visit and benefit-lecture from Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, the entire proceeds of which were given towards defraying the debt on our building. According to promise from Mrs. Britten we had advertised her lecture to be on "New Zealand," with lime-light illustrations; but Dr. Britten's sudden and severe indisposition prevented the fulfilment of this arrangement; and by vote of the audience assembled, Mrs. Britten gave as her subject "The Cause and Cure of Crime and Poverty." The profound attention paid to the lecture, the frequent bursts of applause, and the vote of thanks at the close, carried by warm and long-continued acclamation, formed the best proofs of how deeply the words uttered touched the brains and hearts of all present. We had an excellent collection, including the return of all the tickets sold for the New Zealand lecture, which Mrs. Britten suggested should be put in the contribution boxes, as an investment in "the bank of Providence."—*Cor.*

OPENSHAW.—Mr. S. Carline occupied our platform, and in the morning spoke on "Physics," and in the evening on "Metaphysics." The lectures were well received by fair audiences, the very inclement weather no doubt having a detrimental effect on our attendance. Mr. Carline intends to follow on a series of lectures relating to body and soul, which we hope will do much good.—*G. T. Page.*

SOUTH LONDON. Winchester Hall, Peckham.—Mrs. Yeeles occupied our platform, devoting the morning to answering questions submitted by the audience. The few clairvoyant descriptions given at the close of the meeting were not so successful as is usual with this lady. We had a pleasant surprise at the evening service, as Mrs. Yeeles, in her normal condition, gave an account of "How I became a Spiritualist," narrating many astounding incidents in connection with her investigation and development, the audience evincing great interest in the subject, and applauding at the close. Questions were replied to in a satisfactory manner. A watch-night service will be held at the Society's Rooms, 99, Hill Street, on New-Year's Eve, at 10-30.—*N. E. Long.*

SOUTH SHIELDS. 4, Lee Street.—Dec. 14: Mr. Foster's guides gave clairvoyant descriptions. Dec. 18: Mrs. Peters' guides gave 32 clairvoyant descriptions, all but seven recognised. We are looking forward to another visit from Mrs. Peters.

TYLDESLEY.—We had the pleasure of having Miss Jones another week. On Monday, December 12th, she gave a beautiful discourse, followed by psychometric delineations and clairvoyant descriptions, which closed a most enjoyable evening. December 18th, Miss Jones gave a discourse from the words "Oh think of the home over there." In the evening she spoke on "Spiritualism and its Mission," which was well received by a good audience. Both meetings were closed with psychometric delineations, "all true," and clairvoyant descriptions, mostly recognised. In the Liberal Club, on December 11th, Miss Jones named a child Lily, and the way she performed the ceremony filled the audience with wonder. This lady's visit has been the means of convincing many, and we hope the time is not far distant when we can have her again in this little town.—*G. A. Woolley.*

WESTHOUGHTON.—We had Mr. J. T. Standish with us. Afternoon subject, "Does Spiritualism Teach Love?" In the evening no subject was taken, as it was spent in psychometry and clairvoyance, diseases being well delineated and prescribed for. Our committee are anxious that all who are desirous of spreading the cause broadcast, for hospitality and expenses, will kindly communicate with the Secretary.

WEST VALE. Mechanics' Hall.—Mrs. Britten delivered addresses, afternoon and evening, to very good audiences, considering the inclement weather. Afternoon subject, "Ancient and Modern Miracles;" evening, "Spiritualism, the Reformed Religion and Science of the Age." Both subjects were handled in Mrs. Britten's usual style, and gave every satisfaction. We believe her visit here will be productive of much good. We intend opening our Children's Lyceum on January 1st, 1888, and go right into the teaching of spiritualism. We shall have a fruit banquet on the 31st inst. Tickets 6d., children 3d. We invite all who can come to do so on that day, and give us a help by the way.—*T. B.*

WIBSEY.—Our platform was occupied by Miss Walton, who spoke under control on "Modern Spiritualism;" illustrating the hidden talent that has been lying dormant for a long time. In the evening she again spoke on "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; seek, and ye shall find," which was very instructive.—*G. Saville.*

THE CHILDREN'S PROGRESSIVE LYCEUM.

MILES PLATTING.—We had a good attendance considering the bad weather. We had several visitors. Programme: Opening hymn, silver-chain and gold-chain recitations, marching and calisthenics. We are holding a party on Saturday, and shall go through a portion of our programme, so as to give parents and friends an opportunity of seeing how our Lyceum is carried on. Tea on the table at 5 p.m. Admission 1s. each.—*W. Crutchley, Cond.*

PARKGATE.—The Lyceum here was about to be abandoned, when a few earnest workers determined to resuscitate it. This they have done most successfully. Special services were held on December 11th and 12th to raise funds to obtain books, and interesting programmes were gone through. When in the town recently we had the opportunity of attending a rehearsal, when the little ones said and sang their pieces in first-rate style. The officers of the Lyceum showed great tact, patience, and good management, and deserve praise for their success.—*E. W. W.*

SOUTH SHIELDS.—We had a very good attendance. Programme gone through in good style.—*Cor.*

SERVICES FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1887.

Ashington Colliery.—At 5 p.m.
Bacup.—Meeting Room, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Butterfield.
Barrow-in-Furness.—82, Cavendish St., at 6-30 : Local. J. Kellett, sec.
Batley Carr.—Town St., Lyceum, at 10 and 2 ; at 6-30 : Mrs. Ingham.
Batley.—Wellington St., at 2-30 and 6.
Beeston.—Temperance Hall, at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Dickenson.
Belper.—Jubilee Hall, at 10-30 and 2 ; Lyceum, at 6-30.
Bingley.—Intelligence Hall, at 2-30 and 6.
Birmingham.—Oozells Street Schools, at 11 and 6-30.
 The Ladies' College, Ashted Row, at 11 and 6-45. Séances, Thursdays and Saturdays, at 8.
Bishop Auckland.—Temperance Hall, Gurney Villa, at 2-30 and 6-15.
Blackburn.—Exchange Hall, at 9-30 ; Lyceum, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. Wallis.
Bradford.—Spiritualist Church, Walton St., Hall Lane, Wakefield Rd., at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Green.
 Spiritual Rooms, Otley Rd., at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Craven.
 Little Horton Lane, 1, Spicer St., at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Butler.
 Milton Rooms, Westgate, at 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Macdonald.
 Upper Addison St., Hall Lane, Lyceum, at 9-45 ; 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. Collins Briggs. Monday, Tea and Entertainment.
 Bowling.—Spiritual Tabernacle, Harker St., at 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Metcalf.
Burnley.—Tanner St., Lyceum, at 9-30 ; 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Wallis.
Burslem.—15, Stanley St., Middleport, at 6-30.
Byker Bank.—Mr. Hedley's School, Elizabeth St., at 6-30.
Cardiff.—12, Mandeville St., Canton, at 7, Developing ; Tuesday, 7-30, Phenomena.
Chesterton.—Spiritualists' Hall, Castle St., at 6-30 : Local Mediums.
Colne.—Free Trade Hall, at 2-30 and 6-30.
Cowms.—Lepton Board School, at 2-30 and 6 : Miss Cowling.
Darwen.—Church Bank St., 11, Circle ; 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Yarwood.
Dewsbury.—Vulcan Rd., 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Holdsworth & Miss Caswell.
Exeter.—The Mint, at 10-45 and 6-45 : Mr. F. Parr.
Facit.—At 2-30 and 6.
Felling.—Park Rd., at 6-30 : Mr. John Wilson.
Foleshill.—Edgwick, at 10-30, Lyceum ; at 6-30 : Local Mediums.
Glasgow.—15, Kirk St., Gorbals, at 11-30 and 6-30.
Gravesend.—36, Queen St., at 6 : Mrs. Graham.
Halifax.—1, Winding Rd., at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. Hepworth, and on Monday, at 7-30.
Hanley.—Mrs. Dutton's, 41, Mollart St., at 6-30. Wednesday, at 7-30.
Haslingden.—Regent St. Coffee Tavern, at 2-30 and 6.
Heckmondwike.—Church St., at 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Armitage.
Hetton.—Co-operative Hall, Caroline St., at 2 and 6 : Local.
Heywood.—Argyle Buildings, at 2-30 and 6-15 : Mr. Ormrod.
Huddersfield.—3, Brook St., at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Gregg.
 Kaye's Buildings, Corporation St., at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Crossley.
Idle.—2, Back Lane, Lyceum at 2-30 and 6.
Keighley.—Lyceum, East Parade, at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Ingham.
 Co-operative Assembly Room, Brunswick St., at 2-30 and 6.
Lancaster.—Athenæum, St. Leonard's Gate, 2-30 and 6-30.
Leeds.—Psychological Hall, Grove House Lane, back of Brunswick Ter., at 2-30 and 6-30 : Misses Walton and Pickles.
 17, Upper Fountain St., Albion St., 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Hartley.
Leicester.—Silver St., at 11, Mr. Bent ; at 6-30, Mr. Sainsbury ; at 3, Healing. Thursday, at 8. C. W. Young, sec., 84, Norfolk St.
Liverpool.—Daulby Hall, Daulby St., London Rd., at 11, Open Meeting ; at 6-30, Mr. J. Lambert.
 At 3, Discussion.
London—Bermondsey.—Mr. Haggard's, 82, Alscot Rd., at 7.
Camden Town.—143, Kentish Town Rd., Tuesday, at 8 : Mr. Towns.
Holborn.—Mr. Collin's, 13, Kingsgate St. Wednesday, at 8.
 15, Southampton Row, Thursday, at 8, Miss Godfrey, Medical Clairvoyance.
Islington.—Wellington Hall, Upper St., at 6-30 : Messrs. McKenzie and Towns. Tuesday, 7-30, Members.
 19, Prebend St., Essex Rd.
Kentish Town Road.—Mr. Warren's, No. 245, at 7, Séance. Tuesday, 8, Mrs. Hawkins ; Thursday, 8, Séance, Mrs. Spring.
Marylebone Association.—24, Harcourt St., 11, Spiritual Teaching, at 7 : Mr. J. Hoperoff. Thursday, Séance, at 8.
New North Road.—74, Nicholas St., Tuesdays and Saturdays, at 8, Mrs. Cannon, Clairvoyance, personal messages.
Notting Hill.—33, Kensington Park Rd., at 7 : No Service. Monday, at 8 ; Tuesday, at 8 ; Thursday, Development, at 8.
Peckham.—33, High St., 11 : Mr. J. A. Butcher ; 2-30, Lyceum. 99, Hill St., Peckham : Wednesday, at 8, Séance, Mrs. Spring ; Thursday, 8, Members only ; Saturday, 10-30, Watch-Night Service.
Penge, S.E.—Goddard's, 93, Maple Rd., at 7.
Poplar, E.—9, Kerby St., at 7-30.
Regent Hotel.—31, Marylebone Rd., at 7 : Mr. J. Hoperoff.
Stepney.—Mrs. Ayers', 45, Jubilee St., Commercial Rd., at 7. Tuesday, at 8. Mediums and Spiritualists specially invited.
Walworth.—102, Camberwell Rd., at 7, Meeting : Thursday, at 8.
Lowestoft.—Daybreak Villa, Prince's St., Beccles Rd., at 2-30 and 6-30.
Macclesfield.—Free Church, Paradise St., at 2-30 and 6-30. 62, Fence St., at 2-30 and 6-30.
Manchester.—Co-operative Assembly Rooms, Downing St., London Rd., at 10-30 and 6-30 : Mr. W. Johnson.
Mexborough.—At 2-30 and 6.
Middlesbrough.—Cleveland Hall, Newport Rd., at 10-30 and 6-30 : Mr. McKellar.
 Temperance Hall, Baxter St., at 10-30 and 6-30.
Miles Platting.—William St., Varley St., 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. G. Wright
Morley.—Mission Room, Church St., at 6 : Mr. Holdsworth.
Nelson.—Victoria Hall, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. Plant.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.—20, Nelson St., at 2-30, Lyceum ; at 6-30 : Local.
North Shields.—6, Camden St., Lyceum, at 2-30 ; at 11 and 6-15.
Nottingham.—Morley House, Shakespeare St., at 10-45 and 6-30 : Mrs. Barnes.

Oldham.—Spiritual Temple, Joseph St., Union St., at 2-30 and 6.
Openshaw.—Mechanics' Institute, Pottery Lane, Lyceum at 2 ; at 10-30 and 6 : Mr. T. Postlethwaite.
Oswaldtwistle.—3, Heys, Stone Bridge Lane, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Local.
Parkgate.—Bear Tree Rd. (near bottom), at 10-30 and 6-30, Lyceum.
Pendleton.—Co-operative Hall, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mrs. Britten.
Plymouth.—Notte St., 6-30 : Mr. Burt, Trance, Mr. Leeder, Clairvoyant. Spiritual Temple, Union Place, Stonehouse, at 11 : Mr. Bibbing's Christmas Lesson ; at 6-30 : Angels' Song.
 Sailors' Welcome, Union Place, Stonehouse, at 3 : Miss Bond.
Portsmouth.—Assembly Rooms, Clarendon St., Lake Rd., Landport, 6-30.
Raustenstall.—At 10-30 ; at 2-30 : Mrs. Holden ; and 6 : Miss Maudsley.
Rochdale.—Regent Hall, 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Schutt. Thursday, 7-45. Michael St., at 2-30 and 6. Tuesday, at 7-45, Circle. 28, Blackwater St., 2-30 and 6 : Mr. J. Walsh. Wednesday, 7-30.
Salford.—48, Albion St., Windsor Bridge, 2-30 and 6-30. No services, Wednesday, at 7-45 : Mr. Pearson.
Saltash.—Mr. Williscroft's, 24, Fore St., at 6-30.
Sheffield.—Cocoa House, 175, Pond St., at 6-30.
 Central Board School, Orchard Lane, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. W. Inman.
Slaitwaite.—Laith Lane, at 2-30 and 6 : Mrs. Beanfield.
South Shields.—19, Cambridge St., at 11 and 6-30 : Mr. Westgarth. Progressive Society, 4, Lee St., Lyceum, at 2-30 ; at 11 and 6 : Mrs. Yeeles.
Sowerby Bridge.—Lyceum, Hollins Lane, at 2-30 and 6-30 : Musical Service.
Sunderland.—Back Williamson Ter., at 2-15, Lyceum ; at 11 and 6-30. Mr. Lashbrook, Wednesday, at 7-30, Clairvoyance. Monkwearmouth, 3, Ravensworth Ter., at 6.
Tunstall.—13, Rathbone St., at 6-30.
Tyldesley.—206, Elliot St., at 2-30 and 6 : Mr. Gregory.
Walsall.—Exchange Rooms, High St., at 6-30.
Westhoughton.—Spiritual Hall, Wingates, 2-30 and 6-30 : Mr. C. Wade. Thursday, 7-30.
West Pelton.—Co-operative Hall, at 10-30, Lyceum ; at 2 and 5-30.
West Vale.—Mechanics' Institute, at 2-30 and 6 : Mr. A. D. Wilson.
Wibsey.—Hardy St., at 2-30 and 6 : Miss Cowling.
Wisbech.—Lecture Room, Public Hall, at 6-45 : Local.

PROSPECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

YORKSHIRE DISTRICT SPIRITUALISTS' COMMITTEE.

PLAN OF SPEAKERS FOR JANUARY, 1888.

Corresponding Secretary, Mr. J. WHITEHEAD, 21, Airedale Sq., Bradford.
 BATLEY CARR: Town St., 6 p.m.—1, Mr. Holdsworth ; 8, Open ; 15, Mr. Hepworth ; 22, Mr. Armitage ; 29, Mrs. Connell.—Mr. J. Armitage, Sec., Stonefield House, Hanging Heaton, Dewsbury.
 BEFSTON: Temperance Hall, 2-30 and 6—1, Mr. Parker ; 8, Mrs. Bealand ; 15, Miss Cowling ; 22, Miss Hartley ; 29, Miss Patefield.—Mr. Jas. Robinson, Sec., Woods Terrace, Beeston, Leeds.
 BOWLING: Spiritual Tabernacle, Harker St., 2-30 and 6—1, Mrs. Jarvis ; 8, Mrs. Hargreaves and Mr. Thresh ; 15, Mrs. Smith ; 22, Miss Capstick ; 29, Mrs. Crowther.—Mr. H. Smith, Sec., 1, Barkerend Fold, Barkerend Rd., Bradford.
 HALIFAX: Spiritualist Institution, 1, Winding Rd., 2-30 and 6, and Monday evenings 7-30—1 and 2, Mr. Wright ; 8 and 9, Mrs. Groom ; 15, Mrs. Green, also 16 (women only) ; 22 and 23, Mrs. Gregg ; 29, Mr. Schutt, also 30 (men only). Mr. S. Jagger, Claremount, Halifax.
 HECKMONDWIKE: Church St., 2-30 and 6—1, Mrs. Dickenson ; 8, Mr. Bush ; 15, Miss Harrison ; 22, Mrs. Slater and Friend ; 29, Mr. Espley.—Mr. C. H. Clough, Sec., Butts Row, Gomersal, near Leeds.
 KEIGHLEY: Albion Hall, 2-30 and 6—1, Miss Wilson ; 8, Miss Cowling ; 15, Miss Harris and Mrs. Grimshaw ; 22, Mr. and Mrs. Carr ; 29, Mrs. Riley.—Mr. J. Wilkinson, Sec., 17, Campbell St., Keighley.
 LEEDS: Psychological Hall, Grove House Lane, Brunswick Terrace, 2-30 and 6-30—1, Open ; 8, Mr. Holmes ; 15, Mrs. Ingham ; 22, Miss Wilson ; 29, Miss Cowling.—Mr. H. Midgley, Sec., 22, Stanley View, Armley.
 LEEDS: Spiritual Institute, 23, Cookridge St., 2-30 and 6-30—1, Miss Cowling ; 8, Mr. Crowther ; 15, Mr. Espley ; 22, Local ; 29, Mr. Armitage.—Mr. J. W. Turton, Sec., 33, Glasshouse St.
 LITTLE HORTON LANE: Spiritual Temple, 1, Spicer Street, 10-30 and 6—1, Mr. Hopwood ; 8, Mr. and Mrs. Carr ; 15, Mrs. Connell ; 22, Miss Patefield ; 28 and 29, Mr. Holdsworth.—Mr. J. Parker, Sec., 681, Little Horton Lane.
 MORLEY: Spiritual Mission Room, Church St., 2-30 and 6—1, Mr. Holmes ; 8, Open ; 15, Mrs. Craven ; 22, Mr. Armitage ; 29, Mrs. Bealand.—Mr. B. H. Bradbury, Sec., 13, Scotchman Lane, Bruntcliffe, near Leeds.
 OTLEY ROAD: Spiritual Meeting Rooms, Otley Rd., Bradford, 2-30 and 6—1, Mr. Armitage ; 8, Mrs. Wade ; 15, Open ; 22, Mr. Parker ; 29, Mr. Holmes.—Mr. J. Burchell, Sec., 59, Otley Rd., Bradford.
 WEST VALE (near Halifax): Mechanics' Institute, 2-30 and 6—1, Mrs. Gregg ; 8, Mr. Tetlow ; 15, Mr. Armitage ; 22, Mr. Walsh ; 29, Miss Harris and Friend.—Mr. T. Berry, Sec., Greetland, Halifax.
 WIBSEY: Hardy St., 2-30 and 6—1, Mr. J. M. Smith ; 8, Miss Harrison ; 15, Miss Wilson ; 22, Miss Harris ; 29, Mr. Peel.—Mr. Geo. Saville, Sec., 17, Smiddles's Lane, Manchester Rd., Bradford.
 N.B.—Until further notice the Meetings of the Yorkshire District Committee will be held at Scott's Dining Rooms, East Parade, Leeds Rd., Bradford.
 Mr. Wyld's proposed visit to Yorkshire is postponed.

THE BANNER OF LIGHT, the oldest spiritual paper in the world. Published by Messrs. COLBY AND RICH, Boston, Mass., U.S.A. Sole European Agent, Mr. H. A. KRUSEY, 1, Newgate Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

PLANS FOR JANUARY, 1888.

- BRADFORD: Spiritualist Church, Walton Street, Hall Lane, at 2-30 and 6.—1 and 2, Mr. Schutt; 8, Mr. J. Armitage; 15, Mr. and Mrs. Carr; 22, Miss Harrison; 29 and 30, Mr. G. Wright.—T. J. Poppleston, 20, Bengal Street, Ripley Street.
- BRADFORD: Spiritual Lyceum, Addison Street—Children's Lyceum, 9-45; Services, at 2-30 and 6-30—1, Local; 8, Mrs. Witeoke; 15, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Hargreaves; 22, Mrs. Craven; 29, Mrs. J. M. Smith.—J. H. Smith, Sec., 227, Leeds Road.
- DARWEN: Church Bank Street at 2-30 and 6-30—1, B. Plant; 8, Mrs. Butterfield; 15, T. Postlethwaite; 22, J. Swindlehurst; 29, Miss Annie Walker.—Mr. E. Lord, Hon. Sec., 144, Bolton Road.
- HUDDERSFIELD: Assembly Rooms, Brook Street.—1, Mrs. Wallis; 8, Mr. Hepworth; 15, Miss H. A. Wilson; 22, Mr. Johnson; 29, Mrs. Green.
- HUDDERSFIELD: Kayes Buildings, Corporation St., off Ramsden St., at 2-30 and 6.—1, Miss Cowling; 8, Mrs. Craven; 15, Mrs. Connell; 22, Mrs. Riley and Mr. Moulson; 29, Mr. Hepworth.—Mr. J. Hewing, Cor. Sec.
- LONDON: Islington, Wellington Hall, Upper Street, at 6-30.—1, Experience Meeting for Members; 8, Mr. Hoperoft; 16, Mr. Wortley; 23, Mrs. Hawkins; 30, Open.—A. M. Rodger.
- OLDHAM: Spiritual Temple: 1, Mr. W. Johnson; 8, Mr. J. C. Macdonald; 15, Mr. E. W. Wallis; 22, Mrs. Butterfield; 29, Local.—J. S. Gibson, Cor. Sec., 41, Bowden Street.
- OPENSHAW: Society of Spiritualists, Mechanics' Institute, Pottery Lane: 1, Mr. J. C. McDonald; 8, Mr. A. D. Wilson; 15, Mrs. Groom; 22, Mr. Geo. Wright; 29, Mr. W. Johnson.—J. T. Page, Cor. Sec., 14, Lord Street, Openshaw.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of "The Two Worlds."

In retiring from the office of Corresponding Secretary I beg to thank all the friends and speakers that my duty has brought me into contact with, for the kind assistance and encouragement that I have received during the time that I have held the above position, and trust that the same will be extended to my successor, Mr. Hewing, who, I am sure, will always study to do his duty.

Should any friends require information that we can supply for the furtherance of the cause, I shall be very glad, at any time, along with him, to furnish same if it lies within our power to do so.—I remain, yours, in the cause of progress,

JAMES WM. HEMINGWAY,

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CORRESPONDENT desires to know the address of Professor Kershaw, the Mesmerist, for a case of fits. Address Mr. Wallis, at the office of this paper.

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I.

HOW TO INVESTIGATE SPIRITUALISM; OR, RULES FOR THE SPIRIT CIRCLE.

THE Spirit Circle is the assembling together of a number of persons seeking communion with the spirits who have passed from earth to the world of souls. The chief advantage of such an assembly is the mutual impartation and reception of the combined magnetisms of the assemblage, which form a force stronger than that of an isolated subject—enabling spirits to commune with greater power and developing the latent gifts of mediumship.

The first conditions to be observed relate to the persons who compose the circle. These should be, as far as possible, of opposite temperaments, as positive and negative; of moral characters, pure minds, and not marked by repulsive points of either physical or mental condition. No person suffering from disease, or of debilitated physique, should be present at any circle, unless it is formed expressly for healing purposes. I would recommend the number of the circle never to be less than three, or more than twelve. The best number is eight. No person of a strong positive temperament should be present, as any such magnetic spheres emanating from the circle will overpower that of the spirits, who must always be positive to the circle in order to produce phenomena.

Never let the apartment be over-heated, the room should be well ventilated. Avoid strong light, which, by producing motion in the atmosphere, disturbs the manifestations. A subdued light is the most favourable for spiritual magnetism.

I recommend the séance to be opened either with prayer or a song sung in chorus, after which subdued, harmonising conversation is better than wearisome silence; but let the conversation be directed towards the purpose of the gathering, and never sink into discussion or rise to emphasis. Always have a pencil and paper on the table, avoid entering or quitting the room, irrelevant conversation, or disturbances within or without the circle after the séance has commenced.

Do not admit unpunctual comers, nor suffer the air of the room to be disturbed after the sitting commences. Nothing but necessity, indisposition, or impressions, should warrant the disturbance of the sitting, WHICH SHOULD NEVER exceed two hours, unless an extension of time be solicited by the Spirits.

Let the séance always extend to one hour, even if no results are obtained; it sometimes requires that time for spirits to form their battery. Let it be also remembered that circles are experimental, hence no one should be discouraged if phenomena are not produced at the first few sittings. Stay with the same circle for six sittings; if no phenomena are then produced you may be sure you are not assimilated to each other; in that case, let the members meet with other persons until you succeed.

A well-developed test medium may sit without injury for any person, but a circle sitting for mutual development should never admit persons addicted to bad habits, strongly positive or dogmatical. A candid inquiring spirit is the only proper frame of mind in which to sit for phenomena, the delicate magnetism of which is made or marred as much by mental as physical conditions.

Impressions are the voices of spirits or the monitions of the spirit within us, and should always be followed out, unless suggestive of wrong in act or word. At the opening of the circle, one or more are often impressed to change seats with others. One or more are impressed to withdraw, or a feeling of repulsion makes it painful to remain. Let these impressions be faithfully regarded, and pledge each other that no offence shall be taken by following impressions.

If a strong impression to write, speak, sing, dance, or gesticulate possess any mind present, follow it out faithfully. It has a meaning if you cannot at first realize it. Never feel hurt in your own person, nor ridicule your neighbour for any failures to express or discover the meaning of the spirit impressing you.

Spirit control is often deficient, and at first imperfect. By often yielding to it, your organism becomes more flexible, and the spirit more experienced; and practice in control is necessary for spirits as well as mortals. If dark and evil disposed spirits manifest to you, never drive them away, but always strive to elevate them, and treat them as you would mortals, under similar circumstances. Do not always attribute falsehoods to "lying spirits," or deceiving mediums. Many mistakes occur in the communion of which you cannot always be aware.

Unless charged by spirits to do otherwise do not continue to hold sittings with the same parties for more than a twelvemonth. After that time, if not before, fresh elements of magnetism are essential. Some of the original circle should withdraw, and others take their places.

Never seek the spirit circle in a trivial or deceptive spirit. Then, and then only, have you cause to fear it.

Never permit any one to sit in circles who suffers from it in health or mind. Magnetism in the case of such persons is a drug, which operates perniciously, and should be carefully avoided.

Every seventh person can be a medium of some kind, and become developed through the judicious operations of the spirit circle. When once mediums are fully developed, the circle sometimes becomes injurious to them. When they feel this to be the case, let none be offended if they withdraw, and only use their gifts in other times and places.

All persons are subject to spirit influence and guidance, but only one in seven can so externalize this power as to become what is called a medium; and let it ever be remembered that trance speakers, no less than mediums for any other gift, can never be influenced by spirits far beyond their own normal capacity in the matter of the intelligence rendered, the magnetism of the spirits being but a quickening fire, which inspires the brain, and, like a hot-house process on plants, forces into prominence latent powers of the mind, but creates nothing. Even in the case of merely automatic speakers, writers, rapping, and other forms of test mediumship, the intelligence of the spirit is measurably shaped by the capacity and idiosyncrasies of the medium. All spirit power is limited in expression by the organism through which it works, and spirits may control, inspire, and influence the human mind, but do not change or re-create it.—EMMA HARDINGE BRITTON.

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W. JOHNSON.

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