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A
PSYCHIC DIGEST

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Edited by
Rev. J. T. Huston, N.D.

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EDITOR: REV. J. T. HUSTON, N.D.

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THE THREE WISE MEN OF LONDON

By Rev. Dr. C. Irving Benson

Christmas is the festival of childhood, for since Jesus was born in Bethlehem the world has awakened to the everlasting wonder of a little child. Every one of them is a bit of the Infinite caught in a mesh of gossamer. Trailing clouds of glory do they come into this drab, old world, bringing new hopes to birth. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift in Jesus, and thanks that He still so loves the world that He entrusts us with His children.

A World Without a Cradle

We need them no less than they need us. They teach us many things not to be learned elsewhere. How hard and cynical, how crabbed and complaining, how bitter and unblessed we should grow if we did not have them to school us in patience, gentleness, and generosity. When Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my lambs," it was as good for Peter as for the lambs. Without a cradle to kneel at the world's heart would turn sour and selfish.

Never comes Christmas but I feel tenderly towards those who through no fault of their own have not been entrusted with little folk to love. Some with true parental instinct have lavished their love on other people's children, who rise up to call them blessed. They are lovelier far than those who have borne children, but upon whom the spiritual possibilities of parenthood have not dawned. Then my heart goes out to those who have loved and lost, whose nameless hopes were nipped by the chill winds of misfortune or cut short by the angel of death. Yet have they found expression for the love that swells like a sea in their souls. What arithmetic can reckon all we owe to our maiden aunts? How immeasurably poorer should we be without their help and interest. If I ever break out into poetry it will be to sing the praise of those dear, childless people, who are nevertheless true fathers and mothers in Israel.

We all need to be taken out of ourselves lest we suffocate with self-interest. That is the truth William J. Locke seeks to make us understand in his Christmas story of how three wise men of London found themselves in finding a little child.

The Christmas Journey

Three men who had gained great fame and honor throughout the world met unexpectedly at Paddington Station. They were personally acquainted, and exchanged surprised greetings. It turned out that they were all going to be the guests of a celebrity hunter at Foullis Castle, in Cornwall. Sir Angus McCurdie was an eminent physicist, Professor Biggleswade was a little untidy man with a rasping voice, the greatest living authority on Assyriology. A flippant pupil once remarked that the Professor's face was like a Babylonian cuneiform. The third wise man was the Right Honorable Viscount Doyne, a renowned

Empire builder and administrator, around whose solitary life popular imagination had woven many legends. He had a reserved carriage which he invited Sir Angus and the Professor to share.

The Empty Quiver

After relating how they came to accept the invitations, Sir Angus said:—

"I'm a widower. My wife died many years ago, and, thank God, we had no children. I generally spend Christmas alone."

Professor Biggleswade envied him. He was always praying to be delivered from his sisters and nephews and nieces, who no calculated coldness could repress. "Children are the root of all evil," said he; "happy the man who has his quiver empty."

Lord Doyne, the great administrator, said: "Why I, who loathe country-house parties and children and Christmas . . . am going down there today, I can no more explain than you can. It's an odd co-incidence."

McCurdie took a flask out of his handbag. "Have a nip?" "Thanks, no," said the Professor. "I have to keep to a strict dietary, and I only drink hot milk and water—and of that sparingly. I have some in a thermos bottle." Lord Doyne also declined. The Professor took from his bag a foreign review in which a German sciolist had dared to question his interpretation of a Hittite inscription.

The train thundered on.

"If only this wretched train would stop," said Biggleswade. "I would go back again." And he thought how comfortable it would be to sneak home again to his books.

An accident on the line dislocated the traffic so they arrived at Plymouth two hours late. They missed the connection and had to wait till nearly ten o'clock. A little local train carried them to a wayside junction where they endured another weary wait.

Kings and Cauliflowers

"I shall die of bronchitis," wailed the Professor.

"A man dies when it is appointed for him to die," said Lord Doyne, in his tired way. "It's not the dying that worries me," said McCurdie. "That's a mere mechanical process which every organic being from a king to a cauliflower has to pass through. It's being forced against my will and my reason to come on this accursed journey . . . that is driving me to distraction."

At last, after many stops at lonely stations, they arrived at Trehenna and stepped out on to the snow-covered platform. A luxurious car was waiting for them. The chauffeur wrapped the three travellers in many rugs and started off. The car sped on through an unseen wilderness. Suddenly there was a horrid jolt and a lurch, and the car stood still. The back axle had broken. The chauffeur went off to secure help; meanwhile he suggested that they might shelter in a little house some half-mile up the road. They trudged through the snow. The dim outline of the cottage grew perceptible. A faint light shone from the window. On the door-step they found a man's body huddled together. He was dressed like a peasant. Close by him was a broken bottle, whose contents had evidently run into the snow. He was dead.

A Child Crying in the Night

McCurdie hammered at the door. A faint sound like the wailing of a sea creature came from within. They pushed the door open and found themselves in a poverty-stricken kitchen. A cry of great agony filled the air. Lord Doyne took a lamp and entered the second room. "It's a woman in childbirth," he said. "We must aid her. She appears unconscious." Masters of Knowledge that had won them world fame and honor, they stood helpless before this, the commonest phenomenon of nature.

"My wife had no child," said McCurdie.

"I've avoided women all my life," said the Professor.

"And I've been too busy to think of them. God forgive me," said Doyne.

They did things blindly, instinctively, as men do when they come face to face with the elemental. A fire was made and kettle boiled. They hastened back to the wretched car and came staggering beneath rugs and travelling bags which could supply clean linen and things needful, for amid the poverty of the house they could find nothing fit to touch. They saw that the woman's strength was failing and that she could not live. There in that pitful hovel death and life hovered. They washed the newly-born infant, dipped a sponge in the Professor's hot milk and put it to his lips. Then they wrapped him in some of their own woollen undergarments and placed him on a bed made of their fur coats, in front of the fire.

A silence fell upon them as they sat round in the blaze with the newly-born babe wrapped in its odd swaddling clothes, and it lasted until McCurdie looked at his watch.

"It's twelve o'clock," said he.

"Christmas morning," Biggleswade said.

"A strange Christmas," mused Doyne.

The three wise men shivered with a queer exaltation. Something strange, mystical, dynamical had happened. It was as if the scales had fallen from their eyes and they saw with a new vision. They stood together humbly, divested of all their greatness . . . and they looked, with one accord, irresistibly compelled, at the child.

"It is true," Doyne murmured. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Unto the three of us."

Biggleswade wiped his great round spectacles.

"Jasper, Melchior, Balthazar. But where are

the gold, frankincense, and myrrh?"

"In our hearts," said McCurdie.

The babe cried and stretched its tiny limbs. Instinctively they all knelt to administer to its wants. The scene had the appearance of an adoration.

The Wiser Wisdom

Then these three wise, lonely, childless men, who, in furtherance of their own greatness, had cut themselves adrift from the sweet and simple things of life and had grown old in unhappy and profitless wisdom, knew that an inscrutable Providence had led them, as it had led three wise men of old, on a Christmas morning long ago, to a nativity which should give them a new wisdom, a new link with humanity, a new spiritual outlook, a new hope. And, when their watch was ended, they wrapped up the babe with precious care, and carried him with them, an inalienable joy and possession, into the great world.

Is not that what Christmas does for us all? It makes us more human, by taking us out of ourselves. Unconsciously we retire within ourselves, oyster-like. We gradually shut ourselves up in our select circle of interests, until the mind contracts in sympathy, and we become callous and indifferent. Our enthusiasms tend to be exclusive. We become mere bystanders, spectators in the surging crowds of living men and women. We look on, forgetting that life is the only game where the onlooker sees least.

But Christmas reminds us that we are better than time has made us. The wise men of old opened their treasures. Most of us are sealed caskets. But this returning season of kindness opens our hearts, softens our everyday conventions, loosens our purse-strings, unseals our lips in praise.

—*"The Herald," Melbourne.*

AUTOMATIC WRITING

By the late P. W. BEDDOW, Editor of "Spiritual Truth."

Let us consider some of the numerous and intensely interesting forms of physical mediumship. And by that term we mean those kinds which produce forms of phenomena which can be realised and attested by our purely physical senses of touch, sight, or hearing. This, of course, means a very strong and partly physical "bridge" over the "gulf" that separates the Spirit World from the earth plane: and this bridge is provided for us by the many different forms of physical phenomena. Some of these I will describe as well as I can, for they are intensely interesting to study, truly wonderful in their extent and effects, and by no means too frequently to be witnessed—for a great many reasons which I do not propose to go into here. But the principle one, of course, is just that good physical mediums are, at present, very rare.

There are certain forms, however, that are quite common. For instance, there is the movement of a small table upon which the hands of two or three people have been gently laid. Such a table will very frequently move and gyrate, and, by a series of movements, can be made a means of communication. Then there is the ouija board with a small pointer, which, held in the hand of a mediumistic person, will indicate certain letters, and so give a message; or a tumbler held in the hand can be made to move easily about a table upon which the letters of the alphabet have been arranged. All these three methods need some "physical" power in the medium, and though common, and in some cases satisfactory, I do not advise their use on account of the fact that they can be so easily interfered with, and used by, earth-bound spirits; while the more advanced ones, such

as the Guides are, find them very difficult to use—they are too “earthy,” too purely physical, for them.

The Planchette

A safer method is that of the planchette. In this case a light “hand rest” is used, and with a pencil fixed so it can be made to write upon paper quite plainly; the medium merely resting his or her hand upon it. This is more reliable and is often used for serious communication where there is not enough power or development for a superior method in which the pen or pencil is held in the medium’s own hand. This latter is called automatic writing, or in its best and most reliable form, inspirational writing.

“Writing” mediumship is far more common than it was, and a great many people are getting into more or less close communication with the Spirit World through it. It is well, though, to carefully inform every person who is desirous of attempting it that it needs far greater care and much more development than is generally supposed. All those who would like to have this gift of writing automatically or inspirationally should sit for it if possible in a good developing class, for the very good reason that in a class where there are others seeking to develop their psychic gifts there is the united power of all the sitters and all their Guides, whereas by one’s self there is only one’s own power for the Guide to use. This is not sufficient for good development, as a general rule. Do not attempt it unless it is impossible for you to sit in a Circle, is my advice to all beginners.

If you want to know my reasons for such advice, it is that I have known many instances where quite promising mediums have been grossly deceived by mischievous spirits, their mediumship spoilt and made unreliable to a de-

gree. Or their own minds have gained a curious ascendancy and while they think some spirit is writing it is really and truly their own soul's work. They mean well, of course, but the fact remains.

Automatic Writing

It is just because this form of mediumship is so valuable that I am anxious, supremely anxious, to see it made the most of. One of the best known scripts of modern times was that which came through the hand of the Rev. George Vale Owen, while the wonderful discoveries at Glastonbury were the fruit of another through Captain Barlett. Much of the Bible came this way, and David plainly states in the xxviii. chapter of I. Chronicles that the plans and particulars of the Temple were given him by this method. All this just means that it is quite impossible to bestow more care upon its development and proper use than it deserves! It cannot be valued too highly—but it must be good and reliable. A good rule is for no medium to write unless he or she knows the Guide is present.

I might just make clear the difference between "automatic" and "inspirational" writing. The former is, as is implied, quite automatic; the medium being unconscious of what is being written. Indeed in some well known cases, like that of "M. A. Oxon," the medium can carry on a conversation or work out a mental problem at the same time as the hand is being used for spirit writing. In the case of inspirational writing this is not possible, for the medium's brain, as well as his hand, is controlled by the communicator. This, it can be understood, is the safer and more reliable method of the two, because it puts out of court the possibility of the medium being affected by the thoughts of other spirit beings or by his own mind. It needs good development, his complete attention, and full rendering up of

himself to the unseen spirit Control. The result, then, is often of great value, and always worth having.

Not only writing, but drawings and paintings come this way. Some of the best known are those which were produced through David Duguid by the Dutch artists Ruisdell and Van Steen, and which are described in that entrancing book "Hafed, Prince of Persia. Those who see clairvoyantly can testify to its excellence. Many such cases could be cited, not to mention the truly marvellous pastel drawings produced through the singular and purely automatic mediumship of the Sisters Bangs (U.S.A.).

This is a form of mediumship which is likely to be much better known even than it is at present. It is one that needs special care, and knowledge, in its use, but it is also one through which the greatest possible benefit may accrue to the human race.

He who loses money loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; he who loses his spirit friends loses all.

★ ★ ★

The Soul of each of us is an immortal Spirit and goes to other immortals to give an account of its actions.

Plato.

CHRISTMAS GHOSTS—RATIONAL AND OTHERWISE.

As Seen by James Leigh, Editor of "Prediction."

Probably no writer has done more to create the spirit of "Merry Christmas" than Charles Dickens, whose *Pickwick Papers and Christmas Stories* still make appropriate reading at this season of the year. They are books that have achieved a certain immortality, and are still bought and read, I believe, more frequently than many of their time. The first-mentioned is perhaps the more popular of the two: it is undoubtedly the best known. And its 28th chapter, which

is full of Dickensian humour, reveals the spirit of Christmastide in its highest and truest expression.

Do you remember? Christmas—the time of good cheer . . . memories for the old; rollicking fun for the young; logs crackling on the fire—yes, and mince pies (where would Christmas be without mince pies?), and toasts, and stories.

The Christmas story is essentially a ghost story, and many have been the graphic descriptions of ghosts that walked in the night—on Christmas Eve especially—bringing fear and terror wherever they ventured. The student of ghost fiction can trace a special evolution, not altogether confined to phantoms, but nevertheless typical of them. The early ghost was a transparent spectre, of uncertain outline, who appeared a brief moment before some terrified beholder, only to vanish suddenly into thin air, and leave the startled observer baffled and in doubt. The modern ghost is of a different stock. With his disembodied virtues he incorporates the faculty of common-sense. He is not wholly spiritual: and his apparel invariably conforms to human standards, so that he can be recognised when he appears before old acquaintances, or haunts again the busy scenes of earth.

Charles Dickens helped to invent the rational ghost story, and in a sense it has been prophetic. The Dickens ghosts belonged to the new brand: REAL ghosts, if you like. At any rate, they were sensible ghosts, who answered to human criticism, were not aloof to conversation, and but for their chains (made up, as in the case of Marley, of "cash boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds and heavy purses wrought in steel") were to all outward appearances, tangible and real. They were not unlike the phantoms known to the modern psychological researcher; in fact, the two share so much in common that they might easily be confused. For there is no doubt that when Charles Dickens

turned his attention to the spiritual world, ghost literature began to conform to a rational standard.

To illustrate, note the striking points of identity in the following crisp narrative, which tells in abbreviated fashion, the story of *A Christmas Carol*.

Marley was dead. There was no doubt about that. "The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to lay his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail."

It was, in fact, seven long years since Marley's demise. Scrooge had forgotten him. So it was something of a phenomenon that on arriving home one night he should see, upon the door-knocker of his humble habitation, Marley's face. "It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look." But as Scrooge gazed fixedly at the phenomenon, it became a knocker again. Scrooge was as hard as nails, and so he was not greatly moved. "Humbug!" was all that he observed.

So he went in and sat down, relieving himself of his cravat, and dressing himself in his nightgown, cap and slippers. He sat down before his miserable fire, intent upon the consumption of his gruel (for Scrooge had a cold).

And surely the marching of feet in the cottage at Hydesville were no more astonishing than the noises that Scrooge heard suddenly, to his dismay, "on the floors below, then coming up the stairs, then coming straight towards the door."

He was a real Frank Podmore, was Scrooge. "It's humbug still," he said. "I won't believe it." But his colour changed when the noises stopped in front of the door, and a form came into the room. "Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried 'I know him: Marley's Ghost!' and fell again."

But was it really Marley? Note the careful observations of Scrooge, a mythical character maybe, but still the forerunner, at least, of the modern psychic investigator. . . .

"The same face; the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat skirts, and the hair upon his head." Not a white-robed phantom, mark you, but a virtual human, different from the old-fashioned ghost, and wearing the clothes that would confirm the identity written on his perfectly-formed features.

And Scrooge, mystified by the apparition (for such it was), remained a true sceptic. "Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him: though he felt the chilling influence of the death-cold eyes, and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about his head and chin, he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!"—Marley's *voice*, no doubt about that."

Thinking he might embarrass it, and therefore gain the upper-hand, Scrooge invited the ghost to sit down, but it complied nonetheless, "as if it were used to it."

"You don't believe in me?" observed the ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"Why do you doubt your senses?" "

Yes, Scrooge was a true sceptic, and the question provided him with the opportunity of confessing the reason for his doubts. He made the best of it, and as if to emphasise the sincerity of his scepticism, he ended upon a note of levity.

"Because," said Scrooge, 'a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of

beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than grave about you, whatever you are.'"

Scrooge was not given to the practice of habitually cracking jokes, but (says Dickens) he tried to be smart, "as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror." He even went so far as to produce his toothpick, bidding the spectre examine it, and adding "I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted with a legion of goblins of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! Humbug!"

But the ghost had its own way of dealing with him. Undigested beef or underdone potato could not reason, they could not speak with Marley's rasping voice, nor assume Marley's miserly form. O no! Marley went about his business, meticulous and thorough as usual, and soon had Scrooge upon his knees, gasping "Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of worldly mind!" replied the ghost, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

It is to be noted that the object of Marley's visit was a very commendable one. He came to acknowledge his own mistakes; and to make Scrooge aware of his also. "No regrets can make amends for one life's opportunity missed," said Marley. He was pointing a moral. His teaching was sound. The "Compensation-Retribution" principle of Modern Spiritualism was having an early demonstration.

Dismiss it as fiction if you will, but Marley's ghost was something more than imagination. It helped to create a new fashion in *post mortem* fiction, and hundreds of other stories have been moulded upon it. The ghosts of the novelists have become sensible, in the process, and the airy

shapes of a century ago have disappeared into their cells.

Yes, *A Christmas Carol* was prophetic. In the wake of Marley, hundreds of other ghosts have followed. Their activity has shaken modern thought, which, tending towards a materialistic outlook, has suddenly become quite spiritual again.

These age-old visitants from the ethereal world cannot be dismissed lightly. Their visits are constantly recurring; their main message is ever the same. They come back, like Marley, to point out our errors. They strive to show us the futility of our defaults. Their teaching is that with virtue alone can come peace and goodwill.

And—belief or disbelief—Marley's Ghost altered the whole life of Scrooge!

"The Two Worlds."

MY LIFE AND WORK CONTINUES

(From Victor Hugo to a friend.) "You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of the bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more active when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter may be on my head, but eternal springtime seems in my heart. The nearer I approach my end the plainer can I hear immortal symphonies all around me. It is marvellous to me.

For over 50 years I have been writing my thoughts in prose and poetry; history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, and song. I have tried them all. And I have not wrote a thousandth part of what is within me.

Soon I must say: "I have finished my day's work." But I cannot say, "I have finished my life." My life's work will begin again next morning. The tomb is not the walled-in end of a street. It is a gateway into a new thoroughfare. My life will close here in a twilight, but it will open again as a dawn."—"Vision."

RE BEQUESTS FOR RESEARCH

Reprinted from the
"New York Spiritualist Leader."

Failure of many American universities to carry through the intent clearly expressed in bequests for research in Spiritualism is indicated in a summarization of the survey recently carried through by Dorothy Pope of Duke University's "Parapsychology Bulletin" (further indicating that care in investigating past performance might well be exercised by those-of-means interested in extending the general knowledge along these lines). . . . Interpretation of the facts gathered in the survey is the Leader's, and no blame should be laid at the door of Duke University—incidentally.

"Intent" Ignored

The University of Pennsylvania, for one example, has decided to undertake no further research along the lines of Spiritualism, due to an unfavorable report issued in 1887 by the commission set up as a result of Henry Seybert's bequest "to establish a Chair of Moral Philosophy for the investigation and teaching of religious, moral, and intellectual truth . . . particularly of modern Spiritualism." Seybert had been deeply interested in the subject for many years. . . . The fund now amounts to 52,000 dollars. (It would seem that a suit by the N.S.A. or Federation, for instance, to re-establish the intent of Henry Seybert's bequest, would be worth while! . . . In the 60 years that have passed since the "unfavorable" findings of the Commission, every day has brought greater need for this research, and teaching, in academic circles.)

"A Battle" Overdue

And though Clark University in Worcester has had occasional lectures on parapsychology as a result of the 1908 bequest of Joseph Battles

(which was to be used for lectures on "spiritism, occult or mystic psychic phenomena, telepathy, somnambulism, and kindred subjects," or "for experimental tests to scientifically explain unusual physical or psychical phenomena, apparitions, etc., and to make the knowledge available") the fund now makes up part of the salary of a professor of psychology giving a course in abnormal behaviour and personality development! . . . Principal of the fund is now around 16,000 dollars. . . . Shades of Joseph Battles! A battle is overdue!

Flagrant Violation

Flagrant in its violation of the intent of a bequest, is the record of Stanford University in California. Thomas Stanford (of Melbourne, Victoria) gave them 50,000 dollars in 1912 for investigations in Spiritualism and psychical research, and at his death left about 650,000 dollars for "psychical or psychological" research and study (the use of the words "or psychological" unfortunately misinterpreted in contravention of the clear intent of Thomas Stanford!) Though a Fellowship in Psychical Research was established (in name only) and a suitable laboratory was equipped, the funds have been used to support work in general psychology instead of parapsychology!

"Alas"

Facts in the Duke report further state that "Many years ago a large Eastern university was approached by a woman of great means who offered to endow a research laboratory in parapsychology to the extent of a million dollars, but the offer was later withdrawn because of inadequate assurance that the university was ready to promote the program of research"!

Honest Research

Harvard University has a different record! A fund established in 1912 by friends of Richard Hodgson as a Memorial, "to encour-

age the investigation and study of mental or physical phenomena the origin or expression of which appears to be independent of the ordinary sensory channels," has been used honestly. Income from the original 10,000 dollars is now about 1,200 dollars a year, and has been made available to Dr. Gardner Murphy of the College of the City of New York, and is now financing the experiments of Gertrude Schmeidler.

Duke University's record is also clean on the score of following the intent of donors, supporting a full-time research staff of three, and six assistants part-time, with a special long-term program outlined and in motion in addition to the routine experiments and publicity which have established Duke and Joseph Banks Rhine as the most important single factors in establishing the truths of parapsychology on firm down-to-earth scientific underpinning! (Now, an Annual March of Dollars to Duke would be worthwhile! . . . They have a record of achievement on the right side of the fence! . . . And in the meantime, the shades of Thomas Stanford, Henry Seybert, Joseph Battles, etc., call for a re-shuffle on their intentions expressed in bequests!)

Samuel Johnson, the English lexicographer, said that every nation and age had testified to the truth of spirit return; he pointed out that 'though men oft deny its truth with their lips, yet they confess it with their fears.

"From the earliest revelations of Man that have come down to us, writers have been bold in ascribing their talks and interviews with spirits, angels and God. They seem to distinguish between good and bad spirits, and place the angels on a somewhat higher plane than that of these spirits. May it not be possible that these writers, with the unfoldment which had come to them, mistook, in their clairvoyant vision, exalted spirits that had progressed, for angels — even for God?— Floyd B. Wilson.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

The Christmas story is a matchless pastoral. It is the theme of happy childhood memories; a source of inspiration and a joy for maturity and old age. In the earliest years, when bright young eyes looked out upon an unknown world with wonder, how real it was; how convincing the mental pictures; how deep the feeling of reverential awe. The shepherds and their flocks away out on the plains; the mighty angel with the good tidings of great joy; the long journey through the night; the star, the village of Bethlehem; the crowded inn; the manger; the little Child and His Mother—it is a miraculous moving picture, persisting when all others are lost in the mists. On the lower plane of literary values, it has the elements that appeal to heart and mind, including the delicate, but powerful, suggestion of mystery.

Still basing judgment on the human plane, the characters and their setting are wondrously apposite. More than one writer of distinction has observed that those who live in solitary places, amidst scenic grandeur, where the forces of nature are striking in their movements, are usually more poetic, imaginative and devotional than practical men of the cities and the plains. The shepherds of the Gospel story did not live in Himalayan grandeurs: Nevertheless, they were men set apart from distracting, busy centres of population, living a life suited to reflection, to the conception of ideals, to the development of simple faith and worship. Before the momentous journey, maybe, they were happy in illusions no more scientific than the illusions of over-shrewd worldly wisdom. Those who followed the star to the manger were few. Those who followed the Babe of Bethlehem, as He grew into the sublimity of the Divine Life—around Galilee, through Nazareth, Bethany, Jérusalem, and many a lonely village—became multitudes. Those who were inspired by the

Great Exemplar's message in after ages were to be counted in hundreds of millions.

It is a poor world and a dull life that entirely excludes the supernatural. "Lo, the poor Indian," wrote Pope, in a familiar couplet, "whose untutored mind sees God in clouds and hears Him in the wind." A too rigid adherence to the limits of material things would rob us of the golden associations of the Christmas story. It would do more. With earthbound minds we should never be able to follow Shelley "through the wicket of fancy into the meadow of Heaven and go gathering stars." Frances Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" would become a soulless word puzzle. Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" would leave us cold and thoughtless. The 38th chapter of Job, which Pope and Byron extolled above all poetry, would cause no thrill, spiritual or intellectual.

Far above all other characters in the Christmas story rises the peerless figure of the Divine Master himself. He came as a plain man, a worker, a wandering teacher claiming no privilege. He knew no fear either of today or tomorrow; no haunting dread of bodily pain, want, injustice or tyranny. He shared with the humblest—

"The crowded street, the poor, the halt, the maimed,
The hearth-fire of a friend, the mountain dew,
The silent wilderness; all these He knew."

His was an example of gentleness and humility. It was also an inspiration to men, however lowly their lot, to keep up their heads and hearts, in the simple dignity of their manhood. It made pitiable the arrogance of wealth and the pompous vulgarity of ancient and modern Pharisaism. In the contemplation of the Master's life on earth men of all types—creed or no creed, belief or no belief—can find a common ground of homage. On Christmas Day minds encrusted with

the rust of material things re-open to the old sacred influences, which never entirely perish.

To childhood the Christmas story, from Bethlehem to Calvary, was simple and complete in itself. For the doubts of manhood and womanhood profound and admirable scholarship has supplied a thousand libraries—historical, exegetical, metaphysical, theological, symbolical, literal, didactic, doctrinal, critical, evangelical. Few of us have the capacity to understand; our imperfect minds are overwhelmed. Many have neither the gift of understanding nor of faith, in which many more find comfort and refuge. Yet this Christmas will be happier if we can regain some of the first fine rapture enjoyed in trustful years when the immortal story was new and flawlessly true.

Author Unknown.

But is there not a deep sense in which we are saved by the cradle? God slipped in among us that first, best Christmas night as a wee mite that made a woman cry. There is something at once mysterious and revealing in the thought of God becoming dependent that He might come nearer to men. It is a thing to think of, dream of, and wonder at.

"We see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the encircling spirit world,
Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes."

— Lowell.

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THE SPIRITS CAN HEAL

By ROY BRANDON, in the "Pictorial Weekly,"
London.

Although not generally known, it is nevertheless a fact that healing takes a prominent place in the Spiritualist movement. Sick people in all parts of the world are receiving diagnosis and treatment at the hands of spiritual healers. If it were possible to give the actual number of cases so treated, together with the record of cures effected, the result would make staggering reading.

In this country alone there are hundreds of Spiritualist churches. Practically every church has its own healing circle, or centre. The mediums and healers give their services free. No charge whatever is made to the patient. On the contrary, poor and deserving cases are given nourishing foods and helped financially.

This service of healing is not confined to Spiritualists; it is open to everybody, regardless of sect, creed, race or colour.

At one healing centre alone—that of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association—25,000 cases received diagnosis and treatment in one year. Here, for a long time past, Red Cloud, Mrs. Estelle Robert's healing guide, has diagnosed the patients and given instructions regarding the healing.

On one occasion a man came limping to Red Cloud, complaining of a constant pain in his back. He had been to doctors; they could do nothing to relieve him.

"Your trouble dates back to the time when you fell from a ladder at your work," Red Cloud told him, and the man was astounded. He admitted that he had fallen off a ladder.

The diagnosis revealed a misplaced vertebra. Treatment was immediately given. The patient left the centre with his back perfectly straight.

MIRACLES NOT CLAIMED.

Spiritualists lay no claims to instantaneous or miraculous cures. Sometimes results are obtained speedily, but it often happens that patience and perserverance are necessary before a cure is effected.

One young woman, a nurse, came to Red Cloud with a fractured rib, splinters of which were embedded in her body. These were removed with manipulation and other treatment, but several months elapsed before this woman's name was erased from the patients' list.

Correct diagnosis is an invaluable part of spiritual healing. It is claimed that the physical shell we inhabit is an open book to the spirit guides, who are able to discern at once the root cause of the trouble. This claim is backed up by the following authentic case.

A man attended the Red Cloud healing circle for diagnosis. He stated that he was suffering from acute indigestion. He had received hospital treatment, and had exhausted the medical armoury of drugs, all of which had proved unavailing.

Red Cloud, in his kindly, soothing manner, told this patient from what he was actually suffering.

Treatment was given. Within a few months the man was discharged, perfectly fit.

It is inevitable that work of this nature must expand. In appreciation of what Red Cloud has accomplished, a small band of donors, who prefer to remain anonymous, have provided a new healing centre at Wimbledon, which is known as "The House of Red Cloud."

This new centre is a beautiful building surrounded with lawns and gardens, and is unique, inasmuch as the special arrangements made for healing stamp it as something far and above anything of its kind in the country.

There is a separate treatment room for every patient. Diagnosis is given once a fortnight. As at every other organised Spiritualist healing centre, the sick and suffering will receive diagnosis and treatment free of charge.

WHEN DOCTORS HAVE FAILED.

Meanwhile, other healing centres, in humble surroundings, are accomplishing results equally as efficacious as those obtained at the more lavishly equipped establishments.

In a small flat at Victoria there is a little band of people who are doing a real humanitarian work. At this circle Thomas Wyatt is the medium. On diagnosis days Wyatt is frequently in a state of trance for hours on end. "White Feather," the medium's healing control, is then in possession.

"What we want are the 'incurable' cases," this guide said to me at a recent seance. "We have no wish to do your doctors out of a job. Many of them are performing a noble work, and some, although they are not aware of it, possess spiritual healing power. If only your doctors would co-operate with us!"

There is nothing mystical about spiritual healing. No blind faith is required. According to Spiritualists, the healing is accomplished by the working of a natural law which has been in operation since the world began. Healing rays from the spirit realms are transmitted through the healer to the patient, and disease is gradually eliminated from the aura by the laying-on of hands and by passes.

The instruments, or healers, are carefully selected by the spirit guides. Only those capable of transmitting this power are used. It is claimed that this natural method of healing is referred to repeatedly in the Bible, that in ancient times it was in general use, and that only through the march of materialism has modern man's mind

been dimmed to the knowledge of this psychic gift.

In defence of this statement, let us examine the following case. It concerns that of a young woman, a captain in the Girl Guide movement, who was affected with atrophied muscles, or creeping paralysis. Under doctors' orders she was given electrical treatment, without result. Later, she received treatment at a well-known London hospital, but the disease was not arrested. Finally, she underwent psychological treatment at the hands of a Harley Street specialist, again without benefit.

Now this lady was not a Spiritualist, and it was only as a last resource that she decided to accept the advice of some friends and try a spiritual healing circle.

On August 3rd of last year her case was diagnosed by "White Feather." By this time her right arm and hand were a fixture at her side. The diagnosis was correct in every detail, but the additional fact was brought to light that her hip was out of place.

At the end of a month's treatment this patient was able to use a typewriter, play the piano, and once more participate in her favourite pastime of tennis. Spiritual healing had succeeded where psychological and other treatments had failed.

NOT ANTI-CHRISTIAN.

Spiritualists are often accused of being anti-Christian. A first-hand experience of what is being done at these circles would remove that impression.

During a recent visit to a certain London healing centre it was divulged that one hundred and eight patients had passed through the "healing chair" that day, and that three hundred treatments had been given the previous week.

Among the patients on the day in question was an old lady whose looks indicated poverty

and want. The healers put their hands in their pockets automatically to give her "physical pennies."

Another patient left this same healing circle with great jubilation.

"After two years of treatment I have been signed off to-night," he said joyously. He had been cured by the laying-on of hands which modern thought ridicules as an "early superstition."

A well-known osteopath and naturopath has publicly confessed that he is helped by the spirit world in his work.

"I am conscious that, whatever work I am doing, I am always being helped by the Other Side," he said. "There are thousands of doctors in the spirit world who are only too anxious to find suitable instruments through whom they can work."

On one occasion this healer was able to remove a cataract from a patient in four treatments. Yet all he did was to place his hands on the patient's eyes.

He then quoted a case of a woman who was advised by seven medical men to be operated on for carcinoma. Instead of submitting to an operation, she was treated under spirit guidance. She was now perfectly well and sound, and had had no occasion to seek medical advice since.

During my investigations I have never once heard it said that every incurable case yields to spirit healing. There are some advanced cases that are even beyond the help of the spirit world. These can be alleviated, but not cured.

Every sane person realises the danger of the unorthodox "quack," whose chief interest lies in his patients' financial status. It is only right, in the public interest, that some measure be employed against quacks of this kind.

HERALD ANGELS.

Nothing is so remarkable in this world as the curious religious beliefs of people who otherwise are rational, practical, critical and kindly.

Yet in the annual Christmas services many, without a moment's thought, will sing, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and none would be more surprised than the singers if a herald angel, or any other kind of angel, were to appear. It may be that custom sanctions ancient habit and time hallows for the simple mind ideas that cannot be tested.

Angels are the least of the problems facing mankind at this great period in evolution. Yet failure to establish their existence, after centuries of assertion of their bevenolent interference in human affairs, should make Westerners, at least, suspicious of all the other statements which go with the announcement that winged spiritual beings will sing at a certain time.

"Peace on earth and mercy mild." says another line in the famous carol which will be broadcast and sung in thousands of churches. Peace there is on earth, if by peace is meant that the guns are silent.

Another war rages, and the aftermath of conflict is, in many respects, as terrible as the battles themselves. Sensitive men and women try to thrust from their minds the thoughts of a whole continent in anguish, and, not even if "Hark the Herald Angels" were sung a million times would their lot be happier.

"Joyful, all ye nations, rise," will be another line issuing in a myriad voices. Where is the joy? How can the starving, the homeless and the hopeless rise except by the aid of those who have food and homes and hope?

Those nations now in deepest distress have for long professed the closest adherence to all the dogmas perpetuated by all the Churches, who

have seized Christmas as their property and have attempted to make out of the human feeling of kindness a vested interest of pomp and ignorance.

Those who know of the existence of a spiritual world and who have watched the operation of spiritual law realise that the world lacks not carols but facts; it yearns not for songs but sustenance; it does not ask for foolish assertions but demands a plain guide to a life in which wars shall cease.

From Galilee to a Europe in agony is 20 centuries, and every step of the way is marked by the graves of whole nations which persisted in darkness. Hymns, carols, anthems, recitals and cantatas there have been in plenty. Choirs have sung and the faithful have chanted; oceans of words have been spoken; yet humanity moves forward so slowly that many doubt even if we make progress.

But painfully we advance. We have a truth and speak it. We have spiritual gifts in trust for all mankind and we demonstrate them. We offer light and reason to all who are willing to employ them for their own development and for the helping of others.

Our strength is not in buildings or in traditions. It is in the fact that we exhibit, in the deeds we do, and the illuminating ray we cast on a vast process of evolution.

Christmas, as seen by the orthodox, is a prop to convention, and a satire. As regarded by people of good will it is an opportunity to do good, and a light in a dark world.

Some day, indeed, the angels will sing for all men to hear—when we have constructed a world system of which the truth of the spirit is the foundation. In that day the music of heavenly beings will not be remarkable. It will be natural because we will have earned it.—“Psychic News.”

CAN WE SEE INTO THE FUTURE?

A SENSITIVE SPEAKS

(Beyond the Five Senses. By L. Margery Bazett. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946. 7/6 in England.)

Review by H. F. Prevost Battersby,
in "Light."

"The value of this book," says its author, "is that it is a record of personal experience." That value is increased by its rarity, since very few sensitives have told us their own story, and fewer still have been able to tell it as well as Miss Bazett. She has also that valuable quality, mistrust of obvious explanations. Questioned as to her understanding of the experiences reported in *An Adventure*, Miss Moberly, its joint author, replied: "When we know all there is to know about higher mathematics, we can perhaps proffer an explanation." Similar experiences have been, one might almost say, a commonplace with Miss Bazett—she even shared the "illusions" of Versailles—but she also feels that we must wait for something at least as incomprehensible as the higher mathematics before expecting to solve the mystery.

These visions of hers, for instance, are they impressions on the ether of a scene enacted long ago; are they her clairvoyant post-vision of the scene when it occurred; or is it her clairvoyant reading from the minds of the original participants? Enumerating these guesses we are handling a factor of which we know next to nothing—clairvoyance; and, however intensely visualized, we are not even sure that a sensitive *can* "see" other people's memories exteriorized.

Treating of telepathy, Miss Bazett mentions her failure to be effective when experimenting with the usual telepathic tests, guessing cards and drawings. It would almost seem as if pronounced clairvoyant vision were rather a hindrance than a help in such cases. A similar failure by Mrs.

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Garrett was very noticeable. One explanation of such failures can be attributed to the lack of emotional impulse in this type of test; emotion being an obvious factor in all the more striking telepathic stories. The other, and less regarded reason, lies in the probing power of the clairvoyant sense to extract from the card or drawing, not the mere apparently pointless arrangement of dots and lines, but the emotions besetting the craftsmen who moulded the paper, or placed upon it the design which meant little to them and consequently nothing at all to the clairvoyant who was seeking something much more interesting behind it.

One of Miss Bazett's telepathic stories is a real startler. She was a guest in a doctor's house. The car, which had carried other members of the household to a distant town, did not return for lunch, and when, some hours later, it was still absent, the doctor asked Miss Bazett if she could "see" what had befallen the party. Miss Bazett "saw" the car on a country road with one wheel jacked up and, standing beside it, another car, out of which jumped two obvious mechanics in Air Force uniform, while the girl chaffeur in the car seemed to be writing a hurried message on a sheet of paper.

The doctor thought the whole scene unlikely; and at tea-time the car arrived back safely, nothing whatever having happened; the party having decided to lunch out. The doctor was duly scornful; but what Miss Bazett had seen occurred in every detail next day; in the same place, and at exactly the same time. She throws out, as a suggestion, that there may have been telepathic touch between the driver and herself, but that, I confess, enlightens me not at all, since it cannot be said to cover the time question and, despite Mr. Dunne, I am still allergic to any theory of time that is beyond the comprehension of the kitchen clock.

Miss Bazett remarks mildly that "perhaps enough has been said to show that this subject of telepathy calls for study and thought." It certainly does and, possibly more than either, it asks for an open mind, which conspicuously, indeed one might say fantastically, has, so far been refused it. As someone once said about some equally obvious business: "One might just as well deny that there are shells on the sea shore; because beaches are occasionally without them." That sturdy sceptic, Charles Richet, concluded one persuasive chapter with what almost sounded like a shout in capitals—"There is prevision!"

Miss Bazett, thanks to repeated experience, is equally dogmatic. The future can be foreseen and foretold, but, she adds: It cannot always be avoided. "The ability to see a little way into the future does not necessarily carry with it the power to alter what is coming." On the other hand, some foretellings were given with the express object of their being used, and lives were saved by the knowledge thus imparted. Others had a delayed action; one, she mentions, taking six-and-a-half years to be fulfilled, and she was once warned of a coming operation, a year in advance, and was cheered on the appointed day by seeing her etheric double standing, watching her body from the foot of her bed. Why, by the way, don't unwilling sceptics like, say, C. E. M. Joad, study the abundant literature of the double, to purge their minds of that "qualified kind of survival" which represents the limit of what they can believe? There is nothing "qualified" about the etheric double; it possesses and *can use* every mental quality possessed by the body which it has for the time being abandoned, and if that body is annihilated in its absence, the double's existence will be in no wise altered, it will merely be functioning in conditions more exactly suited to it than when it was encased in flesh, which did "qualify" its earthly aptitudes. Surely these clever people

might spare a little time to study the literature of a subject about which they are so eager to dogmatize.

MAKE CHRISTMAS THE REAL THING

This Message Received From General Booth Through the Trance Mediumship of Winifred Moyes at Zodiac Circle, London.

I want to give a Christmas message to the poor—yes, and to the rich! I want to say to them that the battle is going to the strong, the spiritually strong; and I want all those who have done their bit, who have faced up to the fire of the enemy, to realize that at Christmas time the gates of Heaven are opened, and we come into the earth conditions, like *Father Christmas*, laden with our gifts. That's the part I like, that's the part that suits me—to feel that we can give and give to those who are without!

Self-Expressed Happiness

I want every one who takes the trouble to read my words to make up their mind that this *Christmas* they are going to do a little more for someone who is down-hearted or in trouble, just a little more than they have ever done before, and so there will be songs of praise in Heaven; and the "*Hallelujahs*" that come from our hearts, well, they are too sacred to be expressed in words!

But I have come to give this message—a message from the old General to the poor—and to ask them, in turn, to try to do their little bit for someone who is worse off still. That's the way to make the Christmas bells ring, that's the way to set flowing the happiness that worldly strife has seemed to stem!

Praise be to God that there are so many of my own people who are recognizing that the barriers between the two worlds can be broken down! Praise God for the faithful workers in my own ranks. According to their efforts they are blessed, according to their understanding so the Light shines upon them! They have heard

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the cry to be up and doing. And that is my message to humanity: It is **TO BE UP AND DOING!**

FROM "THE DOCTOR'S DIARY."

"I'm awfully sorry to worry you on Christmas Day," said the prim voice of Mrs. Harton on the telephone this morning, "but Eva has a temperature and I'm worried about her. She won't eat anything. She's in bed and I was wondering if you could possibly call in."

"Well, this is too bad," I said in my best family practitioner voice to six-year-old Eva an hour or so later. "Sick on Christmas Day! I bet Santa Claus came all the same."

"Eva knows there is no Santa Claus," said Mrs. Harton coldly from the other side of the bed. "We've never allowed anyone to lie to her about anything, and we've been quite frank ourselves about everything."

"Mother and father gave me a book each," said Eva.

Eva had nothing worse than temporary gastric disturbance, and, as traditional Christmas is apparently not observed in the Harton household, my advice to have nothing but water for the next few hours may not worry her unduly.

"Without fantasy," writes a professor of child psychology in a book just issued, "life would become intellectually and culturally static. The importance of fantasy cannot be over-estimated."

The line between lie and fantasy is not easy to draw when handling fantasy, but people who would kill Father Christmas sometimes have no hesitation in reciting that the cow jumped over the moon, a statement which the small child accepts with delight and quite literally.

Little Bo-Peep, Little Jack Horner, Marjorie Daw, Humpty-Dumpty, are all real people . . . or at least real "pretending-people," as Wendy used to call them.

It is a brave person who would rub out the kindest fantasy of all, genial Father Christmas, who makes the happiness of boys and girls his life's work. He is the spirit of Christmas, and, as such, very much alive.

CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

By DR. J. M. PEEBLES.

Our thought, now widening, extends over lands and seas, God's witnesses of immortality have made radiant every realm of this planet. How brilliant the evening of Krishna's birth. How musical the songs of attending angels! Krishna, Gautama, Jesus, and Gauranga, all Asian Saviours in their time and place, and all demonstrators of the law of continuity in the sphere of Divine order, whether physical or ethical.

Human life at longest is brief. We brought nothing material into this world and we can take nothing material out of it; and it is of little consequence whether anyone was born in a palace or a peasant's hut.

It is reported that Jesus the Christ was born in a manger, and yet in a few hundred years, proud, imperial Rome trembled from her foundations because of the psychic forces concealed in that manger. Christmas points the thinking mind back to that humble birth, to that man, medium, and martyr who, while going about doing good, had not where to lay his head. And Christians in all enlightened countries are now honoring that inspired martyr.

Messenger From Heaven

It is absolutely amazing, how this character, Jesus the Christ, strikes the minds of different people. To the uncultured and atheistic-agnostic, Jesus never lived—he was a mere myth; to the great German, Strauss, he was a wise Rabbi; to the great Jewish Rabbi Akiba, he was a magician; to the illustrious Renan, he was a sublime moral

teacher; to Fourier, a warm-hearted Socialist; to Fenelon, a most rapt mystic; to Thomas Paine, the most sincere of philanthropists; to Max Muller, the harmony of all history; to Emerson, the transcendental prophet; to Parker, a fellow brother and self-sacrificing reformer; to A. J. Davis, the great Syrian Seer; to Cora L. V. Richmond, the messenger from heaven; to Helen T. Brigham, he was the ethical reformer; to George W. Fuller, the poet-philosopher; to Robert Peebles Sudall, he was the Oriental revealer, and Colonel Ingersoll spoke of him as a "most generous and self-denying man, for whom I feel only admiration and profound respect."

The above illustrious men and women express my conceptions of that Judean Christ who, using the inspired words of that eminent speaker and author, W. J. Colville, is now undoubtedly "the reigning power of the moral universe."

While orthodox sectarists, calling themselves Christians, make Jesus of Nazareth a God, or at least a third part of God in the Trinity, Spiritualists and Liberalists in America consider Jesus a highly-inspired man, begotten naturally, yet on a higher spiritual plane of consciousness than the masses of mankind. The world has had many Christs in past ages; and as the world develops and unfolds, there will be still more great Christ souls as saviours of the world. — "Psychic Observer."

Talking of children, I like the story of the father who had to punish his youngest daughter before leaving for the office. As he came in the door in the evening, the five-year-old called icily: — "Mother, your husband's home."

CHRISTMAS,

"It's a lonesome Christmas," said father Brown
As he laid the fork and the carver down,
And turned his head for a moment aside,
And the mother knew he was trying to hide
The shine of a tear in his dimming eye.

It never will do for folk to cry
At a burdened table on Christmas Day,
But he thought of the words he could not say:
Son of my blood whose body lies
Under the arch of alien skies!
Why are you far and far away?

(He did not turn at the answer clear,
"Father of mine, I am waiting here,
Close and close for the love we bear!")

And the mother bent her greying head
And heard in her heart the words he said
In the years foregone—"Don't worry for me!
I'll travel the land and sail the sea
And come back safe as safe can be!"
Oh, sorrow, sorrow on Christmas Day!
But she did not hear the soldier say:

"Mother of mine, I am here, am here!
Free from sorrow and pain and fear,
Close to the heart of your love always!"

She did not hear, but her lifted eyes
Widened with grace of a strange surmise,
And she turned her face to the vacant chair
And stretched her arms to the soldier there,
Welcomed home from the wars at last,
When the faith that was born of her wisdom passed
Into perfect knowledge and happiness—
God bless us all with an equal grace!

—N. M. Layne in "The Round Robin."

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SCIENCE (!)

A parable reprinted from "Light."

By ALAN HOWGRAVE-GRAHAM.

(From the "Proceedings" of the Society for the Investigation of Psychomorphic Phenomena, Vol. XIII., No. 9. Report on case 181).

The attention of the Society was drawn by a member to this case, to which publicity was given in the first instance by the well-known writer, Mr. Leigh Hunt. It was thereupon handed to the Society's Investigation Officer, Mr. Christopher Blight, for investigation and report. The original account of the episode by Mr. Leigh Hunt reads as follows:—

Abou ben Adhem (may his tribe increase) awoke one night from a deep dream of peace, and saw, within the moonlight in his room, making it rich, and like a lily in bloom, an angel, writing in a book of gold. Exceeding peace had made ben Adhem bold, and to the Presence in the room he said, "What writest thou?" The vision raised its head, and, with a look made all of sweet accord, answered, "The names of those who love the Lord." "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so," replied the angel. Abou spoke more low, but cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then, write me as one that loves his fellow men." The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night it came again, with a great wakening light, and showed the names whom love of God had blessed, and lo! ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

This case is really of quite a usual kind, and only distinctive for one peculiarity: the experience, which seems to have been on the first occasion both visual and audible, was repeated (as to the former respect only) after an interval of plus or minus twenty-four hours; in other respects this seems to have been a fairly typical hypnopompic

phenomenon. Since, however, the story has attracted not a little popular attention, probably owing to the somewhat factitious manner of its relation, it seems desirable to put the essential facts in their proper perspective by re-stating them as from the Society's more objective point of view.

According, then, to the story which he related to Mr. Hunt, and has since maintained, Mr. Abou ben Adhem, a Jewish gentleman, awoke suddenly one night from peaceful slumber, and saw in his moonlit bedroom an apparition which he describes as an "angel," engaged in writing something in a book bound with some metallic substance which he assumed to be gold. It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. ben Adhem to enquire of the stranger how or why it had entered his private bedchamber; indeed, he seems to have been rather suspiciously ready to take its presence there as a matter of course. The only curiosity which he seems to have felt found expression in an enquiry as to what it was that the stranger was writing. The latter replied that it was writing "the names of those who love the Lord," as if it deemed this to be a quite sufficient explanation of its proceedings. On Mr. ben Adhem's next enquiring whether his own name was being thus distinguished, which, could one suppose his visitor to have been a real entity, might to a certain extent have explained its presence, the apparition replied, politely enough, if perhaps a shade baldly, in the negative. Mr. ben Adhem was evidently a little disconcerted by this unqualified answer, and requested that at least his name should be entered in the book in the philanthropic character of *amicus generis humani*. To this request the "angel" apparently acceded without comment. Having made the desired entry, it forthwith took its departure—in what manner Mr. Hunt does not relate; he merely says, all too vaguely, that it "vanished." The following night,

however, the angelic visitor again made its appearance. No further verbal exchanges are on record, but this second time it displayed a list—presumably inscribed in the “golden” book of the night before—of “those whom love of God had blessed,” which list Mr. ben Adhem’s own name now headed. There the episode ended.

It is a subject of continual regret to the scientific student that in these cases of quasi-veridical psychomorphic experiences, the percipient almost invariably neglects to take even the simplest precautions with the object of establishing their objectivity or otherwise. The experienced investigator, familiar with the scientific viewpoint, would have seen at once that if the adventure of the first night had in truth any objective basis, some sort of sequel to the granting of his request to be entered on the illustrious roll was a logically presumable *sequitur*. One would therefore have expected that at least Mr. ben Adhem would so far have anticipated such a sequel as to have placed a ready-loaded photographic camera beside his bed. He himself described his angel visitant as having returned on the second night with what he calls “a great awakening light.” That being so, an indisputable photograph of the supernatural being, if real at all, should have been procurable without difficulty. Though indeed it is a pretty safe guess that such an experiment would have produced a negative the complete blankness of which would have served the purpose—not without utility in this age of spiritualistic and other superstition—of once and for all convincing the photographer and his friends that his experiences were in reality purely automorphic and subjective.

For it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that both Mr. ben Adhem’s experiences were wholly entecephalic. They seem so strikingly characteristic of such phenomena. The thoroughly conventional picture of the “angel,” writing in its

book of gold (a significant little oriental touch, that last, in exact keeping with such a percipient's instinctive racial mentality); the nicely orthodox religionistic piety of the purported writing; the laudable ambition of the excellent percipient for the inclusion of his name in the celestial list; the "wakening light," and all the rest of it! Is not all of this, throughout, eminently characteristic of the wishful thinking of a pious mystic's Subconscious culminating in the psychologically quite orthodox gratification by the Conscious of a subliminal craving in the Unconscious for flattering notice? And is there not in the mental make-up of every religious mystic that latent longing for, and expectation of, some kind, no matter what, of personal supernatural revelation? As was *not* observed by the Poet Tennyson,

I hold it truth whate'er befall,
I feel it when I shudder most,
Better be frightened by a ghost
Then never see a ghost at all.

The percipient's own attitude, moreover, was in full conformity with this view; it was the usual quite characteristic one of spiritualistic or religious romanticism hugging to its bosom its own private miracle. On Mr. ben Adhem being asked by the Society's Investigation Officer what evidence he could adduce in support of the alleged objectivity of his supposed supernormal experience—as likely as not no more than an exceptionally realistic and vivid dream—what was his reaction? Just what one would expect it to be! He assumed at the outset a superior pose of a sort of tolerantly amused pity; said well, well, it took all sorts to make a world; he had not lived sixty-whatever-it-was years without being able to know it when he was awake; preferred the evidence of his own senses to what he called Mr. Blight's secondhand science; even prophesied that this

Society itself would one day "outgrow its omniscience"; and so on and so forth. Our Investigation Officer's wise cautionary reminder of the many authenticated instances of waking hallucinations, as recorded by Gurney, Myers, and others, he laughingly pooh-poohed with—"Nonsense, my dear man; hallucination be blowed," and asked whether Mr. Blight seriously expected him to believe anything so fanciful and far-fetched (save the mark). Being more rigorously pressed to consider the point, he said, not a little stiffly, that he was "busy," and "had nothing to add to or subtract from Mr. Leigh Hunt's statement of the facts," concluding with the distinctly cavalier remark, "It is really not of the smallest concern to me what you and your Society choose to think about it." In fact, everything in Mr. ben Adhem's manner and attitude only tended to confirm the already poor opinion which our Investigation Officer had formed both of his credibility as a witness and of his capability of forming a correct judgment on this or any other phenomenon of the kind.

In the total absence, therefore, of any evidence worth calling such that there was any objective reality in the apparitions seen by Mr. ben Adhem, and in view, further, of the extremely high ratio of antecedent improbability of any such objectivity, the Society has no hesitation in dismissing such an interpretation of his experiences as being quite undeserving of credence.

There remains, however, an interesting point. It is whether we should suppose that Mr. ben Adhem, having been born with, or being otherwise possessed of, a psychorragic diathesis, unconsciously brought about a kind of phantasmogenetic modification of an area of space in his bedroom, as adumbrated in the case of Canon Bourne, quoted in Myers' *Human Personality* (abridged), page 197. Or, on the other hand, whether these

two experiences should be regarded as being instances, autogenous and automorphic respectively, of ordinary hallucination. There is this to be said for the first explanation that the second being (as always deceptively) the simpler one, it would for that reason, following the Society's accepted policy, normally be deemed the less likely one. Nevertheless, the Investigation Committee, having given exhaustive consideration to the various psychologic and other factors involved, has come to the conclusion that this case would most appropriately be assigned provisionally to Category B (iii), as having consisted of two successive Pseudo-veridical or Falsidical Sensory Automatisms, both of somnistic origin. The question will be considered, however, whether this point may not suitably form the subject for debate at one of the quarterly meetings of the Society.

For the Investigation Committee,

A. D. MIRABLE-CRITCHTON,

Hon. Secretary.

THE LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE

THE CHILD WHO KNEW

When Kathleen was a little girl she was the only child, and so while others had brothers and sisters, Kathleen had only her toys to play with, and for her companions a cocker spaniel, and an old rough-haired terrier. And she used to play with them all day long if her mother would let her, and when she grew older and had to interrupt her joyous ties in order to go to school, Kathleen kept close within herself the things she knew, for while she had played with her toys, others had played with her too. And no one had seen the little colleen who peeped round the corner and played.

(Please turn to Page 45.)

WHAT SIR WILLIAM CROOKES TOLD LOUIS N. PARKER

We all, some nights, are deeply moved by an announcement on the wireless that touches us deeply. It may be of some magnificent deed in the war; it may be the unexpected voice of a friend appealing, with all a poet's tenderness and sympathy, for a National Cause; or it may be the death of a celebrity we once knew.

So it was one night a little while ago when the message came through that Louis N. Parker, the dramatist, composer and pageant master, had died at the age of 91. I don't know quite why I was touched so deeply about it. It was five years or more since I last saw him at his home in Kensington, but I was once a playgoer and what he wrote always pleased me—one of his plays, "The Great Day," was written for Drury Lane in collaboration with my friend, George R. Sims—and perhaps that link between us, slight as it may seem, set me recalling two remarkable episodes in his life which left upon him a lasting impression.

(Continued from Page 44.)

But Kathleen knew her well, and so did Rough and Goldie, for often they had walked and talked together, and Kathleen was but one of four who knew the meaning of laughter. And her mother, being wise, said nothing to her when down by the stream she talked to the air.

One day, however, while she was at school, poor Kathleen forgot and spoke out loud to her playmate, and the school mistress told her that now she was growing old, and must leave her Land of Make-Believe behind her and believe in the things she could see, and Kathleen agreed. And as she grew older only the dogs and herself knew the secret of the laughter in her heart, and the constant smile upon her lips and the light in her eyes.

M.S. in "The Psychic Times."

The Apport of the Rose

Would the B.B.C. in their tribute of appreciation to this fine man mention those episodes? Not on your life! They were too wonderful, and too mystical, for that sedate Corporation. Perhaps, even, they had never heard of them, though they are recorded in that most enchanting of autobiographies, "Several of My Lives," published by Chapman & Hall.

The first occurred at a luncheon given by Mr. Douglas Murray at his beautiful home. Amongst many others present were Sir William and Lady Crookes.

Already before they sat down, Mr. Parker tells us, he felt he was in a strange and, to him, altogether new atmosphere. For the first time in his life he heard "controls" spoken of familiarly. He realised he was among convinced Occulists.

At the luncheon he was seated next to Sir William Crookes, to whom he remarked that he regretted that he had never been told anything at first hand about the Occult. "Then let me tell you," said Sir William, "an instance of the sort of experience we constantly enjoy."

In repeating as nearly as possible Sir William's actual words, Mr. Parker, made this comment:—

"You must realise that here was one of the foremost scientists of the day, a man quite incapable of uttering one word he was not convinced was absolutely true, speaking quietly and coolly, just as any one would in recounting the most ordinary occurrence.

"One evening," Sir William began "my wife and I were at a large dinner party when they followed the old custom of removing the cloth for dessert. It was in the middle of winter and our hostess deplored the fact that she had been unable to get any flowers.

"Mr. Home, the great medium, who was present, said, 'Oh, but that can easily be remedied.'

"And then under our close scrutiny a large rose slowly emerged through the joint of two leaves of the mahogany table which remained tightly closed—emerged perfect, with the petals not even crumpled.

"When it had forced itself up with its stem and leaves it was slowly wafted a few inches above the table, to our hostess, who wore it the rest of the evening."

MR. HOME AND HIS PIANO LEVIATED

Sir William then told Mr. Parker another experience which he thought might strike him as even more remarkable. It was that of Mr. Home playing a Beethoven Sonata on the grand piano at Sir William's house. The piano, and Mr. Home on the music stool, were floating during the performance some seven feet above the floor. "To make quite sure my senses were not deceiving me," Sir William said, "I got up from my chair and walked slowly under the piano and the player. Then, while he was still playing, the piano and he floated gently downwards, while I watched, and settled in their accustomed places."

THE VISION IN THE WOODS

The second of these episodes occurred at Murren, where Mr. Parker lost a train and had to walk through the woods to Wengen.

At the time he had a very kind and close friend in London (whom he called Mr. P.) who was connected financially with many theatrical enterprises, and was well-known in theatrical circles.

"He was a man of very striking personality, a man you could not overlook," Mr. Parker said. "Tall and upright, with strongly marked features, and a long snow-white forked beard, he habitually wore a black frock coat and a tall hat."

About half way on his walk, Mr. Parker, to his surprise, saw this well-known figure coming towards him. He thought it strange that he should be dressed as if he were in Piccadilly, but after all, he felt, a millionaire can wear what he likes. He hurried forward to greet him, but there was no smile of recognition.

He was so astonished that he could not move. He seemed riveted to the ground. Still staring straight in his face, Mr. P. passed; he was gone.

Mr. Parker was dazed. Had he deliberately cut him? Impossible—he would never have cut him. Had he not recognised him? Absurd. Then—what? He walked on. At Lauterbrunnen he missed the last train to Wengen and had to climb home through the woods in darkness.

His wife was waiting anxiously. He did not say a word about his mysterious encounter. While he was having supper his wife opened a newspaper which had just arrived from England. "Oh," she cried, "did you know that Mr. P. was dead?"—"Prediction."

I consider this world as a place nature never intended for a permanent abode, and I look on my departure from it as simply leaving an inn.—Cicero.

In My Father's House are many Mansions.—Jesus.

Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.—Jesus.

Is it not strange that after all I have said to convince you that I am going to the society of the happy you still think this body to be Socrates? To die and be released is better for me.—Socrates.

Internal purity is the cause of charity.—Jesus.

No man who does not ever see visions will ever realize any high hopes or undertake any great enterprise.

It is what people do not know, that they persecute each other about. Science will bring, not a sword, but peace.—Robert Ingersoll.

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