

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day"

THE Harbinger of Light

A MONTHLY DIGEST DEVOTED TO

Psychical Research, Spiritualism, Progressive Thought,
Healing, and Spiritual Philosophy

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We extend to our Contemporaries, our
Readers, Contributors and Supporters
our

Christmas Greetings

The Season of Festivity, when Peace
and Goodwill animate each and every
one of us, is here.

In wishing you Health, Prosperity,
and Happiness during this Season, and
in the coming year, we desire to express
our sincere thanks and appreciation for
your past co-operation.

Our desire is to feel that you are a
personal friend, and that we are at your
service at all times.

We have striven to give you of our
best, and through the coming year this
endeavour will always be before us.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Again it is with much pleasure that we extend to our many readers a holiday greeting and wish to each one a most joyous and happy Christmas, for at this season of the year we are reminded of the wonderful beauty of the many spiritual truths which were so well understood and taught by that great Spiritual Teacher and Medium, Jesus, two thousand years ago.

Each December brings to man on earth the old, old story, old but ever new—old because its origin, in one form or another, long preceded the days when it became known as Christmas, for its foundation lies in the Centre of the Universe and has been handed down to us in song and story all through the history of mankind—new because with every repetition and every celebration comes clearer understanding and greater appreciation of the beautiful yet wonderful truths which it represents, but which are yet so dimly discerned by man on earth.

It is well that the Spirit of Christmas, which is the spirit of love and goodwill—which every religious founder and every humanitarian has so well exemplified—should reign in the hearts and minds of men for at least a season each year. It is good that the teachings and life of the gentle Nazarene—Whose birth is celebrated at this time of the year, and Who set an example that the world even now does not fully understand—should again be brought to the attention of mankind, especially at such times as the world is now passing through; when so many are in need and distress and when kindness of heart and the sweetness of love may do so much to relieve the unhappiness of so many of them.

“Peace on earth; goodwill to man”; the angels sang, nearly two thousand years ago, and ever since that time our spirit friends, teachers, and

helpers have been bringing the same message to the earth plane, and gradually the minds and hearts of men are being touched and their eyes opened so that they understand more clearly the meaning and value of the message.

In time yet to come when man shall have fully learned the real meaning of the beautiful lessons taught by the Man of Galilee and shall realise, as He did, the nearness and companionship of the Ancient World, and his own oneness and unity with God the Divine Spirit of the Universe, then indeed the prophecy of the angels and the message of our spirit friends will be fulfilled and there will be "Peace on Earth and Goodwill to Man."

And for this we again wish to our many readers and friends:

**A Joyous, Happy, and Blessed Christmas Season
With all the blessings it can hold.**

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SPIRITUAL AND MAGNETIC HEALING RAYS, BREATHING AND DIET

By W. J. Moran, D.Sc., M.B.H.A.

A course of lessons to teach you how to unfold and develop your healing powers through your hands. The lessons are practical, plainly presented, and well illustrated, so that even the newest student of this great work can take right hold and let himself be the instrument for wonderful healing demonstrations. No apparatus is required.

The editor recommends this valuable work as the most practical and easiest to follow that he has ever seen. Secure your copy from Mr. Chas. Neil, 8 Hatfield, Warnda Street, Kirribilli, N.S.W. 5/- per copy, post free. As the supply is limited and cannot be replaced, you are advised to obtain a copy early.

A PHRASE, A WHISTLE

Brought Conviction

By E. A. S. Hayward.

Mr. Hayward was formerly an Admiralty administrative official, and holds British and French decorations, among others, for his service. Since his retiral some eight years ago he and Mrs. Hayward have visited many countries in the cause of the advancement of Spiritualism. Mr. Hayward is a leading authority on psychic photography. He says:

Up to 1922 we were strongly antagonistic to Spiritualism. The loss of a son in the war, and the death of a daughter under tragic circumstances, were great griefs in our lives, and we could find little consolation in organised religion. While Mrs. Hayward was at a meeting in 1922 a lady was pointed out to her as a Spiritualist. Mrs. Hayward was asked if she would care to meet this lady, and although at first declining, eventually did so.

During the conversation which followed, the new acquaintance produced some psychic photographs which Mrs. Hayward examined without much interest until she came on one which she at once recognised as a photograph of her dead daughter. The face was surrounded by ectoplasm in the shape of a harp and it was certainly an original photograph and not an old one faked up. Moreover, it had been taken three months previously. Mrs. Hayward was greatly moved, and learning that a famous American medium was giving sittings in London she did not rest until one had been arranged for her.

At this seance, the first Mrs. Hayward had ever attended, the dead daughter spoke to her mother, using first an Italian phrase meaning, "Where is my mother?" which she had been in the habit of using when the family were resident in Malta. In the conversation she said that her brother was

with her and later he too came through, his introduction being a certain whistle which the family had used formerly when they wished to attract one another's attention. The son had a long talk with his mother, telling her of his passing over other side.

Finally, both son and daughter appeared in what is called etherealisation, which, as distinct from materialisation, the person who appears is not solid. The etherealsation was from the waist upwards. Mrs. Hayward noticed that her son, who had held a commission in the Royal Field Artillery, was wearing uniform with the three stars of a captain. He had been promoted to this rank two days before his death, but in life had not assumed the third star.

Mr. Hayward, on hearing an account of the seance, believed at first that Mrs. Hayward had been hypnotised, but finally agreed to attend a sitting himself. He, too, spoke with his son and daughter and saw them etherealised, this time the whole figure appearing. As the son stood before his father, he spoke to him, saying, "Can you see me, Dad?" Our first experience of Spiritualism was perhaps the most striking of the many we have had, and convinced us at once of its truth.

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WHICH ARE YOU?

The two kinds of people on earth I mean
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.
Wherever you go you will find the world's masses
Are divided in just these two classes.
And oddly enough, you will find, too, it seems
There is only one lifter to twenty who lean.
In which class are you? Are you easing the load
Of overtaxed lifters who toil down the road?
Or are you a leaner who lets others bear
Your portion of labour and worry and care?

—Author Unknown.

THE GHOST OF SANTA CLAUS

By Rev. Dr. C. Irving Benson.

Christmas Eve is the greatest night in the year. It is a night of mystery. When everybody is tucked in bed, except the policeman, down the chimney comes the queer old gentleman with his load of toys and trinkets, which he empties into the stockings of good little boys and girls.

Some unromantic people declare that there is no Santa Claus at all. How could he get through the narrow chimney pots? ask these heretics with scorn. Why doesn't the soot smirch his beautiful coat? they demand. There is a simple answer to these challenges.

The fact is, Santa Claus is a ghost. He is the ghost of that good man, St. Nicholas, who went about doing good on the sly. It is his spirit which enters into the hearts of fathers and mothers at this season, and prompts them to do his will. He lives on and labours in that higher sense of which George Eliot sang:—

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity.

The name of Santa Claus is a contraction of Santa Nicolaus (i.e., St. Nicholas). How did he acquire his reputation? How is it that every child in Christendom looks upon him as a reliable friend?

He was born of wealthy parents at Panthera, a city in Asia Minor. From childhood he was tender-hearted and could not look upon poverty or distress without lending a helping hand. His parents died while he was still young, and Nicholas came into the possession of vast riches. Nevertheless he lived a very simple, frugal life and spent his money on others, being specially generous to children.

Nicholas was appointed Bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor. The earliest method of perpetuating his memory was for someone to assume the costume of a bishop and distribute small gifts to "good children." From this custom comes the fashionable dress of Santa Claus as we know him.

I am well aware that some archaeologists (the Rev. Father Cahier among them) set the legends of his generosity as late as the tenth century. But who wants to be a higher critic at Christmas? There is sufficient historical evidence to prove that he had the liberal spirit with which fame has credited him.

By the tenth century the reputation of this saint's beneficence had spread into Western Europe. In 1087 the popularity of Nicholas in the West received a great impetus through the daring adventure of a band of merchants from Bari, in southern Italy. They stole the body of the saint from its tomb in Asia Minor, then in the hands of the Turks, and took it home. The sacred treasure was deposited by the archbishop in the Church of St. Stephen.

—"The Herald," Melbourne.

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SPIRITUAL GROWTH EVIDENT

Spiritualism is gaining ground in Brisbane.

The annual report of the Brisbane Spiritual Church—the only registered one in Queensland—states that its membership has increased by almost one-third. With nearly 30 new financial members, there are now 120 adherents to the Church.

Plans are afoot for the erection of a new church at the corner of Mein and Boundary Streets, Brisbane, next to the present church hall.

Officers for the year are: Mr. Alf. Sampson (president), Mrs. M. Pargeter (secretary), and Mrs. A. Shaw (treasurer).

CHARLES DICKENS MADE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT LIVE

By Adrienne Lee, in "Psychic News," 24/12/49.

("Psychic News" may be obtained through Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd. in any of the capital cities. Subscriptions: 21/8, English currency.)

What associations first spring to mind when we think about Christmas? Apart from its significance as a religious anniversary there is little doubt that the great majority first think of it as a festival of cheer presided over by the Christmas "spirit"—the season when goodwill and brotherhood are permitted to reign—and secondly, as the time of the year when ghost stories are most seasonable.

For both these conceptions we owe a great deal to Charles Dickens. It was he who aroused the Victorian conscience, made his fellows accept brotherhood as a reality—if only for a day—and prevailed upon them to remember the poorest of all, and particularly the children.

It was he, also, who started the telling of Christmas ghost stories, an idea kept evergreen by innumerable fireside storytellers, magazine writers and editors since.

Best Ghost Story

Both these results Dickens achieved by writing one story, "A Christmas Carol," which was the first and best Christmas ghost story, and at the same time a tale carrying a spiritual message that aroused a response in the heart of every reader.

Nearly everyone must know the story of Scrooge in its essentials, but probably not all are aware of the extent to which it proclaims teachings indistinguishable from those of Spiritualism.

Not that Dickens was an ardent Spiritualist. Indeed, the "Carol" was published four years before the birth of modern Spiritualism, which makes all the more amazing the amount of our philosophy he has packed into the story.

Not surprisingly it was composed with inspirational zeal and fervour. We have Dickens' own word for how he "wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in the most extraordinary manner in the composition, and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London fifteen and twenty miles many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed." Let us look at the story itself.

"Marley was dead," the first three words are re-emphasised again and again with all Dickens' technique to prepare a way for the ghost. Dickens well understood that though it was a moral tale the ghost was the important essence it needed to carry conviction.

Marley then is dead, and Scrooge, his partner, is carrying on the business in the tight-fisted manner characteristic of both.

Marley's Apparition

When he enters his home, cheerless and friendless, on Christmas Eve, Scrooge sees Marley's face in the door-knocker. Casting aside the "superstition" he searches the house, even looking under the bed, before locking his doors and sitting down to his gruel.

Then a disused bell in the room begins to ring and is joined by every other bell in the house. A clanking noise comes from below and he hears footsteps ascending the stairs. It enters—Marley's ghost!

At first Scrooge refuses to accept the spirit, but eventually he is forced to answer, in reply to the question as to whether he believes, "I do. I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

He remarks upon the fact of the ghost being fettered, and is given an answer in words akin to those heard at countless seances since.

"'I wear the chain I forged in life,' replied the ghost. 'I made it link by link, and yard by yard.

I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?"

Reference to Guides?

Scrooge trembles while the ghost tells him of the chain he too has fashioned. And when he asks for comfort Marley answers:

"I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would . . . I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere.

"My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

Here in a paragraph Dickens has indicated the existence of higher ministering spirits, whom we would call guides, and made it clear that to attract the spiritual one must be spiritual also, and that those who make no use of their opportunities live afterwards in a torture of remorse.

Then are emphasised the ideal of service, the opportunities this world offers for progression, and that only by one's own efforts is it possible to rise.

"'Oh! captive, bound and double-ironed,' cried the phantom, 'not to know that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed.

"'Not to know that any Christian spirit, working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!'"

CHARLES DICKENS MADE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT LIVE

Scrooge reminds Marley of his talent for business. But Marley answers that mankind was his business—the common welfare, charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, all these should have been his business. The dealings of his trade were but “a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

With Him at Work

He tells Scrooge that he has sat beside him invisible for many a day and has come to warn him that he has yet a chance to escape a like fate.

With this he walks to the window which raises itself for him to make his exit. Scrooge closes the window, and afterwards examines the door by which Marley entered—to find the bolts undisturbed.

The visitations Scrooge receives from the three spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Future, and the reformation of his character that follows is known to everyone.

At one point his conversation with the last of these three spirits raises the still vexed question of free will and predestination.

The spirit has shown Scrooge the future, and now, anxious to change his ways and fearful lest it be too late, Scrooge cries plaintively:

Scrooge Reflects

“Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they the shadows of the things that May be only? . . . Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead. But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!”

(Please turn to page 19.)

AN INVISIBLE TYPIST

In the course of a lecture given some time ago by Mr. J. B. McIndoe, President of the Spiritualist National Union, Edinburgh Psychic College, on "The Forces at Work in Telekinesis," the speaker said telekinetic phenomena ranged from slight and almost imperceptible tremors or molecular vibrations in an object, such as the top of a table, increasing in intensity until they could not fail to be perceived, and even going on until not only the table but the other furniture in the room, the floors, walls and ceiling were also affected, sometimes to an alarming degree.

In phenomena associated with mediums, curtains, furniture, and pictures vibrated or moved as a whole. Small objects flew about, apparently impelled by an invisible but intelligent force, which saw in the dark, for they were seldom damaged or caused hurt to anyone, even though the motion might be very rapid. Large and heavy objects as well as small ones might be moved, and there was nothing which enabled them to put a limit to the possible power available. Dr. Geley and others said that during a levitation of D. D. Home, the famous Edinburgh medium, the vibrations produced an effect reminiscent of an earthquake.

Similar effects were also sometimes associated with voice phenomena. Psychic threads photographed and described by Dr. Ochorowitz gave us the first hint of the mechanism employed. But many years elapsed before the work of Dr. Crawford confirmed the action of force through some supernormal extrusion from the medium, and put the matter on a sound basis.

Amongst illustrations of more complicated movements, the lecturer mentioned an instance with the medium, Frank Kluski, in 1919, recorded by the Polish S.P.R. A typewriter on the table,

fully illuminated by the red light, began to write. The keys were depressed as if by a skilful typist, although there was no one near the machine. The person holding Kluski's hands noticed that they twitched during the writing.

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"I do not know how people can keep up their prejudices against Spiritualism; how they are not, at least, thrown on the wish that it may be true, because of that abrupt shutting in their faces of the door of death which shuts them out from the sight of their beloved."

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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Let fear and superstition and dread of the future be banished from the minds of men, so that they may clearly see and perfectly understand nature; then will knowledge come to them, imparted by those who have journeyed into the next stage of progress, the spiritual, or stage of acute intelligence.

M. Leon Faure, Consul-General of France:—"I have long, carefully and conscientiously studied spiritual phenomena. Not only am I convinced of their irrefutable reality, but I have also a profound assurance that they are produced by the spirits of those who have left the earth; and, further, that they only could produce them."

M. Victorien Sardou, the eminent French dramatist, has produced a play, entitled, "Spiritualism," and has announced that:—"He has had frequent interviews with the spirits of friends who are 'dead,' and that he has received messages, spirits guiding his hand to write them as they were communicated to him. He is convinced of the objective reality of the spirit world and of its design and power to enter into relations with humanity."

HANDS THAT HEAL

By Harvey Day, in "Prediction."

- It has been said that our other four senses are all extensions of the sense of touch. Be this as it may, it is a fact that the hands of certain people seem to be endowed with a power beyond that of ordinary sense perception—a power to heal.

Life moves so fast and furiously today, machines perform so many of the tasks once done by hand, and most of us are so far removed from Nature that we have lost much of the sensitivity with which Man was originally endowed.

Also, we have lost that intimate contact with the elements that our forebears enjoyed; the constant lashing of wind and rain, the touch of damp earth, and the kiss of the sun on our bodies as we work.

Life in cities deadens the natural senses and develops our defensive mechanism to crowds and noise. It atrophies such senses as are not used constantly.

And though most people do not realise it, one of these deadened senses is the sense of touch; the most stimulating of all; even more acute than that of hearing.

The happiness of the blind is due largely to the fact that the sense of touch becomes magnified when sight is lost.

In the 'twenties Richard Aldington wrote a remarkable novel dealing with the subject, a work which should be more widely known if only because of the prominence given to this sense.

The blind develop their sense of touch because they are forced to depend almost entirely upon it and upon the sense of hearing. Those who are deaf as well rely on touch.

In Japan, for thousands of years, the profession of masseur has been almost exclusively the prerogative of the blind, and recently we, too, have come to realise the value of blind masseurs.

Whenever you touch someone there is a flow of power from your body into his, or from his into yours. This power flows from the constitutionally strong into the weak, and usually from the young into the old, just as the current from a body of high potential flows into that of a low.

That is why massage should be given by young, vigorous persons, if possible, or by those who are known to have "healing hands." Otherwise much of the value of the massage is lost.

Those who make a study of hands know how greatly they vary. Some are firm, capable and sensitive, though they may belong to delicate people; others are harsh and unresponsive. Some hands always seem cool and capable; others clammy and fishlike.

What pleasure the first give when placed on the hot forehead of an ailing person!

It is this cool, capable type of hand that belongs to the natural healer. The next time you visit a good dentist, surgeon, osteopath, bone-setter or massuer, take note of his hands.

Such hands seem to have eyes of their own. They know instinctively where to apply pressure and exactly how much. They sense when the patient is in agony. The messages of pain from his body seem to pass to them.

Once, during a game, I slipped a cartilage in my knee. An army surgeon examined me and said: "You'll have to lay off sport for at least three months, and then take it easy for a year. The cartilage will slip back gradually."

I saw a number of medical men, with the same result. Then a Captain James Grayson, formerly a lecturer on Osteopathy at Tennessee University, invited me to his room.

I lay on his bed while his sensitive fingers explored my knee and his hands gently levered my leg.

"There may be pain for just a second," he warned, "but don't worry."

There was—but only for a moment.

"Now get up," he ordered, "and walk." I did, and what is more, was playing games that week-end.

"That," said Grayson, "is one of the simplest osteopathic feats. If it slips again, let me know, and I'll put it back."

Yet men like him, with healing fingers, are not recognised by the medical fraternity as real healers!

The millions of cells in the body of every living person are tiny electric batteries which maintain the bodily temperature at a certain level, which in the normal human being is 98.4 degrees Fah. If this rises or falls a state of ill health is signified.

In the bodies of some a much greater charge is generated, which does not raise the temperature but gives them a reserve power which may be released, for healing purposes, into the bodies of others.

The structure of the cells cannot be described in this article, but if interested, you can read all about them in books written by Georges Lakhovsky, Dr. George Crile, Dr. Alexis Carrel, Dr. Serge Voronoff and others. There is a considerable literature on the subject, starting with Galvani, Fabre and Faraday.

Those who possess this reserve power are sometimes credited with having **healing hands**. Yogis say that healing power is developed by the intake of **prana**, and that it is the pranic current that cures the sick.

Does it matter whether we call it pranic current, electricity, magnetism, or any other name, so long as it achieves results?

Yoga is not the only means by which this healing power can be developed. There are people of other sects and denominations who claim that belief in a particular deity is responsible for it. Obviously, it is nothing of the sort.

Some possess healing power, but are unaware of it. For instance, Lady Clerk, wife of Sir George Clerk, former British Ambassador to France, realised some years before the war that she possessed a "mysterious fluid" which flowed from her hands, and according to her: "One day I thought of letting my fellow men profit from my magnetic power. I began making experiments on my friends.

"Thanks to President Masaryk, I was able to make, under the direction of eminent physicians, my first successful experiments in Czechoslovakian hospitals. I became quite famous there and sometimes treated two or three patients simultaneously."

Altogether, Lady Clerk cured more than 500 patients by the "laying on of hands." In Paris she encountered scepticism among French physicians who sent her, as tests, cases that were virtually incurable. She cured them.

Dr. Morlaas, of the Boupипault Hospital, who was one of the worst sceptics, said: "When I witnessed the effectiveness of her treatment, however, I soon became converted, as did other prominent Paris physicians who had scoffed at first."

Lady Clerk treated hundreds of patients in Paris, notably sufferers from supposedly incurable eye and skin complaints. The odd thing about it is that she cannot explain her power. There is nothing supernatural about it.

There is no doubt whatsoever that all living beings are charged with electric power. Some electric eels discharge their static electricity at such a high potential that they can knock a man senseless if he touches them and we all know that the mere act of peeling off a silk vest or shirt causes a crackle, and if shed in the dark, sparks may be seen; and in some cases a sheet of flame.

And if such a garment is held a few inches from your body, it will instantly become attracted to, and try to attach itself to your skin. Make the experiment for yourself.

Sometimes, as in the case of Anna Morano, wife of a fisherman in the village of Pirano, near Trieste, this power concentrates itself in some particular organ.

While she lay in hospital at Pirano one night a nurse entered the darkened ward and observed a glow from her bed. Anna's face was lit by a phosphorescent glow, and a greenish light from the region of her heart seemed to penetrate the covers.

She was examined by a panel of eminent doctors and scientists from all over Italy, but they could give no explanation for her luminous heart. As was to be expected in a country rife with superstition, the peasantry were convinced that she was holy, and her cottage became a shrine for pilgrims from all over Italy.

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M. Victorien Sardou, the eminent French dramatist, produced a play, entitled, "Spiritualism," and has announced that: "He has had frequent interviews with the spirits of friends who are 'dead,' and that he has received messages, spirits guiding his hand to write them as they were communicated to him. He is convinced of the objective reality of the spirit world and of its design and power to enter into relations with humanity."

(Continued from page 11.)

The "Christmas Carol" did more to establish love and charity in the hearts of men than anything comparable ever written. People wrote to Dickens telling him they would keep the "Carol" near them and read it every year as long as they lived.

Today millions are still listening to it on the radio at Christmas time, and watching it enacted on the stage. Many who have never read of Dickens know the traits of Scrooge, who is as much a household character as Hamlet, Falstaff, Oliver Twist and Sherlock Holmes.

And nothing could have pleased Charles Dickens better than that his readers should have taken its lesson to heart, for at the height of his fame he was never too busy to spare his time and energies in giving pleasure or help to those in need, and particularly to children as unfortunate as his own Tiny Tim.

For years he went on writing a new story for Christmas, each carrying the same message that he hoped would soften human hearts. "The Chimes," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain" (another psychic story) being among them.

Although the mass of Charles Dickens' later writings bore little relation to the psychic he was to leave behind a mystery that many spirit communications would claim to solve.

Plot Unsolved

This arose from his last book, suitably entitled the "Mystery of Edwin Drood"—suitably because the ending of the plot still remains a mystery.

Dickens died before the book was completed and the only man who might have given a true solution without much difficulty, Edgar Allan Poe, had preceded him to the spirit world by a quarter of a century.

A whole literature has grown up in suggested solutions, and a number of them have come from mediums claiming to have contacted Dickens. Four years after Dickens' death, in 1874, T. P. James, an uneducated mechanic, claimed to have received the continuation of the story from Dickens, and in his book, "The Edge of the Unknown," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle records a solution of the puzzle that came in a message given to him personally.

Evidential Contact

Many other contacts with Dickens have been claimed and one, a little more evidential than most, was published in the "Cornhill Magazine," in an article written by Sir Henry Lucy.

Lucy told how he was sitting with a table, the other experimenters being his wife and a clergyman friend. The table began moving and when asked his name the communicator spelled out "Charles Dickens."

A message followed concerning Mary Hogarth, Dickens' sister-in-law, who died at the age of seventeen and to whom he was greatly attached. Lucy had never heard the name previously.

In spelling other messages the table introduced a flippant note, making childish mis-spelling and grammatical errors that the sitters were puzzled to account for on the assumption that the communicator was an educated writer.

But afterwards Lucy discovered that this idiosyncratic way of writing had been characteristic of Dickens in his lifetime when corresponding with Forster, his great friend and biographer.

Before the sitting ended the table advised Lucy to visit Dickens' son, Charles, who was then editing the magazine his father had founded, "All the Year Round."

It foretold that Lucy and young Charles would be able to help each other, and so it came about. When Lucy called he was welcomed, and an arrangement was made that he should write for the magazine.

Another appearance of Dickens, acceptable insofar as that it occurred in the place where he might be best expected to appear, was recorded only a few years ago.

Dickens' Ghost

Dickens first saw Gadshill, the home at which he died, when his father took him for walks during his boyhood. He promised himself then that one day it would be his, a dream that came true. It was the last and most beloved of his many homes.

A Swiss gentleman was walking past the house one moonlight night when he saw seated in the garden writing, a figure that fitted the description of Charles Dickens.

After he had gone some distance down the road the traveller retraced his steps, intending to speak to the strange nocturnal worker from sheer curiosity. The writer had vanished.

The Swiss did not know until he described the occurrence to others that it was Dickens' home he had passed. For many years of his life Charles Dickens had been accustomed to work in that garden, and he was, indeed, writing there the day before he died.

And very appropriately, just before his sudden death, while working on "Edwin Drood," Dickens had written a descriptive passage that closed with the phrase "and preach the Resurrection and the Life. . . ." On that note he ended his earthly life.

If that is true of any mortal it must be true of Charles Dickens. When he looks upon this world at Christmas it will be to say with his own Tiny Tim, "God bless us one and all."

BETHLEHEM

By H. V. Morton, in "Women of the Bible."

(Published by Methuen & Co., 36 Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2. Obtainable through leading booksellers.)

In the starlight of a night long ago, when Herod the Great was King of Judea, the roads of Palestine were crowded with reluctant travellers. The great trunk road, on which the silks and the candied fruits of Damascus met the pickled fish of Galilee and the gold of Arabia, was that night alive with families travelling on camel back, on asses, and on foot.

Villages and towns were awake all through the land. A cluster of lights marked Nazareth on its hill. The stark little towns of Judea gleamed darkly among the clefts of the mountains; and on the flat land of the Sharon Plain lanterns shone against the background of the sea like the camp fires of a host.

Dusty and travel weary, the wayfarers came to towns and villages and knocked upon doors. Alas, some had nowhere to sleep that night. Guest chambers were full, and travellers, finding no room in the khans or in the houses of their friends and relatives, were shown into lofts and garrets and stables.

There were some who grumbled as they slaked their thirst and broke their fast:

"God knoweth our numbers. Why should we be counted on the fingers of men?"

God knoweth our numbers. . . . It was the old cry of Israel, the hatred of the counting of heads, the sin that drove David to build an altar unto the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. But these were different times.

Augustus, the Master of the World, had sent forth a decree that men should be counted, and Herod the King had commanded that all Jews,

men and women, should return into their tribal territory and be enrolled as households, as the Egyptians were enrolled every 14 years for the ease and pleasure of the tax collector.

Men spat upon the floor and cursed the disjointed world. Some day, they said, a king would rise in Israel, the Messiah, a man sprung from the loins of David, one born with a sword in his hand, a man of war; and he would free his country and drive the oppressor into the sea.

Among those who travelled from Nazareth at the time of the census was Joseph the Carpenter, and Mary, his wife. They were on their way to Bethlehem, David's town, because Joseph was of the house and family of David.

Among the women who travelled the roads that night there must have been many like Mary of Nazareth over whom hovered the mystery of birth. Greater even than any mystery of motherhood was the mystery of her destiny and the sacred mystery of the splendour that was as soon to fall upon her.

As Mary rode that night to Bethlehem, one is reminded of the opening words of Genesis. Once again in the history of the world the Spirit is brooding on the face of the waters, and as its wings go past in the darkness they promise new hope for the human soul.

"From henceforth," Mary had cried in the Magnificat, "all generations shall call me blessed." She had not singled out one nation from the others. Her song was the first expression of the unity of Mankind, the first cry for the abolition of injustice and inequality and greed, the first looking forward to a better world.

So the immortal travellers came out of Samaria, and as they climbed up into the foothills of Judea they approached the long, steep road that leads to Jerusalem and saw a city, cruel and dark

within its wall, crouched in the night like those beasts which the Egyptians carved on their temples.

If they came down by the north road, where the white towers of Hippicus and Phasaël gleamed on their right, they would have passed a little hill outside the city gate. The name of this hill was Golgotha.

The road to Bethlehem runs like a white ribbon for five miles to the south of Jerusalem.

The little town which travellers now approached climbed the hill among olives and vines. Beneath the fateful stars of that night Joseph and Mary went from house to house seeking a lodging, for from far and near all the tribe of David was crowded together in Bethlehem.

The old houses in Bethlehem are built above caves in the rock. Above these caverns, where the cattle are stabled at night, are the rooms where the humble families live. In such a dwelling Mary of Nazareth found a lodging.

There was no place for her in the room above, but below in the friendly darkness of the rock, and among the quiet, friendly beasts of the field, the mother of Jesus made her bed that night.

Just outside Bethlehem was a place called Migdal Eder, "the watch-tower of the flocks," where the sacrificial lambs were gathered before they were driven towards Jerusalem to the altar on which their blood was spilt.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The shepherds said one to the other: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us."

There is an ancient story that at this moment mariners off the coasts of Greece heard a great voice crying in the darkness: "Great Pan is dead!"

The story of the first Christmas is the most lovely story in the world. It is one on which has lavished the treasure of its love and its imagination; the shepherds on their knees, the Wise Men with their gifts, the quiet beasts in the dusk of the cave where the Mother sat with her Child.

Those who believe in Christ and those who deny Him agree in one thing: that on this first Christmas night long ago in Bethlehem the first visit of Perfection shone out over the world. The world is still imperfect, but the Vision remains: the vision of a world ruled by love and justice, where man loves God with all his heart and soul and his neighbour as himself.

More precious even than the inspired canvases of Botticelli and Correggio are the little pictures of a frosty night in Bethlehem which each one of us holds in his heart.

The sound of the heavenly host above the Watch Tower of the Flock has been taken up by human voices ever since. It comes to us from the past, and we sing it into the darkness of the future—

*Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.*

CHRISTMAS

By Ursula Bloom.

Christmas is the great feast of the Christian year. Then for a while it seems as though hearts are melted, and people warmed one to another. It seems as though the world had become a new place, far, far nearer to the heart's desire.

Nineteen hundred years ago a Child was born in Bethlehem. He came, simple, and unhonoured. He was the Son of poor people. He lived a poor and humble life. Later He preached in the Temple, and He preached a faith that today we should ever attempt to follow. Christ brought beauty to a world sadly devoid of beauty. He brought loveliness to an empire that was tottering under the weight of pomp and imperialism, of men striving each against the other, of neighbourly hate, and of the god of Vengeance.

Christ Taught Simplicity

He had hoped to achieve by His most beautiful life an everlasting example, and He prayed that men would follow Him, walk in His steps, learn to love those whom they had hated, learn that God can only be approached in simplicity and humility, and not as they were used to approach Him.

Christ died for His faith. He died, and it always seems to me that when, hanging on the cross of Calvary, He cried, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He knew that He had died in vain. He had not brought about the world-wide revolution of feeling that He desired.

He rose, as we all shall rise. He carried on into the next phase, and so on and so on. Because He lived here He understands the pain and the woe that we bear, but Christ did not achieve all that He set out to achieve.

Where He had meant to found His Church, priests founded it. Christianity as it has been taught by the priests is a very different matter from the Christianity taught by Christ. It is far from the same thing.

I say, as Temple Thurston says, in his magnificent play, "The Wandering Jew," "There has only been ONE Christian, and He was a Jew!"

What Are We Doing?

It would not hurt some of us to sit down this Christmas, which is so essentially a Christian feast, and think how we are living life, what we are doing for our weaker neighbours, what sort of a fight we are putting up against sin and pain and woe which hem us in on all sides. There is the echo of war in the air. War would not come if we were truly Christians.

If we were truly Christians, there would not be this trail of melancholy people in the gutter: workless, homeless, destitute. "It is probably their own fault, they drink or something," says the truly Christian man or woman. Like that they shirk the responsibility from themselves. They do not feel that they are to blame. If it is the beggar's fault that he drinks, then he deserves to come to the gutter. That is the way we think, these days. Christ, Who led the pattern Life, never thought in that way.

I have a truly Christian relation; she prides herself that she never tells a lie. Yet she repeats the most atrocious and cruel village scandals, and excuses herself by saying "People are telling me." You cannot shirk responsibility that way, either.

Are We Christians?

We are not Christians. I don't know that we are anything in particular. We are entirely occupied with ourselves. Getting on in this poor, petty little world. Reaching out for a crown.

Let us hope we may not discover that it is made of thorns.

This life passes. There comes a crossing over, and then suddenly there is no escape. We have to make good the damage we have done here. There we have to think of other people. There we have to realise that ourselves matter least, and God matters most.

From the other side there are spirits who are toiling incessantly trying to stem the tide of this world which flows along this cruel and selfish bed. They realise what we must do to atone later on. Unfortunately, their power is not strong enough, they cannot stay us. We will not listen.

"But," you ask, "what is all this to do with Christmas? What is it all to do with Spiritualism?"

Spiritualism and Christmas

Christmas is a Christian festival. We get the chance to start again as a simple babe, to start again and to do our best, to practise that peace and goodwill to all men on which the whole of our faith should be based. We get the chance to forgive rather than to condemn, to show mercy rather than power. To be self-sacrificing rather than obstinate.

We get the chance—and, mind you, this chance lies deep in the hearts of every one of us—to stay the harsh tide of cruelty which is at the moment sweeping through this world. We get the chance to bring religion home.

In Spiritualism we have the proof that life goes on. If it ended here, I suppose to the majority of us it wouldn't matter much what we did. The idea would be who could wrest the best out of life, who could get the greatest amount of fun for the smallest payment. Unfortunately for those people, life was not invented as a game. It has more point than that.

The Church Has Failed

Modern young people are lost. They have been born in a cruel era. The Church has failed. It has lost hold. When Victoria died, the Church crumbled. It was going to crumble anyhow, but it made a last spurt in that vice-like grip in which dogma held it. Dogma will destroy any faith. Dogma and the priests. Christianity as it has been has got to go, and there comes in between a dreadful gap, a blankness, a time when we are helplessly groping for hand-hold and foothold on the hard rocks of life. Out of it the new religion will be born. The individual religion, the faith that Christ came to this world to teach.

With the true knowledge of life everlasting which Spiritualism can bring to you, with the proof of death not being the end, faith changes its construction. The New Testament insisted on the resurrection of the spirit. Christ, I am convinced, meant only to preach the resurrection of the spirit. The body is unimportant, it passes away, but the spirit matters.

Yet how many of us are attending to the spirit today? How many of us are willing to forego a comfortable meal, with good food and wine, for an hour of prayer. Not so many.

The spirit which is eternal is shoved against the wall; the body which must be destroyed is tremendously important.

How To Spend Christmas

Give yourself one hour at Christmas, one little hour in which to think over what this really means. Christianity as Christ taught it, Christianity which you must learn for yourself, and which is not preached from the pulpit and set down dogmatically in services. Learn the truth of the humble Babe of Bethlehem, Who was "meanly wrapped in swaddling clothes, and in a manger laid."

Give to the next beggar you see. It doesn't matter if he drinks. That is his affair, not yours. Give, and what is more, give him also a word of encouragement. REMEMBER WHAT CHRIST WOULD HAVE SAID TO HIM. You'll find that it is rather a different world that you are facing then.

Christmas. The time of truth. The time of humility. Not quite so much feasting and festivity, but a little more of the true meaning. Look behind the tinsel glory of your Christmas tree, beyond the too-heavy meal, the crackers, the stockings and the evening's amusements. Behind it all you will see none of this which we have made of Christmas, but a Virgin Mother in prayer, at the sweetest shrine of all the world, the shrine of the Infant Christ.

This is the real meaning of Christmas.

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Life is fortified by many friendships. To love and be loved is the greatest happiness of existence.

Power dwells with cheerfulness; hope puts us in a working mood; whilst despair in no muse and untunes the active powers.

Never think it wasted time to submit yourself to any influence which may bring upon you any noble feeling.

We must laugh before we are happy for fear we should die before we have laughed at all.

Happiness is a sunbeam which may pass through a thousand bosoms without losing a particle of its original ray.

Keep your face always to the sunshine and your shadows will fall behind you.

Dissolution is a step in evolution, and involves no mental change, adding nothing, subtracting nothing, but simply increasing the opportunities for observation and learning.

THE EMERGENCY FUND

We acknowledge with sincere thanks the following donations to the Emergency Fund:—A.D.N., South Grafton, £15; D.B., Mooroopna, 27/6; J.McD., Townsville, 7/6; K.B.W., Launceston, 7/6; J.K.K., Sydney, 7/6; M.L.A., Caulfield, 7/6; J.W.N., Sandgate, 7/6; S.A.K., Wyanda, 3/6.

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S.O.S.

We regret to announce that the monies contributed to the Emergency Fund are used up, and in order to continue publishing "The Harbinger of Light" without personal loss we are compelled to solicit fresh donations.—J. T. Huston.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, 1951-52

Income: Subscriptions, 1951-52, £179/12/-; Agents, £189/6/3; Donations, £160/12/1; Sales, £9/18/9. Total, £539/9/1.

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