

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe,

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Christmas brings to our minds many feelings and reflections that are awakened at no other time of the year. It has become the fashion of late to bewail the passing of many of the old customs, but our regret may well be tempered by the thought that although the world is a greyer place than it used to be, the loss of some of its old boisterous humanity is in all likelihood merely transitional. It is passing from the cruder stages of thought and feeling, and has arrived at a condition in which it has not yet replaced these things by any settled state in which the higher life has gained full play. In the meantime, one old tradition, at least, lingers round the great festival—the idea of reunion. This is the time for friends and families scattered throughout the year to meet together, or, at any rate, to think of each other when reunion is impossible. And that is a custom that comes home to us very nearly, for it relates to much that is vital in our philosophy.

After hearing so much of spirits as 'demons,' 'malignant agencies,' and so forth, it is always a relief to turn to the humorous side of the matter. And in what a cheerful and matter-of-fact way the world is beginning to treat the 'Christmas Ghost' is amusingly illustrated in the Christmas Number of 'Punch' in a picture which shows a guest at an old country house confronted in the early morning by the spirit of Sir Ulric Gyrth, the founder of the family, who announces his identity in blood-curdling tones. 'By Jove!' responds the guest, in no way discomposed, 'that's a bit of luck meeting you, old man; you'll be able to show me where the bathroom is.' It reminds us of another story of a prosaic gentleman to whose bedside (in a strange house) comes a phantom visitor with the complaint that it is the ghost of one who was murdered in the house many years before. 'Very sorry,' says the man in bed, drowsily, 'but it is no business of mine; you must apply to the proper authorities. Good night!'

In an article on 'The Passing of the Christmas Ghost' in 'The Occult Review' for the present month, Mr. Alex. J. Grant alludes to the statements of ancient writers regarding the special keenness of the soul in winter as bearing on the seasonableness of ghost stories at Christmas. Mr. Grant merely makes a passing allusion to the fact, but his reference reminds us that our custom of decorating our houses with holly and mistletoe is said to be a relic of days when the decking of the home with evergreens was a rite intended to propitiate the Nature Spirits. If this is true it would possibly explain the popularity of the ghost legends at Yule-tide, a popularity which Mr. Grant remarks as having waned greatly of late years.

We noted, as a point of more than usual interest, in Mr. Horace J. Bridges' recent letter, 'The Menace of Spiritualism,' his quotation from Swinburne's 'Garden of Proserpine.' By an odd coincidence we had some time previously read the poem, and, charmed with its haunting cadences, had made a copy of it, which lay beside us at the moment. Its conclusion that 'No life lives forever' gave us no disquiet, in whatever sense the words might be taken. Judging from the context, however, it is possible that Swinburne was thanking 'whatever gods there be' that there is an end to the mundane life (and many of us are equally thankful for that!). And when the poet tells us that 'Dead men rise up never,' why, he is perfectly right! If dead men rose up we should be inclined to fear the worst—'Chaos and Old Night,' 'red ruin and the breaking up of laws.' We should look for the 'sheeted dead' to 'squeak and gibber in the streets of Rome' (and London). It would be most distressing.

Those who would reduce Spiritualism to conclusions of such a kind are guilty (quite pardonably) of a sad confusion of thought. This is what a materialistic theology has brought them to. 'These earthly mists and vapours dense,' through which some of our friends view the question of human survival, produce strange and unnatural distortions of idea. The 'dead man' never 'rises up,' because the man himself never dies. Let us leave the old cadaver, with its shroud and its churchyard mould, out of our thoughts. It has nothing to do with the question, although it is constantly being dragged in to give a funereal flavour to the subject. Death is a question of natural evolution, and the soul which has passed through it is far less related to the glooms and terrors of the grave than those in the flesh who find the subject of 'spirits' morbid and unhealthy.

'The Life Hereafter,' by the Rev. Edward Hicks, D.D., D.C.L. (Robert Scott, London, 2s. net), consists of a series of six addresses written from the theological and scholastic standpoint. In his introductory note the author remarks:—

In these days of active thought there is a real danger in the timidity with which the subject of the life hereafter is approached in the pulpit, speaking generally.

There is, indeed; and even when the ecclesiastical guide is able to overcome his timidity he can only, as a rule, refer to what he has heard or read, like the egregious Tomlinson in Kipling's poem. He has no first-hand knowledge, and his hungry flock have to munch an unsatisfying diet of conjecture and scriptural exegesis. Dr. Hicks' work, however, marks a distinct advance on the many dreary theological volumes on the same subject which it has been our lot to peruse in the past, for he includes Professor James and Sir Oliver Lodge amongst his authorities. The book is ably written, in spite of its limitations of outlook, and may be commended to those who still look to the pulpit for the last word on a question which is wider than any theology.

If we ever felt that our love of Nature and our belief in the divinity of her inspirations were misplaced—and we never have—we should feel fortified by perusal of a recent address by Professor T. L. Vaswani, M.A., reported in 'The World and the New Dispensation' (Calcutta), in the course of which he says:—

Western psychology has long assumed that the 'self' is impervious—'hemmed in,' as Dr. Harnack says—'by walls of iron.' Experience, which is more than speculation, points to the truth that the self is penetrable, is open to the suggestions and influence of the Spirit. Not the least of these suggestions and influences come through Nature. . . . And, indeed, the more you grow, the more you feel that Nature is not alien to the soul of man, but is a 'procession' of the Spirit. There is the law of Correspondence; and the greater your progress within the Life of the Spirit the richer the response you receive from the universe.

That impresses us as a true vision of things—full of the primal sanities. Wordsworth, for all his lack of humour, and the consequent inclusion in his poetry of much that his critics deplore, saw truly the Divine element in Nature. As Professor Vaswani puts it:—

So may we also receive suggestions concerning spiritual life from Nature, for Nature is the symbolism used by the Spirit to communicate His messages to man. True it is that we do not see Him yet; but in communion with Nature we feel the pressure of His Personality upon us. . . . Science as an interpretation of Nature may well be regarded as a religious revelation.

The philosophy of Bergson is so full of a realisation of the free, spontaneous, and exuberant nature of life in its universal aspect that we were not surprised at the appearance of his latest work, 'Laughter.' Nevertheless, he traces a serious side to the comic element. Laughter to him is a mode of derision and reproof. It is society's weapon against the mechanical, inelastic, and dull. Laughter, he considers, is purely intellectual; it does not express the deeper emotions. We have sometimes thought that although the laugh seems to be the full-flowering of the smile, the two may be quite distinct expressions. We may welcome with a smile, we may express affection with it, but a laugh would rather extinguish than develop such expressions.

Spiritualism is discussed in many strange places and by very unlikely people. At resorts of informal discussion we have listened to persons who have vigorously defended our simple doctrine, the survival of man and the possibility of communication between the two worlds, the speakers being careful, however, to make it clear that they were in no way committed to a belief in Spiritualism. One of them, for example, would remark to us, 'You will quite understand that I am not a Spiritualist.' 'Certainly,' we would reply, 'perish the thought!' And then we might inquire suavely, 'You are, then, a Materialist?' Perhaps this was not a fair question. Answering it in the negative, the speaker would proceed to 'differentiate,' which, being a wordy process, meant that we had in sheer self-defence to remember a prior engagement.

These little discussions sometimes had their amusing side. On one occasion, when Spiritualism was the topic, a clever young journalist who took part announced that he approached the question with an 'open mind,' after which he proceeded to denounce the subject with tremendous vigour, and sent such terms as 'rot,' 'delusion,' 'twaddle,' 'imbecility,' 'neurotic nonsense' whirling in picturesque confusion about the atmosphere of the debate. He would listen to no argument, he would hear no evidence. At last one of the debaters—the editor of a popular periodical and a man of

a dry humour—rose wearily from his seat and, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, remarked, 'Well, I don't know exactly what Spiritualism is, and I don't particularly care, but if this is the *open mind*' — his pause at this point was more eloquent than words.

According to 'The Herald of the Cross' (for November-December):—

It is impossible to express in any adequate terms the awful disaster which befel the whole of the human race when the writers of the various New Testament records so grievously misrepresented the Life and Teachings of the Master, and founded in His name a kingdom whose members were not illumined regarding the true meaning of the Jesus-life.

The debasement of any great spiritual idea is, indeed, a tragedy, but perhaps in this case it was inevitable. And in the Divine Economy of things tragedies are at last transmuted into triumphs. Yet even that assurance hardly reconciles us to the spectacle of a Christian world that is little better than an array of armed camps in which wars, present or to come, are matters of everyday discussion—and that at the very time when the birth of the Christ Child is being celebrated. Mankind may not have 'fallen,' but it has gone a long and troublous way out of the path. And the return is painful and tedious.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

Meetings will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, S.W. (near the National Gallery), on the following Thursday evenings, next year, at 7.30:—

- Jan. 11.—Mr. E. W. Wallis on 'Interesting Incidents During Forty Years of Mediumship.'
- Jan. 25.—Mr. Herbert Burrows on 'The Soul Problem and the Spiritual Universe.'
- Feb. 8.—Rev. J. Tyssul Davis, B.A., late Principal of Buddhist College, Colombo, on 'Occultism in Buddhism.'
- Feb. 22.—Mr. Angus McArthur.
- Mar. 14.—Mr. Walter Appleyard on 'My Reasons for being a Spiritualist after Many Years' Experience.'
- Mar. 28.—Mr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe, B.Sc., on 'The Frontiers of the Soul.'
- Apr. 11.—'Cheiro' on 'Personal Experiences of Psychic Phenomena in India, America, and other Countries.'
- Apr. 25.—Prof. W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.
- May 9.—Rev. T. Rhondda Williams.

SPIRIT HEALING.—On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Mr. Percy R. Street, the healing medium, will attend between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., for diagnosis by a spirit control, magnetic healing, and delineations from the personal aura. For full particulars see the advertisement supplement.

PALMISTRY.

Judging from his articles on 'The Writing on the Hand' in the Christmas number of 'T.P.'s Magazine' and in the 'Health and Strength Christmas Budget,' Mr. C. Walter Childe (who was at one time on the business staff of 'The Review of Reviews') has made a thorough study of palmistry. He gives a scientific and logical consideration of what it can reveal of our past life, our tendencies and future possibilities, and says: 'The eye has been popularly supposed to be the index of the soul. Yet I contend that the hand is a far plainer one to read and study. Moreover, it is also the index of the mind as well.' Further, he contends that the 'lines and markings on the hands often undergo considerable changes, and correspond thereby to changes in our environment, conduct, health, and cultivation and development of natural gifts' and that 'all the student has to do is to learn the language in which these secrets are written.' It is a large 'all.' Mr. Childe's system seems to be justified by his readings of the hands of well-known persons, but if he had had the hands presented before him through holes in a thick curtain, so that he had no knowledge until afterwards of the identity of his subjects, the readings would have been more evidential. He is certainly an expert in the presentation of the claims of his system.

SUCCESSFUL VISUALISING EXPERIMENTS.

Mr. R. F. Little, writing in 'The Progressive Thinker,' recently gave an interesting report of some experiments that were made by about twenty residents of Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. They formed themselves into a club, which they designated a 'Mental Gymnasium.' Each member in turn gave a short address and followed it, if possible, with a practical demonstration. Mr. Little, referring to his own attempt to give an experimental demonstration of visualising, says:—

As my first attempt I drew what I will call, for convenience, a mental picture on the wall of the room toward which we were facing—a steamship floundering at sea—one of those old propellers, so-called, commonly seen on the Atlantic in the earlier days of steam navigation. Now, I had never seen a wreck of this character, but I pictured the storm and the tempest, the angry, seething billows, the shattered masts and broken shrouds swaying in the wind or trailing in the wave, portions of the railing destroyed; no sign of life upon the heaving decks; a dreary and helpless derelict upon the trackless ocean.

At a signal, I called for results. Four of the company saw what I had produced, and described it in detail.

My second attempt was the form of a dove, as perfect as I could construct it. I clothed it in purple plumage, and gave it the peculiar pose of the dove cooing for its mate, and I partook, for the moment, of the gentle loneliness of the dove before me.

The dear bird was so lonesome that I closed the mental camera lest I, too, should become a sharer in its grief, and again called for results. Several saw the bird hovering near the wall where I had placed it.

My next was a large bouquet of beautiful flowers, and of varied species. I painted the rose, the pansy, the violet, and many others, and became weary with the effort. To me they were real. They were in their beauty and fulness, except in one important particular, they lacked the fragrance of the real flower. This I could not get. Quite a number saw and wanted the flowers.

The next was a cluster of grapes. I am no amateur on grapes. I think I made a complete success—so far as my part of the work was concerned. My mouth actually 'watered for the luscious fruit.' To my surprise only ten of the group saw the grapes. Had they been as fond of them as I, they would, perhaps, have met with better results.

The last on that particular evening was the escutcheon of the United States. I pictured the shield, the colours, and the stars; the arrows and the eagle holding in his powerful talons this emblem of our country's power and balance. This was also seen by several members of the club.

Now, the question is, 'What did these people see?' There was not a professional clairvoyant in the club, and no one claimed or admitted that he saw these things clairvoyantly.

I have called them mental pictures; but were they? I think not. Will someone tell us what these people saw?

We would suggest that during the coming Christmas holidays experiments of the kind reported by Mr. Little should be made by those who are sufficiently interested to try to develop this power of visualising and of psychic perception, or of response to thought impressions, whatever it may be called. Such experiments would be extremely interesting and might well lead to the discovery of the existence of latent psychic powers, such as clairvoyance and psychometric receptivity, in persons who at present are unaware that they possess such capabilities. We should be pleased to receive reports of the results obtained.

CALM INVESTIGATION NEEDED.

We had almost begun to think that the excited people who did nothing but warn us that all our spirit-communications came from demons were tired of sending us their fearsome and lurid lucubrations, or had put the extinguisher over their candles. It occurred to us that possibly they had found this 'demon' theory clash with their other theory that all bad people, heretics, and demons must live in hell for ever, and could therefore hardly be holiday-making in London: or that perhaps they had at least perceived that if God had so arranged matters that *only* evil spirits can approach us, He must Himself bear the responsibility if we are misled. But it was only a lull in the storm of terror, for we are again compelled to listen to their outcries. We only ask for calm investigation and for an honest judging of the tree by its fruits. For the rest, as that glorious 'pagan,' Marcus Aurelius, said: 'If any man is able to convince me and show me that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change. For I seek the truth by which no man was ever injured.'

MAGNETIC AND SUGGESTIVE HEALING IN THE LIGHT OF RADIO-THOUGHT-WAVES.

BY D. VON GOLDACKER.

Since the days of Mesmer's wonderful cures many followers of his school have experimented on the same lines with more or less success. Mesmer held the opinion that a fine fluid was to be found throughout the universe, including the human body, which had properties analogous to those of the magnet. In the magnetism pertaining to the human body he found different and opposite poles, which could be made to communicate with each other, to exchange powers, to be destroyed and reconstituted. This magnetic power could be condensed, transported, accumulated, brought to bear with remarkable effect on other bodies, either with or without soul. Mesmer further maintained that this principle could heal nervous and other diseases.

Mesmer's cures were most wonderful. But it must not be forgotten that many a patient was healed principally by his own faith, or auto-suggestion, or by the healing power of imagination. The strength of Mesmer's opposers centred there, and nearly all the medical men of that age, as well as of the present time, were of the same opinion.

As often happens, both parties were right, inasmuch as they saw the same thing but from different points of view. In all healing, magnetism or suggestion, or both, are involved, and this truth has been proved by recent investigations.

The history of animal magnetism, and of its evolution since Mesmer's day, is extremely interesting. The first scientific commission appointed by the French Government did not recognise the phenomena of the so-called 'magnetism.' A second commission, in power from 1829 to 1835, was obliged to acknowledge its existence. But the record was not made public. In Germany Professors Wohlfart, Hufeland, Ennemoser, and Justinus Kerner were enthusiastic regarding the new science. In England the famous Mr. James Braid became a convert. About the same time (1840) the German scientist, von Reichenbach, who is well known in the world of science as the discoverer of paraffin, proclaimed the results of his experiments concerning 'Od.' 'Od' was the name which he gave to the same fluid which Mesmer had called animal magnetism. Reichenbach was the first to give Mesmer's doctrine a scientific basis. In more than twelve thousand experiments he proved the existence of a fine fluid in every material substance, especially in the human body. But the times were not yet ripe for Reichenbach's great discovery. His books were not popular and were forgotten. Not till the present day, when scientific research and discoveries on the subject of 'rays' have opened people's minds, have they found full appreciation.

The French scientists, Durville, de Rochas, Blondlot, Charpentier, Darget, who were partly rewarded with the fifty thousand franc prize of the Paris Academie, owe their startling results in a great measure to following in Reichenbach's footsteps, as they willingly admit.

In Germany, meanwhile, no progress was made. Books like those of Professor Gustav Jäger, 'On the Discovery of the Soul,' and Professor Harnack's 'Examination of the Electricity of the Skin,' were not appreciated, thanks to the fatalism of the masses who, having once formed an opinion, were not open to increased knowledge. But truth has its day. The results of the discovery of radium opened the minds of the scientists, and of the public, to the possibility of radiations emanating from the human body. For an explanation of the phenomenon of finding wells by means of holding a branch of hazel, Mr. G. Rothe has fixed on the radio-activity of the human body. In this radio-activity we find nothing but the N-Rays which Blondlot discovered, and which are exactly the same as the Od-Rays described by Reichenbach. We have, therefore, at last obtained the scientific recognition of animal magnetism which has, for a century, been so disputed and despised.

And now I shall report the result of recent experiments which appeared in a small pamphlet: 'Wissen und Wollen,' Organ des Shafferloger-bundes für neupsycho-logische Persönlichkeitschuler und Gesellschaftsveredelung, April, 1911.

The experiments took place under great difficulties, but the results are verified and can be proved at any time:—

While experimenting on sensation we made the discovery that our hypnotic medium, Miss W., could describe every part of the human body which we placed over a glass of water for the purpose of detecting radiations. On February 15th, 1910, several people, each one separately, held their ear or their tongue, or their nose over water. The glasses had been previously marked, and to counteract thought-transference we exchanged them. The medium at once saw in the water the part of the body which had been placed on it to receive the radiations. She had been asleep the whole time, and had no idea of what took place in the next room. The drawings which the medium made at our request had the correct shape of an ear, a tongue, a nose. The medium insisted that she saw these shapes swimming about in the water.

What had happened? Had the ear, the tongue, &c., fixed themselves as pictures in the water by way of photography? Or had the thoughts of the different people to whom the nose, the ear, &c., belonged, radiated a certain matter which had fixed itself in the water? In the hope of solving the point several sheets of paper were handed to the medium. As we all know, a hypnotised person sees everything she is told. We told her that there was a rose on one paper, on the other a cross. After the medium had accepted these suggestions we hid the papers between six others. The medium infallibly discovered the papers on which we had projected thoughts of a rose, or a cross.

This experiment led us to the conclusion that the imagination of man can create a reality. For, if a medium finds again and again on a blank piece of paper thought-forms, while other people see nothing, the conclusion is inevitable, that to that paper a fine substance must cling, which formed itself and adhered according to the imagination of the operator.

Further experiments showed that a fine fluid radiated from the body, especially from the brain of the thinker during the act of imagination. It is exceedingly sensitive and is visible to the medium as long as she keeps the objects on which it has been projected in her own hand. It grows stronger, the picture grows clearer when the medium passes her finger over the paper or object. But as soon as another thing is passed over the paper the picture is lost for the medium. The same thing happens if a copper wire is held to the side of the paper, or if another person touches the paper with his hand. The imagination-aura is at once let into another channel. But the thought picture is visible to the medium if the paper is held by a pair of scissors isolated by rubber handles.

If the picture is held away from the face of the medium in this manner, it is visible, even if it is covered with an aluminium plate, with another paper, or with glass. Thought forms pass without hindrance through these. The result is not so easy with a lead plate. The medium said the picture appeared as if a net were spread over it. Cotton wool proved to be worse. We, therefore, used the cotton to cover the eyes of the medium, and the result was the discovery that the medium did not see the pictures with her eyes, but by means of the lower part of her forehead.

After we had radiated thoughts on a piece of paper and then cut it into bits, our medium, although we covered her eyes, was able to put the bits together, fitting them into their places perfectly. But this was impossible to her if we covered the lower part of her forehead with a cloth. These experiments had the same result in a dark room as in broad daylight, and it seems to be of no consequence on what kind of matter the imagination-aura is fixed. The thoroughness of these experiments gave an amount of trouble with which I will not tire my reader.

On April 5th, 1910, experiments were tried to see if imagination-aura of scent could be fixed on different matters. We gave three pieces of paper to the medium to smell, telling her one smelt of violets, one of cinnamon, the third of carbolic. The medium realised these smells. We hid the papers among others, but the medium always discovered them correctly. Pieces of paper over which nothing had been thought she discovered at once as neutral. If we held a lead plate between the face of the medium and the paper, the smell was not felt. By means of a copper wire these scents could be led over on to other objects, and the medium discovered them at once. Every object which is brought into contact with a paper on which thought has been fixed takes the same smell.

On April 12th, 1910, we tried experiments regarding the sense of taste, which were equally successful. On May 24th we experimented on sensation. The papers on which thoughts of irritation, dampness, &c., had been fixed, were at once recognised.

On June 14th, after many experiments, which had ended in disappointment, we found the imagination-aura of hearing. We told the medium the pieces of paper which we handed to her were phonographic plates. Some time after the medium heard

those melodies which had been thought of, without any suggestion from us. If we placed a metal plate between the paper and the ear of the medium, she complained of a rattling noise. A piece of glass made the sound appear clearer, more distant, and more beautiful.*

There is one remark I should wish to make, that the imagination-aura appeared more distinct if the medium was brought into contact with another source of energy, *i.e.*, holding her hands on the warm globe of a lamp. And here, I think, lies the explanation of a valuable series of phenomena.

These experiments brought the following results, which I should be glad if anyone interested would experiment on as to their reliability and truth.

(1) The process of thought in the human being is the cause of the outflow of a fine power, which can be formed and fixed according to our imagination.

(2) The doctrine of healing power and magnetism is found to rest on a scientific basis. By this method of healing by means of thoughts sent out by the healer, and expectation from the patient, energies of the radio-imagination are directed towards the organ which is diseased.

(3) The doctrine of suggestion stands recognised. Our imagination gives direction to the energy which has been used.

(4) Magnetic and suggestive methods of healing go hand in hand. The mesmeriser rouses the imagination of the patient, as well as his own, which acts on the outflow of healing magnetism. The man healing by means of suggestion owes his results equally to the same healing power which flows towards the part of the body which is in need of it. Therefore, both powers, suggestive and magnetic, are in reality only one.

(5) The New Thought movement, which maintains that the fate of man is in a certain manner in accordance with his thoughts, finds through the discovery of radio-imagination a sound basis. The more surely and strongly a man sends radio-rays of his imagination to one clearly defined aim, the more surely he will be able to shape his fate according to his will.

DO WE LONG FOR PERFECTION?

Since many persons desire perfection, without knowing how to attain it, we may well ask what is it within us that creates this longing? Surely it is the divine part of us which is ever struggling for recognition! We *want* perfection because it is our natural state of existence, and it is natural for our *real* self to want to be itself. How, then, should we set out to give our real self the chance of realising itself?

This would be easy of solution at the beginning if we followed the promptings of our ideals. They come unbidden so far as we, in our human state, can see; and we know not whence they come. But how beautiful they are in comparison with anything which we see on this mundane plane of thought!

The inference is, therefore, that our ideals are truer than anything which our material senses can teach us, and that they come from a plane of existence infinitely higher than our present environment. Where, then, is that plane from which our ideals come? Such is the question, and the longing for knowledge, of our souls. In searching for that knowledge we necessarily suffer much. Why? Because with our imperfect vision we stumble along many dark and stony paths in trying to find it. Sometimes we fall, and in falling are often painfully hurt. We are compelled to go on in our desire to know, and we encounter fresh difficulties time and again in our search after truth. This is the meaning of suffering. We inherit, as mortals, the imperfections of lines of ancestors who have lived in error. Our teeth are set on edge by the sour grapes that our fathers have eaten. It is ours to learn from these drawbacks, not to *add* to them for those who may follow after us. Rather must we endeavour to lessen the power of evil. This may entail suffering on our part, because of our imperfect vision, but God is ever at hand to comfort and support us, if only we do our best to overcome. Those who follow us, if we do well, will benefit by our example, and thus we may make the search after perfection less difficult for them, as well as gain for ourselves the reward of well-doing. This thought should strengthen us in our resolve to succeed. There will be many difficulties for us to face before we can reach our goal. Those difficulties depend greatly on our individual weaknesses. First of all, then, we must set to work to discover what they are, and having

* This fact might serve as a hint to the makers of phonograph trumpets.—ED. 'LIGHT.'

discovered them, try to remedy them. Someone has said that the recognition of a fault is half the remedying of it. Is that fault self-will? Then in the words of the poet, let us pray God:—

'Take my will and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.'

Is it lack of patience? Again, in the words of another poet—blind and suffering—let us remember—

'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

'Yes,' you say, 'I have waited so long that methinks the grave will be the only relief.' Even so, but the grave is not the goal of the soul. The way seems long, and we learn our lesson so slowly, but the very length of the journey shows our need of patience. Is it pride that impedes our progress? We have only to remember that 'we brought nothing into this world and we can take nothing out of it'! What, then, should we be proud of? That we are heirs of God and therefore of eternal life. Let us count ourselves but nothing, as St. Paul did, if by well-doing we may win a crown of life hereafter! But we wonder sometimes if life is worth having, and ask ourselves if we have not had more than enough here? No, let us not think that we have lived; we are only passing through this world in our effort to live.

Life! The very word is the expression of all that is radiant and beautiful. Do we find it here, particularly when, despairing and hopeless, we beg for sympathy, and in response to our prayer the world turns a deaf ear? We shall find it in ultimate perfection, and the following out of our highest ideals is the surest road to our goal. If we try our best, and the grave seems to catch us up before we have accomplished our task, we shall find that death is but the gate to higher life. What we have been seeking we shall find—not, perhaps, here, but in God's higher world. Let us not be cast down at seeming failure. No good thought or effort is ever lost—far from it. If only we have been trying bravely, success will be ours at last. The battle is already on our side. Let us not 'weary in well-doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not.' Let us continue to work out our longing for perfection by constant prayer for help and guidance. The longing of our soul is the germ of realisation. The man who first thought of a table, only thought it. Afterwards the thought materialised and became a reality. Our thoughts, combined with earnest endeavour, will have the same joyous end. The world also will be better for our good thinking, for it has need of all that is good, and nothing is wasted.

In cleaning the windows of our own souls, we are greatly helping our fellow-man to clean his also. In taking the beam out of our own eye we are helping our fellow-man to pull the mote out of his. If our eye (*i.e.*, our material vision) offends us and blinds the spiritual sight, let us pluck it out by withdrawing from the world and seeking after what is highest.

In other words, we must refuse to see the false and look only on the true. Is selfishness our besetting sin? Let us remember that 'he who would save his life must lose it.' We must continue to do good for all, no matter how they act towards us, because our souls will sooner attain to perfection thereby, and thus win happiness.

'He does the right who thinks aright,
And lives—who gives his life away;
Perfection means, with all your might
To grow less selfish day by day.'

Then we have also another great aid to perfection: the power of *loving* aright. All other means may fail us, but this—never! Love is the expression of our real or divine self. We can love our fellow-man, the birds, the flowers, the sunshine, the moon, the stars, and all God's lovely creation. If love is the fulfilling of the law, who, then, can stay our progress if we love? Will this help our perfection to become a reality? Yes, because in giving place to so much beauty in our souls, we must of necessity crowd out all mean or selfish thoughts for lack of space to accommodate them.

To attain perfection, then, we must cultivate all that is good within us, and the bad will atrophy for want of use. Unselfishness, love, the blending of our will with that of God (good),

the humbling of our pride to the point of suffering in silence the evil that is spoken of us, the praying of the prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' when most we are persecuted, these are our surest aids to perfection. It is 'the power of God which worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure' which will lighten our task. Although in ourselves we are nothing, let us remember, as St. Paul says, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

The nothingness of our earthly selves is finely illustrated by the subject of one of Watts' famous pictures. A man is dying, he is leaving his worldly possessions behind him, and thinking over his past life. He has been blessed with this world's goods in abundance, and has had to put forth no great effort to attain them, therefore he had shown no virtue in spending them. His reflections are summed up in the title of the picture: 'What I Spent I Had; What I Saved I Lost; What I Gave I Have.' One thing, only, he is taking with him to the world whither he is bound—not what he gave to others, but what he gave to *himself* in spiritual blessing when he thought of others! He is taking this with him, his *only* asset towards the perfection he must continue to work for in a future state. He had cast his bread on the waters, and had found it after many days.

Thus must we seek after perfection by thought for others, and by doing with all our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do. 'We shall thus polish the jewels of our souls and prevent them growing dull for want of use. Perfection is not easy of attainment. What great victory ever was? But it is possible of attainment, and let us resolve to reach it. Reverses are the fortune of war which the soldier must overcome. Unflagging energy and courage will carry us to victory. Let us rally to the fight, so that it can be truly said of each one of us that he was—

'One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward;
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better—
Sleep to wake.'

SENGA VELVINE.

ARE ALL MEN IMMORTAL?

It is interesting to observe how at times a certain subject seems to be 'in the air'; it 'crops up,' if one may change the figure, on all sides. Under various titles, but all converging to the same central idea, a number of books have been published this autumn which indicate that immortality is the thought that is uppermost in many minds just now. Professor W. F. Barrett concludes his little work on 'Psychical Research' with the opinion that although psychic phenomena give evidence of the existence of active intelligences on the other side, they do not prove immortality, and he argues that no 'investigations can yield scientific proof of that larger, higher, and enduring life which we desire and mean by immortality.' Mr. Claud Field, in his 'Shadows Cast Before,' deals with the 'presentiment of immortality.' The Rev. Edgar Daplyn, in his address to the London Spiritualist Alliance, speaks of 'the soul alone conceiving the condition of infinity—that is, eternity,' and holds that 'immortality is simply life, the soul's life.' Mr. Henry Frank inclines to the idea that immortality has to be attained—that tenacity of self-consciousness, strength of will and character, are necessary to secure an integrated and immortal individuality. It is all very interesting as an indication of how 'the flowing tide' is setting strongly in our direction.

WALTHAMSTOW.—'J. E. M.' would be pleased to hear from Spiritualists residing at Walthamstow with a view to joining, or forming, a private circle. He has been led to believe that he is very psychic, and desires an opportunity to develop with experienced Spiritualists. Letters addressed, 'J. E. M.,' care of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., will be forwarded.

ACCIDENT TO 'CHEIRO': POSTPONEMENT OF HIS LECTURE.—Just as we go to press we learn with regret that 'Cheiro,' while travelling in Spain recently, met with a serious accident, which will prevent his return to London for several weeks, and in consequence his lecture to the London Spiritualist Alliance, which was arranged for January 11th, must be postponed. Mr. E. W. Wallis has kindly consented to give his address on that date.

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.

Christmas and the New Year.

To all our readers, old and new, we send friendly greetings, and truest good wishes for 'A Merry Christmas' and happy social days to the close of the old year. In the coming year may they all be blessed, in all ways, always!

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

At a time when the thoughts of Christendom are given over largely to banqueting and revelry it might well seem that spirits of the remote, ethereal type depicted by poets would find the world a more than usually repellent place of abode. One can easily imagine, for instance, those fair sylphs, whom Shelley described in 'Adonais,' turning in disgust from a humanity made additionally gross by an increased attention to the pleasures of the table, and by what they might consider a coarse and unseemly mirth. We say this without any desire to disparage the idealised type of spiritual beings which the poetic imagination has 'bodied forth.' Far from it. We love to think and read of the wondrous elfin world, with its starry splendours and its delicate and fantastic beauty. We are even charmed with Lamb's quaint idea of the invisible realm as a kind of shadow-land:—

We willingly call a phantom our fellow as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world, and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of halfway approach to incorporeal being.

There is a mood in which one can enjoy these fanciful pictures of the unseen world as limned deftly by the great writers of the past. True, such writers were far from the reality, as we conceive it, but then it is to be remembered that their appeal was really made to the fancy and imagination. They asserted no claim to be seers and revealers of inner realities. They left that (rather unfortunately) to the theologians, who, as a rule, failed miserably, their revelations having all the extra-human atmosphere with none of the kindly play of fancy and ideality.

And this brings us to a consideration of the only great imaginative writer who ever handled the subject of ghosts in a warm-hearted and natural fashion—Charles Dickens. In his exuberant humanity he pictured the Christmas ghost as returning, not to affright the revellers or to rebuke their mirth, but to open the hearts of selfish and gloomy ones amongst them to all the cheerful and kindly influences of

the festal season. And how near to the realities the intuitions of the great novelist carried him! Witness his description of Marley's ghost in 'The Christmas Carol':—

The same face, the very same. Marley in his pig-tail, usual waistcoat, tights, and boots, the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pig-tail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail, and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.

That picture of the fetters which Jacob Marley wrought for himself in his selfish, money-grubbing life on earth will have to none so vivid a significance as to Spiritualists, who know that there is more than imagination in it, and that the creative power of the spirit in certain states is quite capable of projecting externally such a symbolic chain as that which Marley dragged and Scrooge saw.

Even the 'Goblin' in 'The Chimes' is a wise and beneficent spirit:—

'The voice of Time,' said the Phantom, 'cries to man, Advance! Time is for his advancement and improvement; for his greater worth, his greater happiness, his better life; his progress onward to that goal within its knowledge and its view, and set there in the period when Time and He began.'

Whether it is the ghost of Marley, the spirits of Christmas, Past, Present and To Come, the Goblin of the Bells, or the awesome spectre that attended the solitude of 'the Haunted Man,' all have their mission of goodwill—to turn the thoughts of men, not from the earth, but only from its baser things. Hear the words of one of the spirits to Scrooge:—

There are some upon this earth of yours . . . who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived.

That is one of the glories of Dickens. Who, more than he, realised the spiritual nature of the human affections? The sour moralist, the gloomy ascetic, preached in vain to him their doctrines of the soul as a cold abstraction—he would have none of them. He saw too deeply into the heart of things to be beguiled by ideas of metaphysical angels or aimless wanderers from 'the vasty deep.' His were ghosts that could point the true lessons of Christmas and even lament when, by their own follies in the flesh, they were barred from its atmosphere of love and joy and fellowship. 'My spirit,' wailed the ghost of Marley, 'never walked beyond our counting-house . . . and weary journeys lie before me.' It is most true. The ghost that Dickens pictured, like the spirits we know, 'walk' for their own highest good or for that of others, and never merely to affright the senses of mortals and add new terrors to the grave. His phantoms and spectres, while presented in some of the conventional trappings, taught the lessons of the soul, and showed how in the simple joys and sorrows of poor humanity were concealed the deepest springs of its divinity. It is good to think that the influence of the great novelist in this direction is still at work leavening the thought of the world, for there are still many spiritual philosophers of the Laputa type who discourse of the next world with a glance at the clouds, and to whom the soul is a 'meagre essence.' And now that the spirit of Christmas is abroad, and the ghost story of the olden type gives us a pleasing thrill as we gather amid the holly and mistletoe about the Yule fire, it is good to think that nothing of our innocent merrymaking is alien to the true life of the soul. For love and joy are amongst the fruits of the Spirit, and if they were as manifest all the year round as at Yuletide, the world would indeed be a happier place.

THE LOVELINESS OF GOD.

One of the foremost uses of our Gospel is the transformation it accomplishes in relation to the world's unlovely dreams of God. Those dreams have, for the most part, been like pictures thrown upon a screen: and the pictures were produced in a struggling and sorrowful world. All the unlovely features discernible in most of the old-world creeds had their counterparts in the daily external lives of the men who drew them. Earthly rulers were arbitrary, harsh, self-willed; and so God was thought to be. Earthly rulers hated their enemies or were even merciless to their friends; and the same was, of course, inferred as to the Heavenly Ruler. But slowly, very slowly, we are emerging: and there is no one who can more naturally and happily help the process of emerging than the enlightened Spiritualist who knows perfectly well that the human fact and the divine ideal are far more likely to be antagonists than duplicates, and who finds it easy enough to pass by these ancient survivals of old-world errors and miseries, that he may look for God within, and listen for Him in the holy of holies of the soul.

The one simple method taught by our Gospel is always, 'Trust in the highest, and believe the best.' In this divine region nothing is 'too good to be true.' It is always much more reasonable to say, 'It is good and therefore it is true.' God, we say, is hidden from us. In Himself, we know Him not: and the mystery of His being we never expect to fathom. But we are far, very far, from being without a test of truth in relation to Him. Always and everywhere, He is the wisest, the mightiest, and the best: and therefore, always and everywhere, He is wiser and mightier and better than the wisest and mightiest and best beings we have ever known; tenderer than the most affectionate father; more pitiful than the best of mothers; more just than the wisest judge; more faithful than the truest friend—'the altogether beautiful of the Universe.'

We are, of course, perfectly well aware of what can be said on the other side; for Nature can appear to be infinitely callous and spiteful and wasteful. But it seems fairly clear to us that callousness and spite and wastefulness are often more in appearance than in reality, and that, in other cases, they are only incidental to inevitable processes: but beneath, above, and at the heart of all, there is a dominant something which 'makes for righteousness,' and makes for progress and blessedness, too.

But, let it be admitted that there is a danger. It is highly desirable that the Spiritualist should carefully guard against being a mere sentimentalist. There is a possibility of going wrong even in our resolve to see and stand by what we rightly call 'the perfections of God.' It is as true that we are the creatures of inexorable Law as that we are the children of an infinite Love. We have been brought into existence by the impersonal forces of Nature, and are held down and mastered by imperative laws: and by these laws the loving God works. The merciful Father, therefore, is, in a sense, the awful Force: and the one relationship cannot repeal the other. For our good, the laws of the Universe are inexorable; and they carry us forward or crush us according to an order and a harmony which are made unswervable for our good. It is a distinct danger, then, that in so eagerly magnifying 'the beauty of the Lord' we may miss the grave fact and the very serious responsibilities suggested by the words 'creature' and 'subject' that lie behind the word 'child.' Rightly understood, the old prayer of the Hebrew poet, 'Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,' is, above all things, a prayer for truth, since only truth is really beautiful: and the supreme truth of the Universe is

summed up and enshrined in that Infinite Life which is, for us, Creator, Lawgiver, and Father all in one.

Mystery there must ever be. How absurd it is to complain of it! Not only are we ignorant beyond all telling, but few of us have the faculties which can report to us even the smallest fact beyond our poor borderland. And even as to this side of the borderland, what do we really know? We do not even know what vision is, what it is that makes one recognise colours, or enables one to tell the difference between the song of the skylark and the boom of the sea. No one can tell why vibrations of varying lengths and frequency should be by the ear and the brain translated to the master of the house as sound. Indeed, we know nothing so well as this—that it becomes us to be constantly humble and thankful and teachable.

But there is one great mainstay in which we all may find an abiding help. It is this—that Life is everywhere flowing in upon us, and that one signal characteristic of Life is loveliness. Everywhere is Life beautiful, and often a marvel, a miracle of beauty in its lowest forms. All the art in the world could not rival the living loveliness of the homeliest patch of weedy green: and the sublimest sculpture never approached the beauty of the humblest human being. Yes, everywhere life is beautiful—the new fresh verdure, the opening olive or emerald buds, the glory of bloom and fruit, the pure lily emerging from the seemingly impure earth, the flush of health on the face of the child at play, the living music of the woods, the sighings and whisperings of the leaves and the harping of the pine branches, the light of the eye that can behold all this and the music of the tongue that can tell it—what a world of beauty because of Life!

But oh for the Life that lies within and beyond all this, that is its fountain and sustainer—that holds up this strength and feeds the flow of its life, the ever-living God! Well for us if we could penetrate to that, feel the reality of that, be sure of the abidingness of that! For the flowers will fade, and the glow of health will depart, and the happy face will be 'sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought,' and the deep scars of trouble: and there will come the silence of death. But the beauty of God is the beauty of an undiminished life, which only manifests itself in minutest portions in these myriad forms on the earthly plane: and it is the unfailing spring whose living waters supply these temporary streams. What it was to Abraham and David and the prophets it is to us—no freshness faded, no glory gone, no exhaustion of that vital and vitalising power. The great natural forces have renewed the face of the earth, interchanging continents and seas, and never anything but beautiful: mighty races have risen and disappeared, and always with forceful flow of strenuous vitality: great empires have grown and decayed, and the sceptres of proud kings have been broken; and still the beautiful Life goes on, shining with undimmed glory over all, in morning and evening star, the same as when Moses told their story or David sang their praise.

We have stood beneath the stately dome of some venerable temple, under whose ample shade the children of men have gathered from age to age. Here the little child learnt to kneel before the solemn presence, and here the old man trembling came, to offer his parting prayer: and new children came, and other wayfarers grew old from age to age: and still the grand old temple dome spread its havening presence over all, and will bend over children yet unborn. Such, but infinitely more glorious, is the vast blue dome over all the children of men—the dome of that temple which is the earth, and whose worshipping multitude is the human race. And that wondrous temple-roof, gemmed with countless worlds of light, is but the pledge

and symbol of the Life which keeps it ever fresh and strong and beautiful. For, beyond all, even beyond the millions of stupendous worlds, depth beyond depth, and fold within fold—behind and within all imaginable forms of manifested life—lie the mystery and the loveliness of God.

THE INNER SELF AS REVEALED BY AURA.

BY MR. PERCY R. STREET.

An Address delivered on Thursday evening, December 7th, at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Mr. H. Withall, the vice-president, occupying the chair.

(Continued from page 596.)

The general type of aura is about five feet across; the largest I have seen was thirty-two feet. This last was due more to psychic power than intellectual or spiritual development. The ability to delineate the aura depends upon the seer's clarity of vision, his knowledge of the significance of the colours, and his skill in judging between their varying degrees of expression. The first must be developed by continued concentration, the second by studying the known facts, and by oft-repeated experience, while the third develops in the course of long and incessant practice. The seer must learn to distinguish between the colours of the various planes, which will be discovered in many cases to have similar colour characteristics.

We will now examine auric types taken from the seven thousand drawings I have made. As we proceed, I will explain the main facts of each. No doubt they will appear somewhat crude, but they represent, nevertheless, a vast amount of work. The physical plane comes first. This plane of the aura indicates the state of the organs, the person's magnetism, vitality, and probable duration of life. The results of the physical and mental habits are here exhibited. In a subject of perfect health the aura would doubtless be of a strong pinky-brown hue. As, however, such perfection is seldom, if ever, discovered, this plane is usually brown, with a faint suggestion of pink. In physical disturbances the markings vary in tone from a murky brown to grey, and from grey to black, according to the nature of the trouble. The state of each organ is indicated by separate markings over, or in the neighbourhood of, the organ itself. A diseased heart is shown by a grey cloud in the aura surrounding it, while the magnetism emanating from the organ itself is almost black. The conditions of the aura of the physical are in a great measure due to our mental habits. The effect of our thoughts for good or ill is observed nowhere so prominently as on this plane. There is not the least doubt that thoughts of a low quality, such as those connected with malice, hate, jealousy and continued morbid dwelling on disease, will attract from the world-aura substance of a like nature, which, finding a home in the thinker, will actually materialise in conditions of active disease. In no other way can certain phenomena be accounted for, and, indeed, a close observation of the auras of such people will reveal the process taking place. It is a self-evident fact that a man must have a proper function on each plane if the whole is to be healthy, and, further, that an unhealthy attitude on any plane will tarnish the others proportionately to the degree of its unhealthiness.

A survey of this plane shows clearly how essential is health. Our proper condition is to be healthful. In the natural order of things we are not subject to states of disease. They are self-induced, consciously or otherwise.

The first ten drawings which were exhibited and commented upon by Mr. Street were all connected with the physical aura. They included brain effects, disease in the aura, the aura during and after transition, the aura during temper, and auras of a drunkard, a sensualist, an imbecile, a melancholiac and a homicidal maniac. These were extremely interesting, and made more so by the clever comments of the lecturer.

Continuing, Mr. Street said: The mental plane is our next

consideration. Here we find the intellectual development together with morality, passion, affection, the artistic nature and the functions pertaining to the domestic and business life. The colours extend from the green hues of judgment, design, and order through the pink grades of affection and art to the yellow and blues of thought, intellect, and morality. This plane should be the strongest in point of function. It is the largest conscious centre in the ordinary individual for the generation (if there is such) and absorption of thought. It is the plane upon which take place most of the activities relating to the affairs of life. A proper orderly balance here is the sheet anchor of existence. Through proper mental function man becomes master of himself, realising to the full his many latent potentialities, which, when related to their rightful sphere of activity, will raise him till he becomes a power for untold good. On this plane I have chosen four varied types to represent the mental aura of man; those of the inventor, the business man, the artist, and the intellectual man.

From the mental we naturally pass to the psychic, the realm of unknown possibilities. This, proportionately cultivated, comprises the largest plane of function, but not the strongest. It is, however, impossible to tell just where it begins and finishes. Its scope seems to be co-extensive with being itself. The psychic element enters unobserved into the affairs of life more largely than we suspect. Every human being appears to possess a psychic plane, and thus all become at some time or other psychically negative. From a variety of reasons all cannot unfold the powers of this plane to the same extent, nor would it, I imagine, be altogether satisfactory if they could do so. All can, however, unfold their powers in some degree, and in my opinion everyone would be the better for such development, since it follows, in the very nature of things, that if we possess any quality or function, it must, if rightly used, be of service. Harmonious psychic development, if carried out with due regard to the conditions made necessary by the individual environment, will hurt no one, and no case, so far as I am aware, has ever been reported where harm has resulted. On the other hand, as in all other functions of life, excess and disorder necessarily involve suffering.

The colours found on this plane extend from the light reds of psychometrical power to the violet of inspiration, including the emeralds of intuition, the blues of clairvoyance and healing, and the yellows of clairaudience and psychic sensitivity. I know of no better way to develop psychically than by concentration upon the mastery of self. When there is self-control, the door of the psychic realm opens for a wise purpose, and only then (Hear, hear.)

The drawings on this plane are three, representing the aura of a clairvoyant, a healer, and a materialising medium.

Finally I will briefly touch upon the spiritual. In spite of our frequent use of the term, very little is known of this function. It is the outer plane of the aura, and in a well-developed soul the most beautiful. Here reside veneration, aspiration, devotion, ideality. Here are shown the effects of the spiritual development of the life, and the environment at birth is also indicated. The colours are not numerous; they extend from the pale yellow of the birth conditions through the blues and pinks of devotion and ideality, to the deep violets and purples of veneration and aspiration.

The harmony of the aura means harmony of life. If perfect balance be sought, development on any one plane must not be excessive. As Hudson Tuttle says in his 'Philosophy of Spirit,' 'Men never cultivate all their faculties. One philosophises at the expense of his moral and social natures, and another moralises at the expense of his intellect.' To be complete every plane must have its conscious function proportionately developed.

I am firmly persuaded that as the aura becomes clearly understood, its value as a source of positive knowledge of human personality will become more and more recognised. I am convinced that many now labouring under disabilities which they imagine to be permanent would be helped and guided by the knowledge imparted through an examination of this record of the inner self. It reveals alike our strength and our weakness, and the application of its principles will enable us to

maintain the one and eliminate the other. Its aid in choosing a career for our children is invaluable: it leads us to know ourselves, and if this knowledge can but become universal a happier, healthier, and wealthier generation in the truest sense will be ensured. (Loud applause.)

Mr. Street then exhibited drawings representing the auras of a number of well-known persons, and gave a brief description of the characteristics of each, as he estimated them from his interpretation of the aura. At the conclusion the chairman said: I do not think we shall have any discussion to-night. At the same time, before we propose a vote of thanks, I should like to say a few words. This is especially the season when our sympathies go out to those in trouble. I am about to make a suggestion—only a suggestion. I want some of you, if possible, to help the society in Reading, of which Mr. Street is the head. Many of the members are working people who are in receipt of small incomes, yet they pay a shilling a month (which is more than the Associates of this Alliance pay during the year), and for that shilling they get nothing but what they themselves provide. I feel that many of you would like to help that society, because of its brave struggle to keep alive and do good in the town of Reading. Another thing: About two years ago a gentleman in Italy, in paying his subscription to 'LIGHT,' sent an additional sum to be used at our discretion in any good work. I have used it in providing magnetic treatments for some who are unable to afford them, and should like to be able to do this in other instances. If you like my suggestion and send me a little money, I will divide it between the Reading Society and this object, and it shall be duly acknowledged through 'LIGHT.' The proceedings terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer.

Since the above meeting Mr. Withall has received the following subscriptions, in response to his suggestion, for which he desires to express his sincere thanks: Lady Mosley, £5; Mrs. Brett, £5; Mr. T. Ritchie, £1; Mr. J. T. Davis, 10s.; Mr. H. A. Calame, 9s.; Mrs. Campbell, 2s. 6d.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE Y.M.C.A.

Spiritualism is apparently causing a fluttering in the doves of the Young Men's Christian Association, and as it is regarded as a 'menace' there, just as it is among our Rationalistic friends, Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., devotes considerable space in 'The Association News' to a warning to young men against it. Sir Robert's article is most ingenuous. Without intending to do so, he writes in such a way as to arouse the curiosity of his readers and set them inquiring. He says, 'that there is a world of spirits is certain,' and he holds that 'Spiritualism may help to expose the blindness and folly of unbelief.' 'But,' he says, 'that there are no spirits save the dead of the human race is clearly false, and therefore the assumption that the phenomena of Spiritualism are due to the presence and action of the human dead is untenable. . . . If the Spiritualists' hypothesis be well founded that the denizens of the spirit world have knowledge of what is passing on earth, this must be as true of the demons as of the dead.' This by no means follows. Demons, if they exist, being of a lower order will necessarily be limited because of their ignorance and their spiritual darkness. They can only prevail with those as base as themselves. But our genial critic himself *assumes* the existence of the demons, yet their existence 'is utterly unproved.' Spiritualists rely upon the content of the messages, the intrinsic value of the communications revealing the identity of the mind from which they emanate. Whether there be other spirits save those of the human dead is a matter not of assumption, but of fact—their existence requires demonstration, and Sir Robert offers no proof whatever for his contention. But, taking him on his own ground, if demons exist and are free to deceive, will he tell us what all the angels, archangels, and celestial hosts are doing? Has God abdicated in favour of Satan? Are demons ruling the next state? Are the emancipated human beings, who were loving and helpful when here, selfishly enjoying themselves in heaven, and ignorant or disregarding of their friends on earth? Are there no 'ministering spirits'? No wonder the popular idea of the next world is that it is a place

to be dreaded. However, our critic gives currency to his own testimony to the reality of the phenomena that occurred through the mediumship of the late D. D. Home, 'a man of high social position and culture.' He says:—

From personal friends I heard of his 'miracles' while a guest at the Earl of Dunraven's Irish home, and notably of his power of floating through the air in a recumbent posture. But nothing could be more solemnly interesting to us than the power of these Spiritualists to neutralise the action of fire. On page 73 of 'The Lighter Side of my Official Life,' I tell how a quarter of a century ago I became acquainted with the Earl of Crawford, an acquaintanceship that has continued to the present day. Lord Crawford is a well-known figure in London society, and his work in connection with the transit of Venus twenty-nine years ago earned him a wide fame as an astronomer. Here are his lordship's words, spoken on the platform of one of the learned societies in London: 'I have frequently seen Home when in a trance go to the fire and take out large red-hot coals and carry them about in his hands, put them inside his shirt, &c. Eight times I have myself held a red-hot coal in my hands without injury, when it scorched my face on raising my hand. . . . A few weeks ago I was at a séance with eight others. Of these seven held a red-hot coal without pain, and the two others could not bear the approach of it.'

Mrs. S. C. Hall has left on record that on one occasion Home placed a red-hot coal on her husband's head and 'proceeded to draw up his white hair over the red coal. The white hair had the appearance of silver thread over the red coal. Mr. Home drew the hair into a sort of pyramid, the coal, still red, showing beneath the hair.' Lord Crawford was one of the four other persons who were present, and some of them burnt their hands on touching the coal after it was removed from Mr. Hall's head.

Dr. A. R. Wallace adds: 'The same witnesses also testify that Mr. Home has placed red-hot coals inside his waistcoat without burning his clothes, and has put his face into the middle of the fire, his hair falling into the flames, yet not being the least singed.' Surely no words are needed to convince sane and devout people that this bespeaks the agency, not of human beings whether living or dead, but of beings that are 'greater in power and might.' Have we not here a premonition of the appearing of 'him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders'?

The suggestion that these manifestations are premonitory cuts two ways—it would indicate that the demons possess power to nullify the effects of fire, and in that case hell-fire cannot affect them, so that Sir Robert seeks to prove too much. He talks of its being 'a master-stroke of Satanic subtlety to delude men into regarding him as a hideous and obscene monster': but how does he know what the devil is like? indeed, how does he know that there is a 'Satan' in existence? Will he tell us who keeps him alive if God is the life of all who live? Where does the devil live if God is All-good and All-present? Will Sir Robert explain how it is that he is so familiar with the 'real devil' that he can so confidently tell us that 'his aim is not to deprave the morals of men, but to corrupt their faith'? Will he explain how we are to know, if we are deceived by demons and they render mediums immune to the action of fire, that Daniel was not also deceived and the three Hebrew children preserved in the fiery furnace by the power of demons? How, in other words, if 'Satan fashioneth himself as an angel of light,' will Sir Robert prove that there are, or ever have been, any angels of light? May not all the revelations upon which he relies be but master-strokes of Satanic subtlety? Since Sir Robert agrees with Luther that the real devil 'setteth forth and decketh all his works with the colour of truth and with the name of God,' how, in heaven's name, is Sir Robert or anyone else to prove a match for this devilish cleverness and subtlety, and determine which is the work of God and which the work of the devil?

Sir Robert had better leave theological problems alone and make himself acquainted with facts. Anyone who seeks to drive back the waves of advancing spiritual and religious truth and liberty with the ancient broom of fear of the devil and demons sets himself as impossible a task as that traditionally undertaken by King Canute.

MARRIAGE OF MR. J. J. VANGO.—It will interest our readers to learn that on Saturday last, December 16th, Mr. J. J. Vango was married to Mrs. Monimia Baxter. The new Mrs. Vango is known to a large circle of friends as a sincere Spiritualist and an earnest worker in the cause. We wish Mr. and Mrs. Vango many happy years of wedded life.

OUR BOOK TABLE.

PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES.—In his new work, 'The Lady Sheila' (Theosophical Publishing Society, 161, New Bond-street, W., cloth and gold, 2s. net), Mr. J. L. Macbeth Bain says that he sets forth 'the story of a few of the most notable of my marvellous psychic experiences through the mediation of my dear wife, narrated by me as faithfully and as truly as I have been able.' It is extremely interesting, as all such records are, as much for the naïve self-revealings of the author as for the events that he relates. One afternoon, when he and Mrs. Bain were sitting together in a cottage parlour at Rannoch, in Scotland, a pencil, which had been lying on a table in front of them, rose 'as of its own accord.' He says: 'I watched it carefully, and I as distinctly saw it work as I now see this pen in my hand while I write. I even heard the scratchy sound as it traced the outline of a human face on a sheet of paper. Perhaps for two or three minutes only this lasted, so swiftly was the work done. Then the pencil dropped as though of its own will, and the portrait sketch was complete.' Mr. Bain is wise enough to recognise that while he personally has now no need for evidences of spirit presence and power such as these, yet there are hosts of persons who do need them, and he feels that he is but performing a public duty in bearing his testimony to the reality of phenomenal manifestations which prove the fact of human survival. We have heard from time to time of the remarkable powers of Mrs. Bain as a psychic and healer, and are pleased that her husband has given to the world these valuable and instructive details of phenomena occurring through her mediumship. Many of them, it is true, happened in the privacy of their home life, but they are all the more interesting on that account, even though, as Mr. Bain says in his 'Foreword,' 'they pertain in a way more to the degree of the psychical than of the spiritual, to the phantomal than to the eternal.' 'That there is yet great need for such testimony is very, very evident to all who have seeing eyes.'

HIGH THOUGHTS.—Mr. C. Brodie Patterson in his book, 'A New Heaven and a New Earth,' which has just been issued by G. Bell and Sons, Limited (cloth, 4s. net), gives us some earnest and helpful thoughts on practically all the great problems of life. It may well be a companion volume to Trine's 'In Tune with the Infinite.' Eminently sane and sensible, persuasive and spiritual, Mr. Patterson imbues his work with a personal feeling that gives the reader a sense of an almost confidential relation. He dedicates his book to all earnest and sincere men and women who are engaged in a conscious effort to make this world a better place to live in, and we have not the slightest doubt that it will prove to be a valuable contribution to that Divine stream of tendency that is working in all and through all for the spiritual awakening of mankind. It is to be regretted that this work was not ready a month ago, as it would make a valuable Christmas gift.

We have received from Mr. Hanson G. Hey a copy of the Spiritualists' National Union Diary for 1912. Beautifully bound in red Russian leather with a neat little pocket for the insertion of stamps, tickets, &c., and with plenty of pages for recording notes, engagements and memoranda of things lent, it contains much invaluable information for Spiritualists, including the objects, purposes and benevolent work of the Union; the names and addresses of its officers and council, as well as those of the officers of the other Unions scattered throughout the kingdom; useful lists of the Union's affiliated societies, with the addresses of their respective secretaries, and of the publications issued by the Union; hints to societies and to secretaries; suggestions for those about to form spirit circles, &c. Altogether it is an excellent shilling's-worth. Mr. Hey informs us that the same book bound in cloth and minus the pocket, is issued for 6d. It can be obtained on application to the office of the Union, 30, Glenterrace, Clover Hill, Halifax.

'I WONDER what the angels of the Nativity think when they look around Christian Europe to-day and remember the words they chanted to the shepherds,' says the Venerable Archdeacon Wilberforce, D.D., in his timely little book, 'Thoughts for Christmas,' and, continuing, he says: 'Millions of armed men await some trivial international misunderstanding to make Europe a charnel-house of slaughter. Divisions, heart-burnings, suspicions, rend the Church of Christ, and divide Christian from Christian. Misunderstandings, jealousies, irritabilities, mar the beauty of home life and keep asunder members of the same family. . . . What beatitude can be more Christ-like or more appropriate to the Christmas season than the blessing of the peacemaker?' The Christmas obligation upon us all to throw our personal influence into the spirit of the anthem of the Nativity, "Peace on Earth," is emphatic and binding.' It is not enough to pray, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord,' we must work for it with hope and faith and love.

'HEAVEN IS LIFE'S DIVINEST FREEDOM.'

That the future life, as ordinarily depicted by orthodox preachers, has no attractive power is easily proved. If one, when in the company of ordinary persons—non-Spiritualists, of course—turns the conversation on to the subject of the afterwards of death, in almost every instance he finds that it is shirked. No one cares to talk about it. There is an uneasy feeling manifest until some safer, more congenial, everyday topic is broached. Well may 'The Literary Guide' for December ask:—

Does any man or woman feel any sort of longing to join the innumerable company of shades in the dim underworld or over-world wherein the dead are said by Christian teachers to exist in a ghostly fashion which is a mere travesty and insipid mockery of the full-blooded and joyous life of earth?

We are in no hurry to go to the other side—indeed, we regard it as both a privilege and a duty to remain on this side as long as possible, so that we may learn all the truth we can, and do all in our power to be of service to others—yet we do look forward to the next stage of life-experience with high anticipation—aye, with joyous expectation. Why should we not? Many of our comrades and co-workers are already there; many loved and dear ones are there; all the fine, great, earnest workers for truth, humanity, and righteousness of the past are there; the world's teachers, poets, artists, reformers—the brightest and best of other days—are there. Surely it is a glorious prospect that opens before us all. We may well look forward to again meeting loved ones and renewing acquaintance with old-time friends, to interchanging experiences with them, to learning new truths, entering into happy associations, and finding new scope and opportunities for useful exercise of thought and influence and power. What pleasure will be ours in those coming times! We anticipate being able to meet many of those who to-day are only names to us; to visit Shakespeare, Milton, Plato, Socrates, Jesus, Paul, John, Buddha, and many other great thinkers and workers for humanity—to learn from them—and to enjoy fellowship with kindred minds, with whom we shall be most at home.

'Heaven is life's divinest freedom,' sings the inspired Lizzie Doten, but we could not be free in a 'New Jerusalem' heaven, nor could we be happy so long as a fiery hell, or a hell of never-ending torture and torment, existed in which human beings endured useless and hopeless suffering. Realising, as we do, that the world beyond is neither an artificial heaven nor an impossible hell, but a homeland, where each one goes to his own place and enters into the joy of living, as far as he has prepared himself to understand life and realise joy, we feel that whenever the death-change comes, as in due course it assuredly will, we shall be able to welcome it, for it will only mean the opening of the way to that larger, fuller, freer, and more progressive life for which in spirit every earnest and aspiring lover of truth, beauty, and good has so deeply longed. It means for us all opportunity for increase in power and understanding, for growth in grace, spirituality, and loving-kindness.

When the true character of life beyond death is generally apprehended, death will be regarded naturally as an *incident* only in our eternally progressive existence, one of the stages of our evolution towards perfect comprehension, fulfilment, and realisation of the meaning, beauty, and joy of life. We shall not then shrink and shudder when the other world is mentioned in our talk, but we shall accept it as naturally as we do the thought of going to the other side of this world to a more genial climate, where we expect to find congenial company.

A THOUGHTFUL friend writes: 'I think Spiritualists exaggerate the influence of "Hooligan" spirits—there is surely a "spiritual police."' We agree, but our experience is that it is mainly the non-Spiritualists who talk most about 'obsessing' evil spirits. Experienced Spiritualists know that, as 'The American Spiritualist' recently said: 'There is no charm so effective in keeping away evil influences incarnate or discarnate, as a bright, sunny smile accompanied by kindly thoughts toward everyone. Evil may rush in on the innocent and unwary in an unguarded moment; but there should be no unguarded moments, and a will to be good and do good instead of a negative wish will form a safeguard at all times.'

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

The London Spiritualist Alliance lectures have been excellent in quality and largely attended this session, and in all departments the work of the Alliance is growing—as it should do. Early in the New Year an afternoon social gathering will be held, and the list of lectures and lecturers for the next few months holds out promise of still better things to come.

Mr. Percy R. Street's suggestive address on the human aura, which concludes in this issue of 'LIGHT,' should be especially interesting and helpful to all who are developing psychic powers, since it is essential that sensitives should know how to protect themselves, and to gain such self-mastery as to be able to close up all avenues of approach except to such influences, or persons, and at such times as they wish. Mediums need to learn not only how to co-operate with trustworthy friends in the unseen, but how to control their own psychic personality so as to choose their company—in a word, to know when and how to be positive and self-controlled as well as how and when to yield to spirit influence.

Whether her experience has been due to spirit intervention or not, is a point that we are unable to determine, but we are pleased to learn that, according to a report published last week, 'Miss Edith Ballard, the Gillingham girl suffering from functional paralysis, is on the high road to health. Her progress during the past week has been most marked.' We trust she will soon be completely restored to health and strength.

Mr. J. Horne, of Johannesburg, South Africa, informs us that Mrs. Place-Veary has successfully commenced her second mission in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg, her lectures and clairvoyant descriptions being intently listened to. He says that Mrs. Veary quite enjoyed her voyage and looked well. The Durban people would have liked to keep her there awhile, and friends at Maritzburg and Harrismith are already inquiring for her services.

Mr. W. J. Colville sends a long letter of greetings and heartiest good wishes to all his friends at this festive season, coupled with grateful remembrances of many pleasant visits to England, and hopes for equally pleasant future ones. He writes enthusiastically of the wonderful improvement in public sentiment in America, and says that the progressive upward direction is noticeable on every side. The cause of Spiritualism has taken a new and vigorous lease of life in New York, where Mrs. Helen Temple Brigham is still carrying on her good work. Mr. Colville himself will go to the Boston Spiritual Temple early in the new year for an indefinite period. We sincerely reciprocate Mr. Colville's good wishes, and trust he will have a very successful season in Boston. Evidently the expected spiritual revival is already being experienced in America. We anticipate a decided forward move in this country next year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

'Position of Bed During Sleep.'

SIR,—'LIGHT' for October 7th and 21st, and November 4th (pages 480, 503, and 528), contained interesting letters on the 'position of bed during sleep.' I have studied this question since 1908, both alone and in collaboration with M. Warcollier, and have published a small book under the title 'L'Art du Repos et l'Art du Travail. Influence de l'Orientation sur l'Activité Musculaire et Neuropsychique.' This book will soon be translated into English. It provoked a great number of experiments on account of the offer of a prize of one thousand francs for the best essay on the subject. This year the prize has been obtained in Paris by Mrs. Agache-Schlemmer.

In general, it seems to have been well established that the north and south position is the most favourable to rest, because the most favourable to nervous relaxation. This would be the result of a greater exteriorisation of the nervous fluid. What happens, then, in Mary Gibbs's case is that lying in the north and south direction her supranormal faculties develop themselves in the sense of an exteriorisation, which becomes easier by the fact of the position of her body, and which result in the perception of phenomena which are supposed to take place in her room at some distance from her physical form.

The same fact, although under different conditions, has been noticed by ourselves with Mr. G., a psychist, of Lausanne, Switzerland. He is a calm, middle-aged man who has no ideas about the existence or the non-existence of spirits, and who, in

consequence, has not the same visions as Mary Gibbs. He has, however, supranormal faculties by which he is capable of exteriorisation while lying in the north and south position, and has even the consciousness of seeing his own 'double.'

On page 17 of 'L'Art du Repos' M. Warcollier and I say: 'There are two orientations (north and south) which increase the exteriorisation of the neuro-psychist strength, and probably give a relaxation in the organisms and a greater facility to rest.'

If cases like those of Mary Gibbs and Mr. G. are numerous, we shall have to modify our conclusions. If one is a medium, this exteriorisation in the north and south position may render easier Mr. G.'s vision of his double, or Mary Gibbs's conversation with spirits. So that the sleep of the subject would be better in the east and west position.

Such exceptions confirm the rule, because we find them in exceptional temperaments.—Yours, &c.,

Montmorency.

E. DUCHATEL.

'Samhita'—an Inquiry.

SIR,—Early in October an article appeared in the 'Daily Mirror' concerning a new religion from India called 'The New Dispensation,' or 'Samhita,' and giving a few extracts from its book, 'The Book of Servants.'

I have inquired in every probable direction for this book, but can hear nothing of it. If any reader of 'LIGHT' can help me, I should be very grateful.—Yours, &c.,

LUCY CARR SHAW.

8, Park Village West, Gloucester Gate, N.W.

Strange Coincidences.

SIR,—You have been good enough from time to time to invite your readers to give some of their experiences in Spiritualism, and I have narrated in 'LIGHT' one or two happenings at Mr. and Mrs. Coates' Rothesay circle; the following strange coincidence may interest some of your readers.

From my childhood, until I was nearly twenty years of age, I was connected with James' Place U. P. Church, Edinburgh. During these twenty years there were three different ministers, all of whom have passed on to the higher life. It is over fifty years since the first, the Rev. Dr. Logan Aikman, left Edinburgh and became minister of Anderston U. P. Church, Glasgow. During his ministry in Edinburgh I, as a boy, was taken regularly by my father to church, and although that length of time has elapsed, I can still remember the particulars of a few of his famous lectures. Since he passed over (and before I became a believer in Spiritualism) he has been described to me several times, as being with me. I always thought it was Dr. Aikman, but did not care to be at all certain, until two years ago he was again described to me and his name given, which cleared away any doubts I had concerning his identity. You will notice it is not a common name—Logan Aikman.

He was succeeded in the same church by Dr. Drummond, who only remained at Edinburgh four years, and ultimately became settled as minister in Belhaven U. P. Church, Glasgow; it is only some three weeks since he passed away, and he was over eighty years of age. During the four years of his Edinburgh ministry I was a young lad and rarely missed a Sunday listening to his eloquent discourses. Although only three weeks have elapsed since he passed away, he has been described to me this week to the life (as a minister I had known) and his Christian name, Robert, given.

Dr. Drummond was succeeded in Edinburgh by Dr. Andrew Morton; he remained in Edinburgh until he passed over. He also has been described to me and his name given. I was a member of his Bible Class, and joined the church under him. All three ministers were thoroughly orthodox and, I should say, inclined to Evangelicalism, and knew little or nothing as to the truths of Spiritualism.

Naturally the question has arisen in my mind, what was their object, all three, in coming back to me? Had they all the one aim in view? Was it for recognition, or craving sympathy and help for themselves, or was it to give me needed help and inspiration? Probably you or some of your readers can answer this.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN DUNCAN.

Edinburgh, December 8th.

A Dream.

SIR,—I dreamed a dream last night, the imagery of which has impressed itself with such startling vividness upon my waking consciousness, that I feel impelled to record my impressions.

It seemed that I started out on a journey with a certain destination in view, but somehow lost my way and took a wrong turning, which led me on and on until I became quite bewildered, not knowing which was the right way, for the path

seemed to be in the form of a maze, when, looking up, I saw in the distance the lights of the city to which I was bound, and pressed on until they appeared quite close. But as I drew near I saw a steep flight of steps which must be climbed, as they formed the only entrance to the city, and as I mounted these the whole flight seemed to be covered with sand, so that I could not get a foothold, and slipped back continually. By continued effort, however, I at last reached the top, but lay on the ground almost covered with the sand and quite exhausted. As I lay thus, there came to me, holding a little girl by the hand, a beautiful woman, who said how glad she was to see me, as she had been waiting for me for a long time and would now get me some food to refresh me and give me strength to enter the city, which was in a blaze of glory before me, bathed in light, the pure white radiance of which dazzled my eyes almost to blindness. Lying there waiting for their return I found myself gradually slipping backwards and downwards in the sand, until at last I was almost covered by it, and gasping for breath, and could not feel the steps beneath my feet. But just as the sand seemed to be covering me entirely, I caught sight of an iron railing at my left side, with two very large iron rings attached some way apart. I endeavoured to grasp the first of these, but slipped past before I could do so, and only just managed to catch hold of the second, and in this way keep my head out of the sand. As I held on to this ring, feeling that every moment my strength would give way, and I should fall and be buried in the sand, a voice came to me from above, saying, 'Do not fear; the sand which seems so deadly and dangerous is really cleansing and purifying, and will cleanse and purify you. Remember to always look upward, and by so doing your feet will find the hidden steps and mount them one by one, and the lights of the city will reappear to your sight, so that by the time you reach the top of the flight of steps, the sand will have done its work, and you will be pure and clean and fit to enter the city.'

I awoke with the echo of this voice still ringing in my ears and the whole dream clearly imprinted on my mind, feeling that I had been in the presence of some unseen power which had spoken a message to my soul. Surely this was so, for the hidden meaning of my dream is clear.—Yours, &c.,

'MOLLIE.'

Suggestions for Inquirers.

SIR,—I would like to suggest that an effort be made to solve the mystery of the disappearance of the 'Waratah'—that some articles or clothing which once belonged to persons known to be on board that vessel should be submitted to mediums, clairvoyants and psychometrists. If this were done judiciously a solution might be obtained.

I would also like to suggest that those who desire that spirit intercourse should be proved to be authentic should have their thumb imprint taken and left, say, in the office of 'LIGHT,' so that when they have departed this life and materialise to their friends a similar imprint could be made by the 'form' for the purpose of identification. If an imprint of the medium's thumb were made, and also one by the 'form' at every séance, proof of the separate identity of the materialisation could be secured.—Yours, &c.,

Cape Colony.

E. W. SIMKINS.

'How About Those Rubies?'

SIR,—With reference to the letter by Mr. Coates, on page 599, let me at once frankly apologise for the mistake I fell into in quoting from a report in 'LIGHT,' 'four dishes of rubies,' instead of 'one large dish of rubies and ruby sand.' I could explain how the error occurred, but it is more important to keep to the points at issue.

Being anxious to avoid the personal element I mentioned no names, but assumed the sincerity and integrity of all concerned. Lest it be supposed that I am an unsympathetic critic, I may be allowed to say I have been a convinced Spiritualist more than forty years, that I have passed my threescore years and ten, and that I have no other interest in this matter than to ascertain the truth.

Mr. Coates says he cannot answer all the questions raised by me. Will he kindly and frankly say which he cannot answer, then we can strike them off the list and deal with the rest. He says 'life is too short for explanation.' What an extraordinary statement to put before people who desire more light on a question that vitally concerns every human creature—and this from a Spiritualist!

However, as we are now promised a pamphlet on these wonderful séances, may I remind Mr. Coates that 'one large dish of rubies and ruby sand' was only one of the items, and further ask, How about those two Hindu Minnae birds? Were they alive? Are they alive still? And, if so, who has them? How

about that 'veil,' very valuable for its curious and rare coins, such as Egyptian native women wear? Who has that? Further information on these points will also be welcome. I can assure our friend, Mr. Coates, that I can easily 'possess my soul in patience.' I am not thinking of myself, but of others who wish to know what is true and what is of no value, and if he can show in his coming pamphlet that there is ample reason to believe that those two birds were brought from their native home by the aid of discarnate spirits, then I say those birds are worth their weight in rubies; not the sort I have been commenting on, but the rubies above price.—Yours, &c.,

H. BELSTEAD.

The Electric Theory of the Universe.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Brown's last letter (p. 598), I may say that physicists are now proving that all substances, all elements, &c., are built up of electricity, not that it pervades them only, as stated in the quotations from A. J. Davis, which he gave on p. 551. This is important, as it requires that the problem be met from another point of view. When it is proved that matter is but an appearance from life, caused by particles of electricity being held in position by magnetism, we shall then, I think, see that all the forms of matter—suns, planets, &c.—in the ocean of life are forms of life, and that those patches of incandescent or glowing gas are embryo solar systems, the first appearance of life forming matter on this plane of existence. Matter comes from life, is life, and life comes from matter; ice comes from water, is water, and water comes from ice; the universe is action and reaction, male and female. All is a manifestation of Father-Mother God.—Yours, &c.,

R. G. BENNETT.

Christmas for the Children.

SIR,—The children are always specially cared for at this time of the year. Those with good homes are made extra happy. The Battersea Lyceum children are all very poor, and we should like to give them one happy evening during the festive season. Kindly permit me to appeal in 'LIGHT' to lovers of children to help us in this direction.

Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by,—Yours, &c.,

ANNIE BODDINGTON.

17, Ashmere-grove,
Acre-lane, Brixton, S.W.

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, DEC. 17th, &c.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Owing to the Christmas Holidays, 'Light' must be sent to press next week earlier than usual, and we shall therefore be unable to print reports of Society Work in our next issue.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—*Cavendish Rooms*.—Mr. E. H. Peckham gave an address on 'Death, Annihilation, or What?' and a short inspirational poem. Both were much appreciated, as was also a solo by Miss Pickles.—15, Mortimer-street, W.—11th, Mrs. Neville gave successful psychometric delineations to members and friends. Mr. Leigh Hunt presided at both meetings. Sunday next, *no meeting*. See advt. on front page.—D. N.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a Conference with the Hackney Society at Amhurst-road on Sunday, December 31st, at 7 p.m. Speakers: Messrs. T. Brooks, F. Dawson, and G. F. Tilby. Soloists: Mr. and Mrs. Alcock Rush.

CROYDON.—ELMWOOD HALL, ELMWOOD-ROAD, BROAD-GREEN.—Mr. P. Scholey delivered an address on 'The Beauty of Holiness,' and gave well-recognised clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Karl Reynolds.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—Mr. H. Boddington gave an instructive address. Sunday next, Mrs. A. Boddington. Tuesday, 26th, at 7 p.m., flower dance and social. Musical programme arranged by the Misses Hough. Tickets 6d.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—Mr. Otto Kottnitz gave an address on 'Jesus and Christ,' and answered questions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. H. Leaf, address and clairvoyant descriptions. Saturday, January 6th, tea and social evening.—R.

STRATFORD.—WORKMAN'S HALL, 27, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—Mrs. Webster's address on 'Spiritualism' and clairvoyant delineations were much appreciated. Mr. E. P. Noall presided. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., address, Mr. G. Taylor Gwinn.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, HAMPTON WICK.—Mr. T. Brown gave an address; Miss Kent clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. J. L. Macbeth Bain on 'Christ the Healer.' Lyceum children will sing.