

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We are sorry to see, in the 'Times Literary Supplement,' a review of Mr. Podmore's book which is in reality only an old-fashioned hustling of Spiritualism. The writer does his clowning in a melancholy way, and seems to have learned nothing from his more modern brethren, who, when they play the fool, are at any rate up-to-date.

We are assured that 'The Society for Psychological Research on the one hand, and the nature of modern opinion on the other, appear to have driven "Spiritualism" out of Court.' We do not know what 'driven out of Court' means, but we do know that organised Spiritualism was never anything like as strong and as lively as it is to-day. Perhaps it is the people who have been 'driven out of Court' who are trooping into our rooms.

The writer of this review, with an air of fine 'culture,' dismisses us as poor misguided, half-educated people, but, when we turn back a page, we find another reviewer puzzling over the fact that half-educated people seem to get hold of some of the greatest truths, and to do some of the best work of the world. He says:—

Samuel Richardson, author of 'Pamela,' of 'Clarissa Harlowe,' and of the impeccable 'Grandison,' was that bewildering experiment of sportive gods—a well-to-do British tradesman of genius. True, other men have flamed into glory starting from even humbler origin; but the fact that Bunyan, for instance, was a tinker; Keats apprentice to an apothecary; and Burns a working peasant, counts for so little in each of their conceptions of life and art, that the story of such antecedents becomes insignificant, except as a matter of gratifying curiosity. For Keats, Burns and Bunyan had this in common, that their loftier spirits moved with a princely disregard of petty social considerations; and one can only say of them, had any one of these men been born the elder son of a duke it is probable he might have found less opportunity to illumine and enrich the world.

That 'born the elder son of a duke' is excellent. He might have said *a well-paid writer for 'The Times.'*

This particular writer concludes by thanking Mr. Podmore for an admirable book about 'matters which no mortal understands.' 'The Times' reviewer can hardly speak for all mortals, but he here correctly describes himself. His want of understanding is palpable, as palpable as the woodenness of his satire. But is it satire? The concluding sentence of this so-called review puzzles us:—

The record of the innumerable outrages on the English language and the laws of logic, committed by pure-minded but emotional American citizens about 1840-60, might make angels weep, if angels have no sense of humour; might make devils laugh, if devils know not that *sunt lacrymarum rerum.*

Whatever does the old lady mean?

The Swedenborg Society (Bloomsbury-street, London) has done good service in publishing a valuable selection of passages from the writings of Swedenborg. The book is entitled, 'Foundation truths of the Christian Religion.' We, of course, have our own ideas of 'The Christian Religion,' and by no means fall in with all these 'Foundation Truths,' but he is a poor seeker after truth who cannot welcome the thoughts, especially the profound and seasoned thoughts, of other men.

Besides, we never cease to feel our kindredship with Swedenborg. If ever there was a medium he was one, and we are immensely indebted to him for a multitude of precious suggestions concerning spirit-life. For his 'Memorable Relations' alone, Spiritualists should keep his memory green.

The subjects treated in this excellently printed volume are:—1, God; 2, the Incarnation; 3, Redemption; 4, the Sacred Scriptures; 5, the Divine Providence; 6, Charity, or Love to the Neighbour; 7, Faith and Life; 8, Death and Resurrection; 9, the Intermediate State, and Judgment; 10, Heaven; 11, Hell; 12, the Second Coming of the Lord.

'The Christian World,' in a serious and discriminating review of Mr. Podmore's book, sums up thus:—

On the whole subject as here presented, we may say that the vast mass of phenomena brought before us, after the careful and painstaking analysis to which it has been subjected, will in the minds of most readers leave, we imagine, some such conclusions as these: That a very considerable proportion of the phenomena has been the outcome of fraud pure and simple: that much of it has been an affair of self-deception and suggestion; and that a residuum points to powers of the human mind, belonging especially to the subliminal consciousness, which have not been fully explored, and the limits of which have never yet been defined. At this point, which is the author's own position, many will be content to remain. The subject ends for them, up to the present, with a query. Others there will be who, with an equally impartial desire for the simple truth, will, with Mr. Myers, and other distinguished men, go a step further, holding that the facts already ascertained form a sufficiently scientific basis for the belief in direct communication, through the mind's subliminal powers, with the unseen world.

'Merlin,' in 'The Referee,' still hovers, mothlike, round and about our lamp. One of his latest deliverances presents us with 'seven conclusions,' thus:—

The first of these will be that fraud, gross, palpable and flagrant, has been rampant in the history of modern Spiritualism, but that the proof of one fraud does not necessarily imply the existence of another. The second may possibly be that so long as Spiritualists seek wildly improbable reasons to account for proved cases of imposture they lay themselves open to a charge (at the lightest) of incurable fanaticism. Thirdly, that a vast majority of their cases are referable to what are called 'natural' causes, using the word in its commonest acceptance. Fourthly, that a majority of the cases which escape this verdict are open to reasonable suspicion. Fifthly, that there is such a residuum of possible truth in these rare and selected instances as makes it worth while for an honest observer to look into them. Sixthly, that there is a fairly sound presumption in favour of clairvoyance. Seventhly, and finally, that no doubt hangs round the question of the transference from mind to mind of emotions and impressions by methods

which are wholly independent of the means commonly employed.

We shall have that moth before long.

Mr. R. Brimley Johnson sends us a collection of six dainty—what shall we call them?—stories, parables, phantasies: 'The man and the flower,' a beautiful fairy story, but with a 'moral' that does not quite reveal itself or entirely commend itself to us: 'Castles in the air,' a perfect gem of delicate thought and winsome phrasing: 'The Baptism of Psyche,' a lovely allegory of death into life: 'Healing,' 'Honour,' and 'War,' three very short parables.

The writers are said to be Courtenay Thorpe, Mark Whyte, Leonard Montague, and H. M.: but we should not be surprised to find that these four are one. On the whole, these dainty little experiments suggest great possibilities, as did Olive Schreiner's 'Dreams.'

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS

(From many shrines).

God of my life; as the years pass, I want to come closer to Thee. One by one, my beloved of the days of old have passed beyond the veil, and my oldest friends are there; and Thou knowest how sorely I sometimes need them. But I thank Thee for other gifts of kindred spirits. May I be worthy of so much love and kindness! and may I be worthy of all Thy precious gifts to me! As I look back upon the years that have gone, I see many things that might have been different,—brighter, purer and happier,—if I had considered, if I had thought less of self, if I had listened for Thee. Be tender to me concerning the past, O Father, and help me to do better for the days to come. What the new year will bring to me I know not,—I know not what a day may bring forth: but help me to be cheerful, hopeful and brave, knowing that I cannot fall away from Thee,—that I cannot go where Thou art not, and that, if I seem to lose Thee, Thou wilt never lose me. Show me Thy way, dear Father, and incline my heart to keep Thy law; and whatever the coming year may bring, may I rest in Thee and wait patiently for Thee. Amen.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the Regent Saloon, St. James's Hall (*entrance from Regent-street*), on the evening of Thursday, January 8th, 1903, when

MR. J. BRUCE WALLACE, M.A.,

Will give an Address on

'The Reconstruction of One's Personality.'

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 2s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—Mr. Alfred Peters will resume his illustrations of clairvoyance at the rooms of the Alliance on Tuesday, January 6th, at 3 p.m. No one will be admitted after three. Fee 1s. each.

DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES.—Mr. George Spriggs will resume his Thursday afternoon services in the diagnosis of diseases on Thursday, January 8th. Hours from 1 to 4. No fee is charged, but Mr. Spriggs suggests that every consultant should make a contribution of at least 5s. to the funds of the Alliance.

MEETINGS FOR PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT.—Mr. Frederic Thurstan, in consequence of other engagements, will be able to attend but twice more, at present, viz., on Thursdays, January 8th and 22nd. Hours from 4.30 to 5.30. No person admitted after 4.30. There is no fee or subscription.

LOST—AND FOUND AGAIN.

CLAIRAUDIENCE AND CLAIRVOYANCE.

The readers of 'LIGHT' will, I think, be interested by a brief record of some of my experiences. A few years ago I had a son who was a ship's officer. He was a noble fellow, manly, pure-minded, and unassuming. We were all expecting his return from a voyage, and anticipating the pleasure of his presence in the home circle at Christmas. In the month of November he sent us word from a Continental port that he 'had arrived and would soon be home,' but in some unaccountable way we all became increasingly anxious, especially as, contrary to his custom, we had no other letter from him. His mother felt impressed to proceed to the port to see him, but the dense fog that evening caused us to persuade her not to go, and there came over the home an anxiety worse than the gloom of the fog. The vessel was bound to a port in England, and wondering at the continued absence of news, his younger brother proceeded thither, intending to accompany him home.

That night, at about midnight, I was startled by the appearance of my son, and whatever the reader may think of the incident, to me it was, alas! too real. I saw his features as distinctly as possible except that they appeared swollen, and I was at once certain that he had passed over *through drowning*.

When my younger son arrived at the home port, all the information he could get was that in some inexplicable way his brother had missed the ship, but all on board anticipated that he would be following on by another vessel, but, feeling sure that my brave son had really passed over, I wired to his brother to return home at once.

The following day my wife and younger son proceeded to the foreign port to make inquiries, and, on presenting my sailor son's photograph to the authorities, they were informed that his body had been found, *drowned by accident*, in the dock, and sent for interment to the cemetery, where they found that by some unexplained circumstance it had not been interred, and it was subsequently brought to England.

Our grief at so painful and mysterious a separation was harrowing; but the following circumstances will explain how I received comfort and consolation by spirit communion.

For a long time the depression of this bereavement so affected my general health that I lost all interest in life, and all who knew me were distressed to observe the condition I was in. One day, while sitting at my desk absorbed in business duties, I heard a voice exclaim three times, quite distinctly, 'Go home by the cemetery!' At first I was inclined to treat this as imagination, or hallucination, call it what critics may; but when it was repeated with the same emphatic tone of command, I immediately instructed my man to get ready and drove to the cemetery.

I cannot describe the feeling that possessed me during the drive, and on entering the cemetery I was proceeding to the grave of my dear son when I was suddenly stopped, and found myself holding audible conversation with his spirit. He assured me that we were really holding converse together; that he was all right; and that I, his father, was not to grieve or regret his death as he was often present with us. The spiritual influence pervading this interview so composed my mind and altered my life that I was prepared for other spiritualistic experiences, and was much strengthened and encouraged by his subsequent visits, and the realisation that we were not separated.

Some months after the foregoing, as I was travelling north—quite three hundred miles from the localities referred to—I longed for some token of my dear son's presence. I prayed long and earnestly that if it was the will of the Father of spirits I might have some further realisation of his continued life and love. The same night I had a remarkable vision. My son came to me in my bedroom and I saw him clearly; his face was beautiful, and reminded me of his handsome youthful days. He was accompanied by several children, one of whom appeared to be coming down a very steep gradient. Instinctively I advised her to be careful, whereupon my son instantly explained that there was no need for that sort of care in their state. He seemed to be very happy

and busy in attending to these children, and I could only gaze at and admire the scene before me, which lasted long enough to convince me of its reality.

I then remembered it was just possible that the child forms were those of the three little daughters whom we lost in infancy. And I may say that I related all these experiences at the time of their occurrence.

After the incidents already referred to I prayed for strength to overcome my great grief for my loss, and one evening, as I was returning home from business, it was suggested to me that I would soon see the end of this sorrow, either by my son again appearing to me, or in some other way. On arriving home I was led to retire to my bedroom and quietly sit down alone. Part of the time I spent in prayer on my knees, and then resumed my sitting again for a considerable time (how long I did not note). I centred my thoughts on my son. With my eyes closed, I communed with him, and whatever the manifestation may have been, there certainly was present a form, though indistinct so far as human form goes, and I felt a presence; and I left the room much relieved but not altogether freed from the load with which I was burdened. During some part of the night, my spirit must have been to some extent freed from my body, for I was conscious of moving swiftly and gently far away from earth, or at least where my body was, and being placed in a ferry on a beautiful, peaceful lake. The surrounding scenery I did not notice, except that on the side to which I was being ferried there seemed to be huge walls of engulfing water (I cannot describe the appearance in any other way). Up to this time I had been so entranced that I had neither looked at nor spoken to the strange being who, without any apparent effort, was taking me over towards the awful walls of threatening waters; but on looking at the ferry man, I was surprised and delighted to see my own father, who had passed over many years ago: the form being perfectly clear and distinct. The recognition was mutual, and I cannot attempt to describe our interview: words cannot picture it. I asked him quickly, 'How ever can we land at the other side? Look at the immense height of water threatening to engulf us.' With a look of strength and calmness of spirit he replied, 'Keep yourself as quiet as possible. Be still. I am sent to take you over.' And immediately those words were spoken we were landed without even a spray of water touching us.

On returning to earthly consciousness I realised what a lesson I had received. For over two years I had been in a state of unrest and grief; it was now at an end, and since that time my life has been renewed, and I feel invigorated in spirit, soul, and body. These happy results became so marked that those who met me daily observed the change, and a doctor whom I had known for years, and who frequently saw me, met me as usual about the time of this incident, and looking at me with surprise, said, 'Well, well! what have you been doing? you are so changed; you look a dozen years younger!'

One morning early in May, 1901, my son most unmistakably came into my bedroom and walked softly to the side of my bed, and stood there for a few moments, smiling.

And again on New Year's Eve, December 31st, 1901, I had not long retired for the night when I was once more visited by my son. I spoke to him audibly (for I was fully awake), saying, 'Is that you, John?' He instantly came to me and expressed his pleasure in seeing me. I felt his presence, saw him clearly, and after assuring me of his happy condition in his spirit home, he quietly withdrew, leaving my whole, being in a state of quiet peacefulness such as I have never experienced before or since. For the benefits I have received from spirit communion I sincerely thank the great Father of spirits and take courage.

N. S. II.

TRANSITION.—On December 12th, after much suffering, at 57, Elmhurst-mansions, Vernon-road, Clapham, Marion Jane Burman Norton, aged fifty-three, wife of Howard John Norton, colliery proprietor, late of Llanelly, Carmarthenshire, and eldest daughter of the late Edward Burman Adams, of Bungay, Suffolk, surgeon. Gone from the 'Midnight' into the 'Light' Eternal. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'

THE MEDIUM SAMBOR.

'Les Annales Psychiques' contains an article by M. Petrovo-Solovovo, recording the latest experiments with the medium Sambor, who passed over last summer. Whilst M. Petrovo-Solovovo states that he is still in the position of a doubter, he is evidently 'almost persuaded,' and his kindly and sympathetic appreciation of the medium's personal qualities shows that his spirit is too just and too discerning to allow his condition of uncertainty to prejudice his judgment against the man with whom he is dealing. This admirable quality makes M. Solovovo particularly qualified for the task of a scientific investigator in this difficult region. Acuteness in detecting flaws in evidence has a tendency to weaken this quality of fair judgment and human consideration in relation to the 'sensitive,' whose character is by these flaws often exposed to unjust suspicion. The striking quality in M. Solovovo's criticisms is that, whilst his acuteness brings to light every weak point in the evidence, and he unhesitatingly recognises in what direction possibilities of fraud have to be allowed for, he never seems to forget that he is dealing, not merely with a 'sujet,' but with a man, and his personal kindness towards the medium, as a *man*, takes all sting out of the remarks he feels it obligatory to make, drawing attention to circumstances which appear unfavourably.

He points out that Sambor insisted on having his hands satisfactorily held, and that when asked, in the course of a particularly good séance (May 7th, 1902), to allow himself to be searched, he undressed in a moment with perfect goodwill. He says that as far as he could judge Sambor was a sincerely and unaffectedly religious man, and he began his séances with a prayer of a style 'assez élevé,' which had been given by direct writing. 'I think,' says M. Solovovo, 'that he never can have hurt anything, not even a fly. At least, he gave the impression of a kind man incapable of doing an injury.' He goes on to touch upon the faults of which Sambor was accused and upon suspicious circumstances, but always with the same large-minded fairness and readiness to recognise that to form an adverse decision upon suspicious circumstances *merely*, especially in matters in which we are all so profoundly ignorant, is neither humane nor just; and, in conclusion, he says:—

'For my part, I cannot refrain from a feeling of compassion when I think of the deceased Sambor . . . As to this sympathetic man, without high pretensions (except with regard to his mediumship), is it possible that blind Nature really chose him to be an intermediary between our world and the uncertain Beyond? This would be to me an enigma, if I absolutely believed it. It is with this word of *uncertainty*'—(is not *uncertainty* the most *certain* result, alas! of these mediumistic experiences?)—'that I will conclude this article; but not without sending, from the bottom of my heart, a kindly remembrance to that kind, simple, enigmatic man, the medium Sambor.'

If Sambor was so chosen, it is not the first time in the course of evolution that the lowly and the obscure have been used as instruments in great and important causes.

H. A. D.

CONJURING—OR THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE ?

Being a constant visitor to the local spiritualistic meetings here (Southsea), and an investigator, I have noticed that a number of persons lay claim to *every* little item with any mystery about it, that takes place in the circle or hall, or wherever they may be, as necessarily to be put down to Spiritualism or thought transference. I read the letter of 'C. A. M.' in 'LIGHT,' of December 6th, and I waited for some more skilful penman than I am to answer the query 'Conjuring— or Thought Transference?' Let me at once say that the exhibition by Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin was *conjuring*, by a trick well known to the majority of conjurers, and pretty well played out. My friend Baldwin made a name and *money* by its aid in this country and India, but he never claimed to be a spirit medium, or pretended to have any occult power. The papers never left the writer but the lady read them yet it is a simple trick.

J. WINGARD.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library, should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

BE STRONG!

This is our message for the New Year. The idol of the hour is the strong man, the man who can pile up power and money, and get his own way:—the business strong man who can buy or break competitors and make a hundred streams flow in the channel he has willed: the financial strong man who puts sinister meanings into the old saying, 'Unto him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath': the political strong man who can grip tens of thousands of human beings and bend them to his will or drain them dry: the fighting strong man who professes no chivalry and studies not the justice of the thing, but gives or takes his orders, and works his will with lyddite, gun and flame: the religious strong man who blows his brazen trumpet of exaggeration, and damns saint or Sultan according to the mood or passion of the hour. But these are the strong men of Paganism: and Paganism rules the spirit of the hour. It is practically a Pagan world in which we are living now. There are excuses, doubtless, and even good reasons, it may be, but the fact remains, that Paganism is the dominant ruler of the kingdoms of this world to-day.

It is the custom to contrast Christianity and Paganism, and the custom is a good one, but the contrast is of not much use when Paganism sits in the chair of the Christian and states the case. What we actually want is, not a Christian there, but Christ. Let him state the contrast between the strong man of Paganism and his own ideal. Fortunately, there is no difficulty about it. We can put Christ in that chair, or, let us say, on the judgment seat, at any time; for he is always with us in the Sermon on the Mount. We know that Sermon is out of fashion, but this is only another reason for re-preaching it. How familiar but how novel it all is!

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: rejoice and be glad.

What does the Pagan in possession say to that? He goes on his knees or looks into his hat on taking his seat, and revives his faded love for—fairy tales. What he really believes in is:—Blessed are the high-spirited, for their's is the kingdom of earth. Blessed are they that enjoy themselves, for they will need no comfort. Blessed are the resolute, for they will enter into possession of the world. Blessed are they who have good appetites, for they will enjoy their food. Blessed are the merciless, for they will be beyond the need of mercy. Blessed are the adroit, for they shall see success. Blessed are they who are prepared for war, for they shall have peace. Blessed are they who escape all persecution, for their's is the entrée to good society. Rejoice and be glad!

We do not say that the Pagan type is universal to-day, but we do say that it is just now in the ascendant. The children of the dawn are more numerous than we sometimes think, but they can only bear their testimony and bide their time. Perhaps the dominant Pagan is doing some necessary work that we cannot fathom. In any case, the future is not his, for God is just and the Universe is sane.

In reality, however, the contrast is not between Paganism and Christianity but between Paganism and Spiritualism. Paganism is essentially materialistic and brutal. Its law is the law of force. Its motive is self-enjoyment. Its success is measured by its plunder. Gild it, decorate it, star and garter it as we will, it is essentially a case of trough and swill. Its natural, direct and perfect antithesis is Spiritualism; for Spiritualism looks beyond matter and all that relates to it. It teaches that the real man is not the animal but the wonderful spirit-self which for the time inhabits the animal and uses it. It knows that the true end of life is the uplifting of life to higher grades, to loftier uses, to sweeter and brighter ends. It, in fact, is in completest harmony with the Sermon on the Mount.

We face the world, then, in its adoration of the strong man, and we tell it that it is going astray in the worship of the object of its idolatry. It is forsaking God and bowing down to a graven image. It is harking back to the beast instead of pressing forward to the man. We challenge it to be strong in the way of our Ideal; to be strong for helpfulness and mercy—for building up, not pulling down; for championing the weak, not profiting by their ruin; for making the world beautiful, and not ravaging it in self-indulgence; for the higher life of love and goodwill to all, and not the lower life of lust of money and the masterfulness of power. Spiritualism is from above, Paganism from beneath: and surely if the one can be strenuous in its evil, the other ought to be strong for good.

In many practical ways Spiritualists can apply this splendid truth: and specially in one way which we commend to them. The past year, so far as our public work is concerned, has been a year of unbroken success. Our Alliance has been greatly strengthened by constant accessions, and this publication gives light to an ever-increasing circle of readers. It is the reward of strength. We have had courage: we have had faith: we have spoken our minds. We appeal to all our friends, and to the hoverers about the boundary line, to pluck up a good heart about this work of ours, and to find out ways of helping us. We have been greatly encouraged of late, but we want to use all our gains as 'stopping stones' to 'higher things.' May it be so with us all this year!

'The eternal life that we are now living will be well lived if we take care of each little period of time as it presents itself day after day. If we fail in doing this, we fail in everything.'—RALPH WALDO TRINE.

TRAGIC FULFILMENT OF A PREDICTION.

I have just had a most startling psychic experience, appealing to me more strongly, perhaps, than anything else in my recent investigations, being the tragic fulfilment of a prediction which had been given by Mrs. William Paulet twenty-four hours before the event.

On Wednesday evening, December 3rd, my wife and I met Mrs. Paulet socially, and during the course of the evening she said to me, 'There is a great friend of your's going to pass away very suddenly, very rapidly, and very soon.' She described him as a dark, gentlemanly-looking man; the description was not, however, sufficiently definite for me even to surmise to whom she referred, but my wife, with the intuition more or less characteristic of a sensitive woman, said, with a sad expression of countenance, 'I have an impression that I know to whom it refers,' but she added, 'I do not wish to say.' Mrs. Paulet said, 'Does the gentleman you think of live in Scotland?' My wife replied in the affirmative, and Mrs. Paulet added, 'That is he.'

The same evening, some time afterwards, my wife said in an apparently casual way, 'Have you written to Dr. Woodburn lately?' she knowing that I had received two letters from him in the course of a few days, but having been much occupied I had not replied. She asked me to write soon, and I promised to do so the next day. On the Thursday evening I was obliged to be out in consequence of a professional engagement, and when I returned my wife had retired, but she had left me a note in which she said, 'If you are not too tired you must write to Dr. Woodburn.' Strange to say, I never even then associated the prediction with my friend, Dr. Woodburn, but, unfortunately, the next morning early I received a telegram intimating that he had passed away very suddenly from angina pectoris the previous evening, while present at a lecture given in a hall in Glasgow. The newspaper report states, 'Dr. Woodburn was seen to drop his head on his chest . . . became insensible, and almost immediately passed away.' Thus in a most tragic manner the prediction of the previous evening was fulfilled. He was a dark, handsome man, with dark hair, and beautiful dark eyes, and was one of my dearest friends, and thus passed to the spirit side of life with suddenness and rapidity, as distinctly expressed in Mrs. Paulet's prediction, and within twenty-four hours.

Such experiences suggest very perplexing questions as to the philosophy of life, which are very difficult to answer, or even to suggest a more or less acceptable hypothesis. I know there are many people who deny the possibility of prevision, but these simply show their ignorance of the evidences on the subject. How are these things foreseen—what is the seat of the prevision faculty? Are these what are glibly called by the sceptics 'mere coincidences'? Are we the creatures of circumstances? These and many other questions suggest the necessity for a more careful and systematic study of the subject than has hitherto been given to it.

A. WALLACE, M.D.

THE LANGUAGE OF THOUGHT.

Among the best things penned by the late Rev. George H. Hepworth was the following, written for the New York 'Herald' just before his demise. He said:—

'Why may not the time come when we can convey our thoughts without the coarse medium of words? There are no words between us and heaven. A prayer is a longing of the soul, "uttered or unexpressed." God speaks to hearts. There are "unseen beings who walk the earth, both when we wake and when we sleep." They make us feel their presence, and we are sure that they are close by as though we heard a trumpet call. What they would say steals into the heart, for our poor ears cannot catch it. We hear nothing, but we know that they are helping us. Is there any language in heaven except that of thoughts?'

'When the world grows older why may we not speak to each other without this cumbersome factor of spoken words? We catch glimpses of the possible already. A look, a pressure of the hand, and sympathy or contempt are complete. Enlarge the circumference and you have a new truth.'

A VISIT TO MR. THOS. ATWOOD'S CIRCLE.

Those who have recently read Mr. Thos. Atwood's articles recounting his experiences during a course of séances held for the purpose of helping undeveloped spirits, may be interested in the notes which I made after attending one of these séances at his invitation. I will, therefore, put the notes into article form with as little alteration as possible.

The communications were made by tilts of the table round which we sat, but the sentences were rarely completed entirely by this means. One of those present usually guessed, or gained impressionally, what the conclusion of the sentence would be, and, if this impression was assented to, time and energy were saved by avoiding the slow process of spelling out every word. Sometimes the suggested conclusion to a word was negatived, and in that case the tilting was continued until the right word was obtained. This method, from the *evidential* point of view, is by no means the best, but it must be remembered that the object of these sittings was not to obtain evidence of spirit action or spirit identity; the fact of spirit action was assumed, and the object sought was philanthropic, not scientific. If any one would help a soul in trouble it is of first importance to meet him half way. If such a one is expressing himself under difficulties, we should try to lessen the difficulty by quick comprehension, by sympathetically divining the broken confession or the half-expressed word. If this is obviously the method of a successful and sympathetic friend when dealing with spirits in the flesh, it is not likely to be less desirable when dealing with spirits incarnate. This was the method pursued by the sitters on the occasion to which I refer in these notes.

Five persons were present, two of the five being Mr. Atwood and myself. Of the other three, two were friends of Mr. Atwood's, and one was a friend of my own whom I brought with me.

After a prayer had been offered by Mr. Atwood, the table soon began to tilt. The first intelligible sentence was: '*Please help. You will take trouble to some purpose.*'

We said we had met in order to help. What could we do?

'*Pray; guide me to light.*'

'*I lived in Westminster, migrated to Nebraska, was lynched for supposed murder, innocent—swore vengeance.*'

Before proceeding with the further communication that followed, it will be well to explain in what way this long sentence was obtained. Mr. Atwood repeated the alphabet, and by tilts at the letter required the two words '*I live*' were spelt out; after a pause '*d*' was added; then, '*in W*' (I thought of Winchester) '*est*'; a gentleman present suggested 'Westminster.' This was accepted, and the alphabet and tilts began again. By this slow method the first three letters of the next word were obtained, '*mig.*' The same gentleman then suggested 'migrated,' which was right. '*To Neb*': Nebraska was guessed. Sometimes I observed that in repeating the alphabet the inflection of the voice revealed at certain letters an expectation that the table would tilt, but often this letter was passed and the expectation not fulfilled. I myself thought that I was aware sometimes how a word ought to finish, but I was not always right in my impression.

We elicited by questions the following addition to the above communication. The communicator intimated that the violent death had not obscured his mind, which was intent on revenge; that he was now sorry and wished to forgive and progress. Mr. Atwood asked if he had done any deed of vengeance. '*No.*' 'Because you could not?' '*No.*' 'Thank God for that!' Mr. Atwood rejoined. Mr. Atwood had, on a previous occasion, seen clairvoyantly a man with a rope round his neck whom he had taken for a murderer. He now said: 'I am glad we were mistaken; it does not do to conclude that everyone who comes so is a murderer.' To this the table responded by raps. The name '*George Will*' was spelt out. Someone suggested 'Williams.' This was negatived by the table. 'Willbury' was suggested and assented to. Something was then intimated to the effect that the sympathy of those present had

wintering abroad came to stay with us on her way home. One morning, a few days after her arrival, one of my sisters began to relate a most vivid dream she had had the previous night, about a very pretty town in which she found herself, and how she had entered it, and what she observed of the streets and buildings. Our visitor, after staring at her for some minutes in speechless surprise, exclaimed, 'Why, Edith, that is B——' (a town near which she had been staying on the Continent); and she began questioning Edith about the dream town, and became more and more astonished as her questions as to scenery, streets, buildings, &c., were quite accurately answered by one who had never in her waking moments seen the place, nor even heard any account of it.

I shall end with just one tiny experience—very trifling, but to me an evidence that we see, and hear, many things in our sleeping hours, mere glimpses of which we can carry back to our bodily life. Feeling much interested in the childhood's home of a dear friend of mine, who has now been in spirit land for over twenty years, I procured a few photographs of the little town in which his early days were passed. When carefully studying them I noticed a building, only the side of which was to be seen in the picture. Every time I looked at it, I wondered what the building was, and what the front of it was like. The other night I became conscious for a moment, in the middle of a dream, and found myself quite close to, and looking up at, the other side of that building, and remember saying to myself, 'Oh! that is what it is then!' Now in my waking hours I cannot even recall what the building was, but have felt no more curiosity about it when looking at the photographs since, having apparently been satisfied by what I saw in my dream. 'EUNICE.'

THE NO-BREAKFAST PLAN.

A correspondent writes: 'A trial, extending over several months, of a cup of coffee and a mouthful of bread in place of the ordinary breakfast has convinced me of the advantages of the system. From the domestic standpoint there is less preparation and consequently room for a higher standard of punctuality—two very important matters these dark mornings. It enables one to devote more time to letters or the newspaper, and yet get away comfortably to the City. But it does more than this, it gives a delightful feeling of well-being and energy, and a capacity to start the day with vigorous work either mental or physical. I have no hesitation in endorsing all that Dr. Dewey has written upon the subject. Sleep is certainly not to be regarded as a hunger-producing process—quite the reverse, as during its continuance no demand is made either upon the body or brain, and to make a hearty meal directly after rising when it is not required, is simply to handicap the stomach and dull the faculties for a considerable portion, and the best portion too, of the day. The hunger usually experienced at breakfast-time is entirely the result of habit. Give up breakfast and the hunger will presently disappear. The "no-breakfast system" means a pronounced natural hunger for the mid-day meal, and a prompt digestion of all that is then partaken of, which of itself is the very basis of health. A cup of tea, if so-minded, in the afternoon, followed by a substantial meal in the early evening, and you have, in my opinion, a rational system of living, based on physiological needs, capable of doing much in the restoration and establishment of health. Of course it is a system that may not suit everyone; each must experiment for himself. As Eustace Miles says: "If one avenue does not suit choose another, there are plenty, and walk in that for a time."'

THE lily's lips are pure and white,
Without a touch of fire;
The rose's heart is warm and red
And sweetened with desire;
In earth's broad field of deathless bloom
The gladdest lives are those
Whose thoughts are as the lily
And whose love is like the rose.

—NIXON WATERMAN.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'A Hint to Clairvoyants.'

SIR,—It is to be sincerely hoped that the invitation for a discussion given in Mr. Thurstan's article in 'LIGHT' of the 6th, will be liberally responded to, and if so, the results should be of great value to students of our cause. It is surely time that some system or method should be adopted by our mediums (which I know by experience the spirit people are ready and willing to assist), whereby concise descriptions and definite identities can be proved, for when a spirit knows it can show itself, and does so, it can as readily present to the clairvoyant visions of events and surroundings that would be at once conclusive, as a clear description of features, hair, &c., which, unless very striking, would apply to several personalities; and thus would more positive distinctions be arrived at, as to whether the picture is a psychic or thought form, and not a living spirit personality.

E. GRADDON-KENT.

SIR,—I have read, with much interest, Mr. Thurstan's article in 'LIGHT' for December 6th, entitled: 'A Hint to Clairvoyants.' There can be no question that many spirit delineations given by clairvoyants fall flat for the reasons stated by your much-esteemed contributor. But, the great objection to Mr. Thurstan's proposed remedy—as it appears to me—lies just here. If from the first moment the person to whom a delineation is being given recognises the spirit so described, he will at once vividly and distinctly call up in his mind the several and peculiar characteristics possessed by such spirit when in earth life; in other words, he will have before him a complete mental image of his departed friend. In my own case, and under such circumstances, I should feel that possibly the medium, in any further delineation, was simply reading my mind. It would then be a case of mind-reading, and not one of clairvoyance. If Mr. Thurstan's way of getting over the difficulty be adopted, what can be said to the objector when he asks me whether I had been thinking at the time about the person described? I should be obliged to confess that I had thought of my friend, and he would at once say 'Ah! I thought so'; and would jump to the conclusion that it was mind-reading and nothing else.

I confess that when any clairvoyant describes a spirit for my benefit, I endeavour to fix my mind on anything but the person being described; and then, when a clear and vivid description has been given, I do not fear that it has been done through the agency of mind-reading.

ALFRED DIXON LORD.

Bridlington.

SIR,—I am quite grateful to Mr. Thurstan for his criticism on spirit descriptions given at meetings and séances. I have had the same feeling myself whenever I have attended one. The descriptions are much too vague, and might apply almost to anyone. Some striking characteristic or peculiarity should at once be mentioned to arrest the attention. For instance, a stammer, a lame leg, a white or red beard, a wig, bushy hair or whiskers, any deformity, or point of beauty, anything unusual in manner, speech, or appearance, would afford a clue at once and give a chance, especially if the name could be given, of recognising the person.

DEEPLY INTERESTED.

Proposed Psychological Society.

SIR,—It has been a long-felt want among palmists, clairvoyants, and practitioners in the occult arts in general, that an association should be constituted for the purpose of mutual benefit in divers ways. Various attempts have been made in this direction, such as the Chirollogical Society, Occultists' Defence League, &c., but nothing has been attempted on sufficiently broad lines to include in one brotherhood all who practise the various arts of delineating character and destiny. A series of meetings have been held among the palmists and clairvoyants of London, and the result has been the establishment of the Psychological Society, or Soul-reading Society. The word psychological has been coined because no existing word seemed suitable. The idea underlying our title is that all the various sciences or methods, such as palmistry, phrenology, astrology, graphology, clairvoyance, crystal-gazing, psychometry, &c., are but different ways of reading the indications of the soul's thoughts, as these thoughts are imprinted on various parts and members of the body, or are made known to a sensitive

on the astral plane. All these various sciences and methods, then, are but various modes of soul-reading and have the choice of the word psychological, from psyche, 'soul,' and lego 'to read.' The objects of the society are the protection of the members from legal prosecution; to obtain alteration of the existing law; to hold social intercourse between members, and interchange of ideas by means of lectures, and a monthly journal; and to raise our credit and status by granting certificates of merit to candidates who shall successfully pass examinations in the various branches of psychology. In short, to do all this will tend to put competent and honest practitioners on an honourable footing as public advisers. People will go to a palmist, a clairvoyant, or a phrenologist to unburden their hearts, and to seek advice and good counsel, when they can go to no one else, and no profession offers greater scope for doing good to our fellow creatures than this one, which *ipso facto*, by the present law, constitutes us rogues and vagabonds. Once, the medical fraternity in England were mere ignorant barbers; why may not a psychologist take an honourable place in the world like the members of the medical profession, and do service equally valuable in his own line? He will do so only when he forms a combination based on community of interests, such as the Psychological Society seeks to establish.

MADAME DELVA.

38, Pembridge-road,
Notting Hill Gate.

The Fate of Suicides.

SIR,—I was much interested in Mrs. Bathe's very able lecture on 'Man—Here and Hereafter,' in the course of which she gave a striking description of the after-death experiences of suicides. But I would suggest that such a fate as that depicted cannot possibly apply to *all* suicides without distinction. Surely it will be admitted that many persons who commit suicide are in such conditions of body and of mind—diseased, depressed, and overborne by their anxieties, griefs and fears—that they are not responsible for their actions! It seems to me open to question whether a really healthy, sane, and well-balanced individual ever did or could commit suicide. The act itself, it may be argued, is sufficient evidence that the victim of self-murder is temporarily overcome by some dominant feeling and thought—or distressful circumstances of 'mind, body, or estate.' Suicide is the last scene in the terrible 'part' which the individual has played, and was led up to by influences and conditions the full force of which as regarded himself he alone could explain. For aught we know he may have been the victim of the malice and unscrupulous conduct of others, or of circumstances that he did not create and could not control, of diseased conditions of body and brain due to ancestral taint, or local causes for which he was not in the least degree responsible, or to mis-education and false training, or the dominating influences of other persons. Surely the injustices which so many have to endure, the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' and the pangs of 'man's inhumanity to man,' will not be perpetuated in the after-death world, and the poor unfortunates who received the kicks and curses of this life, be compelled to experience 'over there' the terrible doom of such horrors as Mrs. Bathe so vividly depicted.

Human beings are not, as a rule, wholly vicious or wholly virtuous. Each one has his 'streaks' either of vice or virtue—but on the whole, I think, we are well-intentioned, and the suicide is nearly always the victim of his organisation or his circumstances, or is 'more sinned against than sinning,' and I am inclined to think that 'over there' there will be compensations and recompenses—fresh opportunities and a new outfit—and that the darkness will not be 'overwhelming' nor the hell absolute, but that just as in this life there is something of pleasure or of pain, of sunshine or of shadow, in almost every life on almost every day, so there will be no arbitrary divisions—or water-tight compartments where the sheep will be absolutely separated from the goats—but that there will be in each individual alternations of feeling and emotion, periods of sorrow or of pleasure. Life is made up of varying moods and experiences and interchanges—actions and reactions in both worlds. Most people are like the man whose friend recorded upon his tombstone that he was

Too bad for heaven,
Too good for hell;
Where he has gone
I cannot tell?

But if heaven is *within*, so also is hell, and there is something of both hell and heaven in our consciousness every day we live, and surely, if death does not alter our characters, we shall be conscious of both regret and gladness—of some things to be sorry for and some things to be thankful for as the consequences of our past thoughts,

feelings, motives, and desires, and, as Mrs. Bathe has declared, 'the very projection of nobler thoughts and aspirations' will not only enable higher spiritual entities to be but will prove beneficial to the spirit that expresses them.

A LISTEN

'An International Language.'

SIR,—Will you be so kind as to allow me space in your columns to invite would-be students of the international language 'Esperanto' to join a class for the study of it at my address, after the New Year? Mr. J. C. O'Connor, B.A., who is keenly interesting himself in the propagation of 'Esperanto,' has most kindly consented to teach the class free of charge.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with the Esperanto movement, I quote the following from the grammar book: 'It (Esperanto) aspires to serve in *international relations* for literature and science, and such affairs as are of equal interest to the whole human race.' (The italics here are mine.—Spiritualists please especially note.) 'It aims, furthermore, to hasten the destruction of the barriers raised between the people of the earth, who form, in fact, but *one family*.'

In 1894 Tolstoy wrote: 'There cannot exist the slightest doubt that mankind tends ever to form but *one family* having for sole guides wisdom and love, and that one of the best means of attaining to this ideal is to arrive at *mutual comprehension*.' Furthermore, in a 'public letter' the celebrated author said that he found Esperanto so easy that after studying it for *two short hours* he could read it.

Max Müller, the master linguist of the age, said he placed Esperanto very high among its rivals.

The grammar is very simple, containing *not a single exception to any rule*—so simple, indeed, that anyone of ordinary capacity can master it in one or two hours. Mr. O'Connor says an English student will recognise at least 75 per cent. of the words. And one who knows Latin, or French, will find that practically the whole vocabulary is familiar to him.

To Spiritualists, who are to be found among all nationalities, the idea of an international language should appeal very strongly.

We cannot, however clever, expect to be able to learn all languages; but appreciating the desirability of unity we may all learn *one* neutral language, and so bind together more closely the great family of Spiritualists.

Mr. J. C. O'Connor, whose address is 17, St. Stephen's square, Bayswater, W., will be pleased to give any information to those desiring more; and I also shall be pleased to answer any letters of inquiry, and to receive names of people who would care to join the class for instruction mentioned above, accompanied by the visiting card of the applicant.

Bryanston-street is a minute's walk from the Marble Arch and close to the Tube and four routes of omnibuses.—Faithfully yours,

(MRS.) EDITH M. MACHUTCHIN.

63, Bryanston-street,
Marble Arch, W.

As a P. S. I should mention that the Esperanto grammar costs 8d.

Interesting Experiments.

SIR,—Some months back I was present at a meeting, conducted by a well-known member of the Alliance, for psychic investigation, and one experiment consisted in one of the audience selecting a card from a pack, impressing the image of the same well on his mind, then laying it on the table back uppermost. The remaining sitters then wrote down the name of the card that was telepathically transmitted to their brain; some were consistently correct time after time, others more or less so. A perfectly correct answer, you will observe, contains an appreciation of colour, number, and form.

Practising this experiment at home with some friends, I found I could name the correct card, on an average, *once in five attempts*, and being latterly thrown on my own resources when investigating, I have closed my eyes, shuffled the cards, selected one from the pack, and to my astonishment find that I can 'sense' the right card in the proportion of *one to three*, whereas the 'chances' are one in fifty-one.

I should be exceedingly indebted to any mental or psychical student who will enlighten me as to how this knowledge or intuition of the card chosen is brought about. It is not auto-suggestion, suggestion, or telepathy. What is it? Yours, &c.,

Lee.

FREDERICK R. BRYANT.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'FAITH.'—You give no name or address, and your letter is therefore inadmissible.

W O U L D Y O U P L E A S E
S E N D Y O U R L E T T E R S
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