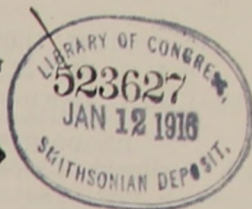


Light:



A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul.

No. 1,824.—VOL. XXXV. [Registered as] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1915. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.
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The Library of L.S.A. and Office of LIGHT will be closed from Friday, December 24th, to Tuesday, December 28th.

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For further particulars see p. 614.

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Purchase it from your Spiritualist Society or any newsagent, Price 4d., or send 5d. in stamps to Publisher, 47, Bank-buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.

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We regret that until further notice we shall be unable to forward any books or pamphlets to the Neutral Countries of Europe, owing to the difficulties made by the War Office Postal Censor. Will subscribers please note and not order any books or pamphlets till the Censorship allows the sending of books, &c., as usual. This applies to Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Greece and Switzerland. Our regular subscribers in these countries will receive their copies with as little delay as possible through the agents registered by the War Office.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE,

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Established 1884.

Incorporated 1896.

By the Memorandum of Association the Members are Prohibited from receiving any personal benefit, by way of profit, from the income or property of the Society.

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This Alliance has been formed for the purpose of affording information to persons interested in Psychical or Spiritualistic Phenomena, by means of lectures and meetings for inquiry and psychical research.

Social Gatherings are also held from time to time. Two tickets of admission to the lectures held in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, are sent to every Member, and one to every Associate. Members are admitted free to the Tuesday afternoon seances for illustrations of clairvoyance, and both Members and Associates are admitted free to the Friday afternoon meetings for "Talks with a Spirit Control," and to the meetings of the Psychic Class on Thursday, all of which are held at the rooms occupied at the above address.

Rooms are occupied at the above address, where Members and Associates can meet and attend seances for the study of psychic phenomena, and classes for psychical self-culture, free and otherwise, notice of which is given from time to time in LIGHT, and where they can read the special journals and use the library of works on Psychical and Occult Science. The reading-room is open daily to Members and Associates from 10 to 6 (Saturdays excepted).

A Circulating Library, consisting of nearly three thousand works devoted to all phases of Spiritual and Psychical Research, Science, and Philosophy, is at the disposal of all Members and Associates of the Alliance. Members are entitled to three books at a time, Associates one. Members who reside outside the London postal area can have books sent to them free of charge, but must return them carriage paid. A complete catalogue can be obtained, post free, for 1s., on application to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Librarian.

The subscription of Members is fixed at a minimum rate of one guinea, and of Associates at half-a-guinea, per annum. A payment of £1 11s. 6d. by Members or £1 1s. 4d. by Associates, will entitle subscribers to a copy of LIGHT for a year, post free. Inquirers wishing to obtain books from the Library without joining the Alliance may do so at the same rates of subscription.

Information will be gladly afforded by the Secretary, at the Rooms, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

* Subscriptions should be made payable to the Hon. Treasurer, Henry Withall, and are due in advance on January 1st in each year.

Notices of all meetings will appear regularly in "LIGHT."

D. ROGERS, Hon. Secretary.
HENRY WITHALL, Hon. Treasurer.

The subscriptions of new Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1916.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Perhaps it is because the holly is more suited to the winter season in which the Christmas festival falls that it has become the especial badge of Yule. Yet it has no tradition linking it with the birth of Christ, and in that respect is a less appropriate emblem than the Christmas Rose, of which the following pretty legend is told. At the time when the Wise Men and the Kings went to present their gifts to the Christ Child in Bethlehem, a peasant maiden in the City of David who had heard the news wept because she had no gift to carry to him. To her in a vision came an angel, who asked the cause of her grief, and bade her rather rejoice at the birth of the Saviour. The girl replied that she could not rejoice, since as all who took gifts to the Child received a blessing, she with no gift must go un-blessed. The angel answered that it was not the gift, but the spirit of the giver that mattered, but since she wanted a gift she should not go empty-handed. And he bade her look on the ground, where from her tears had sprung the first Christmas Rose. Eagerly she gathered the flower and hastened to present it to the Child, who smiled upon her, and his smile carried the blessing.

* * * *

Another beautiful old legend is that which tells of St. Joseph of Arimathea (who removed the body of Jesus from the Cross) and the Glastonbury Thorn. According to this story, St. Joseph with Lazarus and his two sisters were cast adrift in an open boat, and after a long and perilous journey, with much suffering, reached the shores of Gaul. From there, carrying the Holy Grail in his bosom, and accompanied by twelve companions, St. Joseph started on a Gospel mission to Britain. After many troubles the party reached, on Christmas Day, what was in those times the Isle of Glastonbury, and sat, exhausted, down to rest. Here, as so often has happened, the disciples began to complain against their Master for bringing them into such distress, and, to revive their faith in him, St. Joseph had to perform a miracle. Sticking his hawthorn staff in the ground he began to pray, and as he prayed the staff, which was old and dry, began to put forth branches, leaves and buds, and finally was covered with the white may-blossom. And since then (the legend runs) the Glastonbury Thorn has flowered on every Christmas Day.

* * * *

It is rather late in the day to revive the question of the Mons visions, but we make an exception in the case of a New Zealand correspondent—a Dunedin business man—who writes to suggest that as "Thought is the power that rules the world," Mr. Machen, while in a receptive condition, received the inspiration for his famous little

romance by thought transference from those who were actually going through experiences similar to those which formed the motive of the story. The idea is not, as our correspondent seems to think, a new one. It has been put forward by others and is quite a reasonable theory, accepting the reality of the visions. No doubt Mr. Machen himself would be willing to entertain the idea if he could be persuaded that the manifestations really happened, but on this point we believe he remains unconvinced. But we will bring our correspondent's letter under the attention of Mr. Harold Begbie, whom it may interest. The Mons visions, by the way, are not a subject which has ranged Spiritualists on the one hand and Materialists on the other, for, oddly enough, a large number of Spiritualists have flatly refused to endorse the visions, whereas thousands of non-Spiritualists have contended vigorously for their reality. Mr. Harold Begbie, for example, who may be regarded as the leader of those who accept the stories, is not a follower of Spiritualism, and knows but little of the subject.

* * * *

The death, recently, at Chesham Bois, of Dr. Henry Charlton Bastian recalls a famous controversy of forty years 'ago with Professor Tyndall and others, on the spontaneous generation of life. The scientists of that day were opposed to his views and discredited his experiments on the ground that his infusions of hay and turnips were not properly sterilised, and that sufficient care had not been taken to exclude micro-organisms from the flasks and tubes used in the investigations. Dr. Bastian would never admit that his conclusions were wrong, and not so very long ago he published in "Nature" an article in which he reaffirmed the possibility of dead matter giving birth to life. The attitude of his opponents may have been justified, but it is conceivable that, swayed by preconceived ideas, they were incapable of an impartial judgment. In the meantime science has made great strides, and new and revolutionary theories as to the constitution and properties of matter have been advanced. The electron is paramount. The indestructible atoms of the materialist are now regarded as systems of electrons, and each electron is supposed to be identified with a negative charge of electricity with which it is indissolubly associated. We have thus an electronic conception of matter favourable to Dr. Bastian's contention, as it offers a possible basis for the correlation of vital and physical forces, and emphasises the continuity of life.

* * * *

"The Ladder of Reality," by W. Scott Palmer (John M. Watkins, 2s. net), is a book with a message. It deals with those interior things of life that under the stress of life to-day are coming more and more into the outer world, fore-runners of a new grade of spiritual evolution which will lift us all by degrees out of the "narrow schemings and unworthy cares" that have cramped us so painfully in the past. Here is an example of the author's thought:—

We are not alone, and not only do we live in a multitude of lives, but all those lives are of the one life given to be possessed

among the many. Let common-sense or science trace back the pedigree of the human animal-world; what does it see? A jelly-mass, a speck of living stuff, and from that speck of living stuff life has spread like a great fountain in a spray of scattered living things. Are these really, each of them, quite separate things? Both common-sense and science tell us they are not. By origin, and by an interweaving of mutual nourishment and support, they still are one. And it needs no more now than this same common-sense to enable us to discover the intercrossing of currents of feeling and thought between different men, the telepathic communion that goes on beneath the separateness of the flesh.

* * * *

There is much that is attractive and suggestive in the remarkable series of "War Letters of the Living Dead Man," by Elsa Barker (Rider, 3s. 6d. net). The letters were received automatically and purported to come from the late Judge David P. Hatch, of Los Angeles, California. The introduction is a clever piece of writing, as it anticipates objections from sceptical readers, and with feminine subtlety often avoids a definite statement by an adroit turn of thought. The book abounds with "astral incidents" and references to "invisible enemies" in connection with the present war. The Belgium atrocities, we are told, were the work, not only of "the devils from the outer vast, whose time for activity had come"; but of "a horde of undeveloped and earthbound spirits who had suffered in the Congo." These spirits accompanied the invading Germans and urged them to murder and destroy, rape and burn. Two thoughts may be said to dominate the letters: the mystery of good and evil (love and hate) and the brotherhood of man. A new race has to be born, and new races, like men, are born in the pain and blood of their predecessors. This, the so-called sixth race, it is asserted, is about to arise in America. Theosophical teaching is a marked feature of many of the communications, and it is sometimes intimated that the "control" is in direct communication with a "Master" or "Teacher."

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance 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

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 20TH,
WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN BY
MR. PERCY R. STREET

ENTITLED

"A CHAPTER FROM MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES."

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

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate. Other friends desiring to attend can obtain tickets by applying to Mr. F. W. South, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., accompanying the application by a remittance of 1s. for each ticket.

The programme of the remaining Thursday evening Addresses in the Salon in the New Year is as follows:—

Feb. 17th.—"Immortality," by Miss Lind-af-Hageby.

Mar. 16th.—"Psychic Science in Parliament," by Mr. Angus McArthur.

Apl. 13th.—Address, "Spiritualism in the Balkans," by Count Chedo Miyatovich.

May 11th.—"Our Self After Death, as Declared and Demonstrated by the Christ," by the Rev. Arthur Chambers.

TELEPATHY WITH MAGNETIC APPARATUS.

MR. JAMES WESTON'S EXPERIMENTS.

Mr. James Weston has now been good enough to send us an account of some of his experiments. At present most of his time is absorbed in business and the receiver in war work, but he kindly promises to send us an account of the whole series of tests when he has more leisure. In the letter which accompanies the article he relates some remarkable experiences confirmatory of independent spirit action and identity. The evidence, as he remarks, is cumulative and irresistible, so that in this respect he holds convictions on a subject regarding which Mr. Wilson is not yet wholly convinced.

Mr. Weston sends two diagrams, which it is hardly necessary to reproduce. An oblong figure, covered with dots to indicate metal points, represents the magnetic screen, and three bars the triple magnet. The metal points on the screen are level with the board on the "seeding side," and project about one-eighth of an inch on the other. Mr. Weston proceeds:—

I simply write the letter or figures on the screen with the magnet, and the points are demagnetised in about thirty seconds. Spirit communicators tell me that the letters leave the screen like dots of sparkling light.

The result when sending to L. H. [the receiver of the telepathic messages] at 9 a.m., 12 a.m., 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., was almost nil, but at 9 p.m. we obtained the following results:—

SENT.	RECEIVED.
567,704	574
666,333	33
oahspe	hpe
353,770	3,377
gematria	getri
736,170	737
ekpetasis	ekpeti

[It will be remembered that 567,704 was the number so unexpectedly received on Mr. Wilson's psychic telegraph.—Ed.]

My friend who receives the messages is a materialist and never reads occult literature, which is why I chose the occult words and what I regard as significant numbers. I regret to say these experiments have ceased for a time, but I made another set of experiments, the receiver in this case being a niece. Some years ago, when we were together, our favourite pastime was to read Longfellow aloud and then write what we called "thoughts that arise"—reflections suggested by the poems we had read. My niece is now living on a farm, and as Sunday was her day for writing to me I suggested that she should write out some "thoughts that arise" in a book just before writing me her weekly letter. In the meantime I selected a passage and "telepathed" it to her. Here are the results. They seem almost convincing.

SENT (ON MAGNETIC SCREEN).	RECEIVED AND WRITTEN IN BOOK.
Oct. 24th "There is in every human heart Some not completely barren part."	Every human heart is human.
Oct. 31st "Shine like a glow-worm if you cannot be a star."	Be a sunbeam everywhere.
Nov. 7th "Into each life some rain must fall, Some days must be dark and dreary."	Dark days come before Christmas. Brighter days with the New Year.
Nov. 14th "Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime."	The reading of great and noble lives will help to make one more wise.

To me this is a good test, considering that the receiver of the messages is a young girl untrained in these matters. I am continuing the experiments.

"LIGHT" "TRIAL" SUBSCRIPTION.

As an inducement to new and casual readers to become subscribers, LIGHT will be sent for thirteen weeks, *post free*, for 2s., as a "trial" subscription. It is suggested that regular readers who have friends to whom they would like to introduce the paper should avail themselves of this offer, and forward to the Manager of LIGHT at this office the names and addresses of such friends, upon receipt of which, together with the requisite postal order, he will be pleased to send LIGHT to them by post as stated above.

THE CALL OF THE INVISIBLE.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE LIFE OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

BY C. TARR.

"Narrow is the house of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that it may be able to receive Thee. Thou madest us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they rest in Thee."

St. Augustine, in the words quoted above, taken from his "Confessions," expresses the deep longing to find God which was born out of his intense spiritual struggles. By studying the lives of some of the world's transcendent souls we shall be able to grasp something of the meaning of the war of the spirit. Let us first take the life of Augustine as he reveals it in his "Confessions." As a boy, he hated study and did not learn at all unless forced to it. Reading, writing and arithmetic he abhorred, as being "as great a burden as any Greek." But Latin he loved, yet could not understand why, and delighted also in reading the stories of the tragedians.

But in other lessons, I learned the wanderings of Æneas, forgetful of my own, and wept for the dead Dido, because she killed herself for love; while with dry eyes I endured my miserable self-dying among these things, far from Thee, my God, my life.

Already this transcendent soul was becoming conscious of the spiritual war within him. He tells us that at the age of sixteen the madness of licence took hold of him, and none of his friends guided him away from the pitfalls of vice and evil.

My friends meanwhile took no care to prevent my fall; their only care was that I should speak excellently and become a great orator.

And of his father he says:—

But yet this same father had no concern how I grew towards Thee; or how chaste I were; or, so that I were but eloquent, how barren I were to Thy culture, O God.

But in the soul of his mother, the holy Monica, the knowledge came that the time was ready to warn her son, for she well knew the signs of evil. And so with trembling soul she warned him in private to avoid fornication. Augustine turned from advices which he blushed to obey and which he deemed to be nothing but womanish whims. The fog of evil and suffering was fast enwrapping him. The darkness was coming, which alone could make possible the mighty struggles for spiritual freedom.

I ran headlong with such blindness that amongst my equals I was ashamed of being less shameless than others, when I heard them boast of their wickedness.

And now he came to Carthage, where the dramas carried him away and dominated his soul-life, his sorrows and joys reflecting those of the heroines and heroes of the plays. He learned, too, from the books of eloquence the lust of ambition, making him desire to attain eminence as an orator. Already he was head scholar in the school of rhetoric, "whereat I swelled with conceit." He could now sell words to the schools and courts, and gain the world's applause according to his greater craftiness and subtlety of speech. It was during his studies at this time that a book of Cicero fell into his hands. This book, he tells us, changed his disposition, so that he desired God and the immortality of wisdom. He resolved to turn to the study of the Scriptures, but when he had the Sacred Books before him he shrank from them, "disdaining to be one of the little ones." But a lightning flash from the Eternal Fire had pierced his soul-darkness. Augustine's soul had touched the Infinite for a divine moment.

We find him now among the Manicheans, and from his nineteenth to his twenty-eighth year he lived in the abysmal depths of evil. "Nor knew I that true inward righteousness which judgeth not according to custom, but out of the most righteous laws of Almighty God." Out of the hell of vice and misery, of puffed-up pride, lying and deceit, there emerged the consciousness of bitter dissatisfaction and emptiness of life. When he sought the reality of God, the Manicheans gave him the sun and moon, "beautiful works of Thine, but not Thyself."

"I knew not God," he tells us again, "to be a Spirit." It was Faustus, the Bishop of the Manicheans, who gave Augustine his strongest doubts as to the truth of their teachings. Faustus could not solve the difficulties which perplexed the mind of Augustine and frankly confessed his ignorance, and we find

Augustine going to Rome, his pagan beliefs shaken, and his materialistic hold on life loosened. From Rome we find him again seeking office at Milan, where he was received by the Bishop, Ambrose, who was destined to exert a powerful influence over his intellectual and spiritual life. Yet the mighty war of the spirit still waged within him. "I panted after honours, gains, marriage—and in these desires I underwent most bitter crosses." In some great, melancholy passages he tells us of how he was preparing to recite a panegyric before the Emperor, in which he was to utter many a lie and be applauded by those who knew he lied, when he saw in one of the streets of Milan a beggar, joyous and joking. In that moment the emptiness of his life smote his soul, and he spoke to friends around of the barrenness of their lives and how they pursued but the phantoms of existence. "I was racked with cares, but he by saying 'God bless you' had got some good wine. I, by talking lies, was hunting after empty praise." But the mighty conflict between the carnal and the spiritual wills raged with unabated force. Augustine multiplied his sins and turned more and more to the fulfilment of the lusts of the body. But above the fearful noise of his soul-war, the mad seething desires and passions, which with every gratification became stronger, the voice of the spirit called—unutterably deep and strong and tender, "Augustine! my son! my son!" The fog of misery came down upon his soul and darkened his life, but that same hour he drew nearer to the Eternal, and the spiritual life was born. "My evil and abominable youth," he says, "was now dead." At this time he came upon certain books of the Platonists in which he read "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," but he tells us that there was no reference to the glorious atoning work of Christ. "But that the Word was made flesh and came among us, I read not there." At last the tremendous spiritual conflict was nearing its end. The Eternal had triumphed and was leading Augustine to his resting place in the Christian faith, where he embraced "that mediator between God and man—the man Christ-Jesus"—and "rejoiced with trembling." Later the spiritual counsellor of Ambrose, Simplicianus, related to him the story of the conversion of Victorinus, the orator and translator of the Platonic books. Victorinus, with mighty thundering eloquence, had led the people of Rome to worship the monster gods who fought against Neptune, Venus, and Mercury; so that the populace of Rome worshipped the very gods whom they had once conquered. But suddenly and unexpectedly he turned from his base paganism and, embracing the faith, became as a little child of the Master. Augustine was fired with a divine enthusiasm by this story, and his soul burned with the longing to serve God alone. But the will of the flesh still fought with dying strength the will of the Spirit. Now was the time come for the Holy Spirit to liberate his soul and the peace of spiritual strength to rest upon him. He tells us that after much torment and soul-sickness, an incident occurred which wholly freed him from the bondage of the flesh. "I was weeping and bewailing in my heart, when lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, crying, 'Take up and read! Take up and read!'" The voice came to him as a command of God to open the Scriptures and read the first words his eyes should find according to the custom. "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the morrow to fulfil the lusts thereof." Like a stream of fire these apostolic words flowed into the soul of Augustine and thrilled him with divine power and serenity. The fog of doubt and sin vanished like mists before the morning sun, revealing the eternal realities of Nature. Nor was this victory of an embodied soul shared by him and his earthly companions and counsellors alone; it was a spiritual triumph, shared by the unseen watchers also, who had guided a great soul to such light as he was ready to receive. Such, indeed, is the spirit of biography and history, as revealed to us by the spiritual philosophy.

The days that followed Augustine's revelation were veritable holy days, filled to overflowing with the wondrous charm and haunting mystery of spiritual awakening, when man strikes the inner chords of life and truth. He told the Milanese to get another teacher to sell words to them and was baptised in the faith, which to him was salvation. The passing of his holy mother, Monica, who had spent her life in prayer and deep yearning for his spiritual redemption, was a grievous sorrow to him. "Little by little was the wound healed, as I recovered my former thoughts of her holy conversation towards Thee and her holy tenderness and observance towards us." So this transcendent soul passed through the Golgotha of temptation and suffering, descended into the very depths of human hell and there caught the "one flash of Heaven's glory."

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ON THE EVE OF YULE.

"A Merry Christmas" sounds a dubious, almost an ironic, greeting at this time, yet to give it any other form would be to offend against a custom as old as it is kindly. So we offer it to our readers with a full sense of its verbal inappropriateness—it is in the spirit rather than the letter that the wish must be interpreted this time. One can with less hesitancy say, "A Happy New Year," for the coming year may hold amongst other blessings that of Peace—"Peace with Honour."

For all of us who have gained what all are in course of gaining, a knowledge of the truth concerning the meaning of life and of death, this present festival of Yule must stand out mainly in its aspect as a time of reunion. For us, indeed, this sacrament of the reuniting of families and friends, which for ages has been one of the main events of Christmas, has found a larger meaning. Those who between the Yules have passed to "that other country" leave gaps in the fireside circle, but the gaps are now understood to be more apparent than real. The vanished friends are with us "in spirit," and that in a sense more human, more real and natural than the common use of the phrase implies. We can rarely enter into an utter and complete realisation of this, otherwise our Christmas gatherings might even have some approach to merriment. It is a trite but curious reflection at this point that where desolation is present, it will be the result not so much of bereavement or privation as of ignorance. And it is because of their acute consciousness of this ignorance and its devastating effects that so many fine natures in our movement have scorned the counsels of a petty prudence and gone boldly forth to make public proclamation of their faith and knowledge. All honour to them; they will have helped to make the atmosphere of many homes at this season more in harmony with the Christmas spirit than otherwise would have been the case.

Nevertheless, to multitudes the old Yuletide memories will return sadly, and they will find something of mockery about the carols and carillons, the holly and the mistletoe, and the clustered evergreens once meant to conciliate the Nature-spirits which industrialism and machine-made warfare seem to have driven forever from the earth. If so, they will have missed the meaning of this great travail of the earth which through pain and terror is driving us to a knowledge of those realities which are only dark when they reflect the darkness of our souls. The spirit of Christmas which stood for

so many radiant things—the celebration of a great Nativity, for peace, goodwill and human fellowship—is, like all spirits, immortal, and will shine the brighter when in the great clearing of the vision of life its real meaning is discerned. In the remote past the festival commemorated the passing of the winter solstice—the triumph over the dark powers and the re-emergence of the sun. We have passed beyond that state of short-sighted intellectualism when to discover its heathen origin was to deprive any rite or festival of its higher and later meanings. We have found that symbolism came not from primitive illusions, but from the perceptions of the soul, however dim and vague. In its latter days the world has been a spectacle of hollow rites and empty forms, the meanings of which were lost—pale corpses of custom from which the spirit had long fled. The stars of Noël became obscured by earthly mists. From "beautiful superstitions" we were conducted by the high priests of Matter to the "vision of realities." The realities are upon us to-day, ghastly, terrifying—the "facts" of Gradgrind, the naked horrors of Attila. And it dawns upon us that we are the victims of a strange and horrible inversion. We have been led not from illusions to realities, but from realities to illusions crass and hideous. The very beauty of the supposed superstitions should have warned us, had we gained any hint of the meaning of Beauty and its relation to Truth. But the stark ugliness of that which has taken their place has driven the lesson home. We have abandoned the star for the marsh-light, the exhalation of rottenness and corruption. Let us hark back to our "superstitions"—the spiritual meanings that underlie all the things of sense, the presence and companionship of invisible hosts, the things of wonder and vision, the intimations of immortality, the sense of eternity. Let us have no more of the artificialities that have destroyed Art, of the "organisation" that has killed Fellowship, of the sham Progress that has banished peace of soul and the restful mind.

The powers which should have been the servants of Life have become its tyrants. In the old Christmas masques the Lords of Misrule had the office of ministering to the season's gaieties. Once it was a jest—to-day it is a kind of tragic parable.

The lesson is being learned—it is being fairly burned into the souls of men—and we are beholding a new "Twilight of the Gods"—the false gods which have replaced the old simple rites of fellowship and kindness and reverence with their bloody rituals of war, their human sacrifices on the altars of industrialism and their saturnalias of soulless luxury. It is the passing of the Dark Powers prefigured in the Nature-worship which took its symbology from the seasons of the circling year. Yule may thus have for us this time a newer and larger meaning.

Bells and carols and Christmas garlands—the spirit they symbolise is imperishable, as imperishable as the spirits of those who, remembering the Yuletide of earth, will be the invisible guests at our feasts, saddened only if those feasts have become "maimed rites" because of our lack of the power to discern the World Beautiful beyond the phantasms of sense.

ALL bloom is fruit of death;
Creation's soul thrives from decay
And Nature feeds on ruin; the big earth
Summers in rot, and harvests through the frost,
To fructify the world; the mortal now
Is pregnant with spring-flowers to come
And death is seed-time of eternity!

God and the human spirit belong together as the light and the eye do, or beauty and the artist's soul, or harmony and the musician's ear.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR: HARMONIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

By E. WAKE COOK.

An Address delivered to the Members, Associates, and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday evening, December 2nd, at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Mr. H. Withall, acting-president, in the chair.

(Continued from page 609.)

THE SCIENCE OF A FUTURE LIFE.

But the supreme need of the time is for the deepening and strengthening of the foundations of religion; especially does the world need the scientific demonstration of an after-life. The best the Churches can offer is deplorably depressing and inadequate. Their pictures of Heaven in the past have not been alluring, psalm-singing being among its chief attractions. The old crude conceptions have been transcended of late years since Spiritualism began its teachings, but even the present conception rests on aspiration, and not on knowledge. The conditions for attaining this nebulous heaven are equally nebulous, and depressing in the ratio of their clearness. A hell of fiery torments, although put in the background, has not yet been finally abolished, and it still looms as a grim horror which might await those not fulfilling the conditions of salvation prescribed by the Churches. How many of the fine soldiers who are fighting for us have neglected these conditions, and thus risk damnation! The idea that our brave fellows who are performing the most Christ-like action possible to man, that of laying down their life for others, and for the right, and often with even greater Gethsemane agonies than those suffered by Christ Himself, that these men of men in the supreme heroism of sacrifice should be in any danger of Church-made hells is too abhorrent; our whole soul revolts against such nightmare conceptions. Yet the Churches are tied down to these religion-killing monstrosities, and while so many of their noble-souled ministers rise above their book and their spirit-cramping creeds, yet they do but soar on the wings of hope and belief, with no knowledge and no authority from their articles of faith. What assured comfort can they offer to those sorrowing hearts mourning the loss of their beloved ones compared with what we can offer?

Spiritualism is God's greatest gift to man, and, like the Gospel, is free to all, without money and without price. Cursed by no soul-imprisoning creed, it offers to meet the most poignant need of the time, and give to religion that assured, that scientific foundation which would raise it high above the critic's questioning. Were Christ to re-visit us in the flesh can we not hear His terrible denunciation of His so-called followers for neglecting this newer light just as the Pharisees neglected the newer light He brought? It is just the curse of the party spirit in religion. Each pastor must work for his party, the particular institution to which he belongs, and his main care is to see that none of his flock escape from the fold. Those who have glimmerings of the newer light are hampered by the ignorance and prejudice into which they have educated their congregations, who have therefore keener ears for heterodoxy than for newer truth. The sectarian quarrelling discredits religion and hampers education. If it were possible to pool all the funds raised for sectional creeds, so that all workers should be able to fight for religion as a whole, rather than party sections of it, we should see it gather the strength of unity, rather than the weakness of warring divisions.

Just think of the incredible foolishness of most of the doctrinal differences which divide the Churches! Truth is infinite, and can be comprehended only by the Infinite. To suppose that it can be compressed into the boundaries of any creed is infantile. The pursuit of knowledge is a chief end of man; and it will take an eternity of time for ever-enlarging faculty to attain plenary truth. With every extension of faculty the aspect of existence changes, adding wonder upon wonder of ever-increasing complexity and beauty. Think what merely mechanical aids to our ordinary faculties have done! The wondrous worlds revealed by the microscope and the telescope; the mind-

staggering immensities on the one hand, and the unfathomable minutiae on the other. The smallest flower that blows displays ingenuities of construction, of adaptation of means to ends that would baffle the inventive powers of a whole academy of Edisons to equal. The smallest insect contains even greater wonders; yet there are little people who think they have demolished all arguments for a God! The construction of their own bodies, and the very faculties they use to disprove the existence of a God, prove the existence of all the God-like powers they are bent on disproving. Could they but realise for a moment the marvels involved in the faculties they are using, they would be instantly brought to their knees overwhelmed in amazement. It is their own dullness which causes them to doubt the immanence of God-like powers even in the smallest atom. It is only the old-world theological conception of God which can be discredited; it is that which stands in the way of a revival of vital religion which would transform the world. What is the Kaiser's God but the old God of Battles, an angry, jealous God, who must be feared for His frightfulness in visiting even unbelief with the most horrible tortures conceivable by perverted human ingenuity? How are all the horrors to be banished from the world while the Biblical conception of a revengeful God is taught in our schools and churches? One of the earliest after-effects of the war should be the banishment of such a conception as the Jewish Tribal God to the limbo of savage superstitions. Get rid of that old-world idea and religion would receive an accession of strength enabling it to grapple with the task of religious reconstruction which will be one of the paramount needs of the coming time. Christ made an immense advance on the Old Testament ideas; and a like advance on His teaching is needed in the Newer Dispensation of our days, the coming of those further revelations which He said those old-world generations were not fitted to receive. But breaking away from the old revelations by religious people will tend to discredit all revelations; and the best that will be left them will be what is called natural theology.

THE MISSION OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

Here the mission of modern Spiritualism becomes apparent, it is to get religious revelation down to the bedrock of Science; but a new and larger science which must shed its little bogies, its superstitions of unbelief, its prejudices and narrownesses just as theology must do, face the fundamental facts of existence fairly and squarely, and realise the great spiritual reality to which all its own evidence points. Scientific men have been scared from this by the old theological bogies, fearing to give any support to such gross anthropomorphic conceptions of a God, and such a nightmare conception of an after-life involving the terrors of a possible hell of fire and brimstone. While these monstrosities stand in the way scientists will not go that way. They have made atheists and sceptics of men, and so prejudiced the idea of an after-life that men shut their eyes and minds against the subject, and this prevents them accepting or even looking at the priceless boon we offer them. (Applause.)

What is this boon? Spiritualism simply as a philosophy gives the grandest, most consistent, most truly scientific conception of Existence ever offered to the world. It reveals a universal scheme of material and spiritual evolution, so vast that the Darwin-Wallace-Spencer evolution falls into place as a mere detail. It shows a unity of principle never before conceived. It transforms the duality of cause and effect into a trinity of cause, effect and ultimate, the end or purpose for which cause and effect are working. All existence is united in a comprehensive system of correspondences, so that the lower is at once the foundation, the index and prophecy of the next and higher stage in endless progression. It reconciles Materialism and Spiritualism, meeting the materialist's objection that we have no evidence of consciousness or intelligence apart from a material body or organism, and that the dissolution of the body ends the intelligence, and proves the non-existence of a soul. This objection is met by the teaching that matter itself goes through a complete cycle of evolution. Thrown out from the Great Central Sun, the inexhaustible fountain of all existence, it becomes the matter forming the suns which we see. These

throw off the matter which forms the fiery cloud which condenses into planets, or worlds. Having cooled to form earth and rocks it may be said to have reached its "grossest" form, and then starts on its return journey. Its tireless motion, which is incipient life, forms it into minerals. Still progressing, it passes through the plants into animals. These preying on each other keep matter grinding, so to speak, in the organic mill until it is sufficiently refined to form man, who is the marvellous synthesis of all forms and faculties below him, and is composed of all the more progressed or more highly developed particles which it has been the function of minerals, vegetables, and animals to prepare. But this evolution of matter does not stop there; it seems to be part of our bodily functions still more to refine and spiritualise the material particles until they pass beyond our ordinary faculties as etheric or spirit-matter, which is the substance of the spiritual realms which form the stages of our future activities. But a more intimate process goes on within us, the progressed particles forming a refined edition of the material body which, when fully matured, sloughs the physical body as a worn-out garment, and proceeds to those more congenial spheres where its sublimed faculties may suitably function. Thus are Materialism and Spiritualism reconciled, and thus is the sceptic's strongest objection met.

The evolution of the material atom until it becomes etheric, or spirit-matter, typifies the whole course of evolution. Man as an atom, or molecule of Deity, gradually awakening to a consciousness of his Divine essence, passes through this life as a preparatory school of sorrow and suffering to fit him for the higher schools of experience in his ever-ascending progress. Life has been said to be a perpetual dying from the moment of birth. It could be more truly said to be a perpetual process of birth, and sorrow and suffering are but the birth-pangs of the old in travail with the new. Death itself is but a glorious transition, an inevitable promotion. Unbroken continuity is essential to personality, to the individualisation of spirit, which Davis says is the purpose of existence. The old orthodox notion that after death we suddenly become demons, or angels possessed of all knowledge, is an idea which belongs to the infancy of the race. Yet to the orthodox it is a stumbling-block which prejudices them against our scientific and consistent teaching, and they impute the absurdities of their own position to ours! Such a fall, or such a jump, would be a fatal break of continuity, and the destruction of personality; we should be other beings, and the whole purpose of our earthly schooling would be thrown away.

Starting on the next plane from the exact point of development attained in this life, we are at first unconscious of any change, until the more congenial environment leads us gently to realise the change and the transcendent nature of our faculties which were clogged and hampered by that "muddy vesture of decay," the earthly body thrown off on our promotion. This progress will be gradual, but unbroken, and every stage of life will have its value as a prophecy of, or a preparation for, the next. The second sphere, as we are told, will not be a new and strange world to us, but we shall feel it to be a step nearer to our real home. Those things which have floated before us here as unattainable ideals will be living realities there, and they will give us a sense of at-homeness never felt here in like measure. Each upward movement will be a step nearer to the sublime unity from which we sprang. Each step nearer will be a larger sympathy, a more burning love, a wider knowledge, an ever-growing sense of power to create, and to give form to the soul-stirring thoughts struggling for expression. Exhilarating activity alternating with exquisite repose; knowledge conquering error, harmony conquering discord until life itself becomes a vaster music. Each attained delight will be an earnest of that to come, each achievement a coin of vantage from which to view the ever-widening possibilities of achievements in the unfolding of futurity! Beauty, which is the most gracious form of revelation, will there disclose its inner meaning and significance; and we shall revel in endless loveliness.

We have now glanced at a few points of that harmonial reconstruction which should be the aftermath of the war—the construction of harmonial relations between the nations, between the sexes, between capital and labour; and of harmonial relations between the outer and the inner world, between God and

man, by means of that glorious religio-scientific philosophy we offer to the world. The shell-ploughed soil is ready for the sowing. However little men and women may be outwardly changed by the war, there will be an inner change of tremendous import. The brave survivors who have so heroically fought for us will not have been through that hell in vain. Some, like Dante, will burst into song, the music of suffering. All will have gained a glimpse of the deeper realities of life and death, and thoughts too deep for words will find vent in inarticulate questionings. Then is the time for our glorious gospel to meet their need. Then the not less heroic women who, with fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, and lovers at the front, have had to wait wearily and in an agony of suspense for news of their loved ones—too many, alas! having to mourn the loss or maiming of those they held so dear—these, too, have looked on the deeper depths of life and suffering, and are hungering blindly for the message we alone can bring with full measure of conviction.

Whatever we may achieve in the way of harmonial reconstruction on this plane, and whatever happiness may come through the sense of duty done, there will always be strife and turmoil, if not actual war. Sorrow, with its purifying fires, will search our souls, and suffering in some of its forms will always be near to evoke our song or to drive us inwards to live more and more on the spiritual plane where alone abiding peace can be found; and Spiritualism opens to the inner eye the most glorious vista ever offered to human vision. So let us keep an ever-open door of the inner mind to that spiritual influx of loving and helpful thought from those gone before. In addition to that we may each be a jet from the Great Fountain of all Life, Love, and Wisdom; this will give us those inner beatitudes which the outer world can neither give nor take away! (Great applause.)

An interesting discussion followed, and the proceedings closed with the usual resolution of thanks to the lecturer.

THE INFINITELY LITTLE.

THE LIMITS OF THE MICROSCOPE.

The more recent developments of science are well calculated to excite the emotions of wonder and awe. Take, for instance, those set forth in an article in the September number of the Boston (U.S.A.) "Spiritual Journal" by the well-known director of the Lowe (Cal.) Astronomical Observatory, Edgar Lucien Larkin. In photography, Mr. Larkin states, man has mentally expanded beyond even his imaginings of a few years ago.

Micro-photography is so complex that there is only one term to apply, infinitely complex. For entirely new objects by literal millions are being discovered by means of each increase in power, and in every new pathway of research. The life maze may never be explored. The lengths of waves of light, between 33,000 and 63,000 to the inch, will not prove to be able to reveal living beings far more minute. For no doubt the limit of power of microscopes has been reached. The standing question in biology now is: if a microscope could be made that would show a molecule, would it reveal animals that small? Atoms and electrons are beyond imagination: the very thought that they may be living staggers all faculties now functioning in that entity named the human mind. And stars in huge telescopes fitted with cameras containing the finest plates so far manufactured, are so small that their images on the silver bromide film on glass have to be observed with a microscope. Yet these very small images are those of huge suns at such amazing distances that the greater the power of trained mathematical minds, the less the time wasted in trying to think of how far it is from the earth to these distant bodies.

What will be done? The lifetime of man will be required to be greatly lengthened, or his mind made ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred times stronger; else each one of the great standard sciences must be divided into many parts. Then specialists will devote their short life, even to three score and ten years, to mastery of their one branch. For even now, in only the three hundredth year of science, since burning of scientific men ended, no one brain can comprehend any one science. . . . In the science of electricity alone, the highest resources of the most profound mathematical minds are taxed to the limit. Entirely new formulas, equations, coefficients, constants of integration and in analysis are coming up and out of the depths of mind, in searching out the laws ruling electricity.

THE UNSEEN WORLD.

SOME STRIKING TESTIMONIES.

In its Christmas number the "Christian Commonwealth" gives a remarkable symposium on the subject of the spirit world, to which amongst others the following are contributors: Miss Lillian Whiting, whose name will be well known to our readers, William le Queux, George B. Burgin, A. St. John Adcock, Max Pemberton, William Canton, Mrs. Kendal, Miss Violet Vanbrugh, Oscar Browning, H. De Vere Stacpoole, Lady Grove, Sir John Kirk, Louis N. Parker, and Louis Wain. Perhaps the most noteworthy contributions are those quoted below from Mrs. Flora Annie Steel and Miss Violet Tweedale, the novelists, and Mrs. Edwin Markham, who writes on behalf of her husband, the famous American poet. Our contemporary says:—

FLORA ANNIE STEEL,

the famous novelist, tells us that she has "never seen a ghost or had any physical experience of spiritual life," but imparts this interesting information: "All my stories written in the dialect of Nathaniel James Craddock were told me verbatim by an *eidolon* [an image of the mind vision or unseen presence], whom, though I never saw here in the flesh, I feel I should recognise in the street. They are generally considered my best."

BY VIOLET TWEEDALE.

General A—, a celebrated soldier, committed suicide under mental trouble. I had never seen him. He was known to my husband as a club acquaintance. After his death we became aware, by disturbances in the room, that someone on the other side desired to speak with us. We sat at once. General A—, to our amazement, wished to make a communication. It was to this effect: We were to tell a brother officer, then on the Gold Coast, that a certain sum of money which General A— had borrowed from him would be refunded, if applied for at a certain office in London. The brother officer was not the type of man to whom one would naturally speak on things psychic, but we had received the order, and felt bound to obey. My husband wrote a simple account of what had passed to this officer on the Gold Coast, and there we left the matter. A year after, when on leave, he wrote to say he had verified our statement, called at the office mentioned, and received the money he had lent to General A—.

BY MRS. EDWIN MARKHAM.

In Oakland, California, about twenty years ago, a certain lady, after a brief illness, was pronounced dead by the doctors. The undertaker prepared her body for the grave. Her funeral was announced. On the day she was to be buried her disconsolate husband was borne down with a grief all the more unbearable because of a conviction of his own sternness to the dead woman in years past. He said, weeping, to a little niece whom he and his wife had brought up from the cradle: "Maude, you call her to come back. Perhaps she will come for you." The little girl, of about ten, bent obediently over the coffin, and over and over again called, with tears: "Auntie, auntie, come back to us. We need you so! Come back; come back!" Whereupon (and the niece herself told the story to Mr. Markham and me) the dead woman presently began to stir, and slowly roused as from sleep. To the amazement of doctor, coroner, and friends, she that was dead arose, and in a few days was at her old place again as head of the house. She may be still alive. She was alive two years ago, when I was speaking with a friend who knows the whole story.

The niece asked her aunt often how it all seemed to her when she was gone from them. She would reply, "I was in a lovely place of light and flowers and song and rest. I was going on and on, when I heard your little voice calling me. In all the years since you were born I had never refused to answer that cry, and I could not then turn from it; so I came back." This lady (the niece said) had hitherto often denied herself the doing of acts of charity through fear of her husband's protests. After this experience she consulted his whims no longer, but acted quietly upon the principle she deemed right. Also, the niece told me, the lady had never lost the power to see into that outer realm and hear its voices. Sometimes, at a dinner or other function, the niece would see the listening look come into her aunt's face, and would know she was in communion with the Unseen. Often the niece would quietly touch the aunt's arm to bring her back, whispering, "One world at a time, dear."

Both these women are well known in California. The niece is a perfectly normal young woman, artistic and literary. The aunt, considered rational and usual, moved in society and church as a leader and worker.

A MESSAGE TO MOURNERS.

An article from the pen of Mr. L. V. H. Witley under the title "What of our Beloved?" appears in the current issue of "Healthward Ho!" Mr. Eustace Miles's bright little magazine, the issue of which, as already mentioned, is suspended for the present. Mr. Witley writes words of consolation for those who have been bereaved by the war. Want of space prevents our reproducing more than a few passages from the article.

After referring to the pain of separation, and to the fact that for most of us it is not possible while in the flesh to see those who have passed into the unseen, the author remarks:—

Of this, at any rate, we may rest assured: that excessive grief, so far from being honouring to our beloved, or helping either them or ourselves in any way, actually hinders such help; for our grief, even if it does not cast its spiritual shadow upon and into the unseen—as it doubtless does—at least hinders their sense of gladness and freedom and progress from reaching us. There, they are either in the sunshine, or facing towards the sunshine, and there, too, any and every cloud, whether belonging to the present or to the past, has its silver lining.

Everywhere to-day it is being understood and realised that, notwithstanding all sorrowful and bewildering experiences, life and not death is the ultimate and final word. For those who have laid down life—life physical—for the Kingdom (the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God), the death of the body has meant, not the loss of life eternal, but gain of life eternal—and life eternal does not mean so much increased length of life, as increased depth and height of life.

In the past we have been prone to think of death and of the life beyond largely from the personal and individual standpoint. Every heart in bereavement hath known its own bitterness. To-day we must "build more stately mansions," and look higher and further. We must realise that nothing less than the immediate (if not the ultimate) destinies of the whole human family depend upon the results of this present world-conflict, and we must count it not as "loss" but as "gain" if we—or ours—are called upon to suffer and to sacrifice for so vast and so noble a cause. No longer must we think only of the one (or more) of our beloved who has passed from our sight; we must realise our common kinship, our common brotherhood and sisterhood, with all those whose hearts have been torn, and are being torn, by reason of anxiety, sorrow and loss.

This is no time for littleness, but a time for greatness; no time for the negative, but for the positive; no time for pessimism, but for a divine optimism. Such, indeed, is our only hope. Fretting or fretfulness will not (because they cannot) save us or our race. Courage, faith, and faithfulness will save us and help us to save the race.

It is no artificial or superficial hilarity which is being advocated. Let the tear drop, as drop it will, as your head lies on your lonely pillow, or as you think of the son or lover or husband whose kiss you will never again know on earth. You will know all the better how to staunch another's tears, or at least you will better understand another's grief, if you know to the full in your own experience what grief is. But do not hug your grief to yourself so that your arms are not free to take some other sorrowing heart to your own. Believe that separation is only seeming separation, and that spiritual communion and spiritual union still abides, and that in the very "Heart of the Eternal" both you and your beloved are at home and "for ever with the Lord."

"There is no loneliness here, no desolation of spirit. Every spirit goes to 'its own place'—the place for which it has prepared itself by the governing purpose which has predominated it in the earth-life; yet no spirit is left companionless: ever and always there is grace and help at hand for any spirit which welcomes the desire for the upward path to holiness and God."*

For Death is just a covered way

That leadeth into Light,

Wherein no blinded child can stray

Beyond the Father's sight.

THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.—The important series of papers by Dr. W. J. Crawford will be resumed next week, when the twenty-second article containing an original theory of levitation, will appear.

SUCCESSFUL clairvoyant descriptions were given at the Rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Tuesday afternoons, December 7th and 14th, by Mrs. Cannock and Mrs. Brittain (of Hanley), Mrs. Bell kindly taking the chair on both occasions.

* From "Words from Within the Veil."

LUX E TENEBRIS.

THE NIGHT OF SORROW AND THE MORN OF JOY.

Thinking of the faces that will be missed in many homes at the coming sacred season, Tennyson's pathetic description of the first Christmas Eve after the passing of his friend, Arthur Hallam, recurs to us. Let us hope that whatever sadness of bereavement may hang over the festival, the voices of those who celebrate it may take that "higher range" of which the poet speaks. The final lines of the stanza will have a new and wider meaning in the circumstances of the time than when they were written. They will voice the prayer of hearts in many lands for the dawn of the promised brighter day after this night of sorrow—the day, heralded by mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, when peace shall begin her long deferred reign on the earth.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle, hand in hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sang, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

THE LATE MRS. AGNES F. MALTBY.

In the course of a tribute to the memory of the late Mrs. Maltby, for all of which we regret not to be able to afford space, Mr. Frank W. Grayson Clarke writes:—

Mrs. Agnes F. Maltby has for the past eighteen years been a worker in, and loyal supporter of, the Brighton Spiritual Mission. Prior to her residence in Brighton, she was for many years a member of the old British National Association, being well known to and respected by most of the prominent early workers in the movement. Many have cause gratefully to remember the loving sympathy that worked silently, yet surely and practically for the good of all.

The body was quietly interred in Preston Cemetery on Monday, 13th inst., in the presence of many of her old friends. While all will sympathise with her family—to mourn the loss of her physical presence would be selfish, and far from their wish; for well do we know that she lives, that humanity will ever claim her service; and that with that new body that "God giveth as it pleaseth Him," she will love to live, and live to love and bless all whom her powers can reach.

As one who was beloved as wife, mother, friend and inspirer, we bless her memory, and, than king her for all her devoted service, look forward to the ministrations of her loving, helpful spirit.

Her life was prayer—to bless her life's chief end,
As wife, as mother, loyal, loving friend.
Need the one claim and Love the constant call
That roused her powers to service for us all.

SIDELIGHTS.

Difficulties attending the construction of the vast edifice in Bloomsbury, which is to be the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, have now been overcome. When the building is completed, it will have cost £200,000 instead of £40,000, originally contemplated.

An Edinburgh correspondent writes inquiring whether it is possible to verify the statement that Robert Louis Stevenson was the first secretary of the Spiritualist Society in Edinburgh. In our recent note to this effect we were merely repeating the statement that has already appeared several times in the Press. It is possible that the novelist's tenure of the position was very brief; but it would be interesting to discover what foundation there is for the report.

Count Miyatovich, speaking at a well-attended At Home held on Friday, the 17th inst., at the Chaldean Library and Reading-room, 14, Jermyn-street, Piccadilly, dealt with the subject of prophecy. After quoting several of the fulfilled predictions of Nostradamus, he alluded to the prophecies of a Serbian peasant in 1868, which foretold all the principal events that had since happened in Serbia, including the accession of King Peter and the subsequent invasion and occupation of the country by foreign troops. How long that occupation would last the prophet did not say, but he predicted that at last a man would arise who would drive out the invader and inaugurate an era of great prosperity. The Count believed that the course of earthly events was foreordained by higher powers, that moving through human history could be seen the visible finger of God.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents, and frequently publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views which may elicit discussion. In every case the letter must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

"A Dream Problem and Some Solutions."

SIR,—In regard to the case of the supposed spirit communicator which Mrs. Champion de Crespigny recognised as a character from one of her own novels, might it not have been that this was an actual spirit who had at some time impressed her with his personality so that she unwittingly portrayed a real character, and not, as she supposed, an imaginary one? There are some parallel cases doubtless known to many of your readers.—Yours, &c.,

E. K. G.

Cricklewood.

Automatic Writing and the Subconscious Mind.

SIR,—In reply to "Student," who asks if in automatic writing when there is no unconsciousness the subconscious mind can interfere, I should say certainly "yes." "Student" quotes a medical man as stating that "the subconscious mind can only work in this way when the normal consciousness is in abeyance"; I should say that this statement would be correct if the words "in proportion as" were substituted for "when." It must be realised that subconscious activity increases in proportion as conscious control decreases, and that the degree of subconscious working varies most widely.

It is not uncommon, I believe, for even wise men in the abnormal condition known as "being in love" to find themselves, when musing upon the many and peculiar graces of the beloved, automatically and unaware tracing her name with a casual pencil or even the tip of the prosaic umbrella—a simple instance of subconscious automatic writing when the degree of abstraction is but slight. The commonplace instances are quite valuable as showing the phenomena in rudimentary form, and this single example, I think, is sufficient to demonstrate that the subconscious *does* intervene so soon as the normal control is in any way reduced.—Yours, &c.,

H. ERNEST HUNT.

December 15th, 1915.

MRS. M. H. WALLIS desires to send the season's greetings and cordial good wishes to all her friends and to convey her appreciation and thanks for kind letters and inquiries. She is thankful to be able to state that she is steadily recovering from the effects of her recent painful accident.

NATIONAL FUND OF BENEVOLENCE.—Mrs. M. A. Stair, the hon. secretary (14, North-street, Keighley), sends us a statement of the income for November and the list of donors, for which we are unable to find space. The total amount acknowledged is £17 17s. 4d., and Mrs. Stair adds that the response on the part both of friends and societies was rather disappointing, but she remembers that appeals for other funds have attracted money in other directions. Nevertheless she urges all who can spare a note to contribute to this fund, which is for the relief of aged and distressed Spiritualists.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.—In the absence of Mrs. M. H. Wallis, who, we are glad to learn, is progressing satisfactorily, Miss Violet Burton again occupied the platform at the meeting on Friday, the 17th inst., at the rooms of the Alliance, and made a marked impression by the fine quality of her mediumship. The answers to questions from the audience were dealt with in an able fashion and Mr. H. Withall, who presided, expressed the thanks of the audience to Miss Burton's inspirer, who claims to have been a contemporary and follower of St. Francis D'Assisi. It may be mentioned that in reply to the first question this control gave a brief sketch of his earth life and some remarks on the character of the teachings of St. Francis.

READING.—SPIRITUAL MISSION, BLAGRAVE-STREET.—On Wednesday and Thursday, December 15th and 16th, the annual bazaar was held in the New Hall, Blagrove-street. Mrs. W. Pierrepont Wise performed the opening ceremony. Amongst the large company gathered were Lady Mosley, Mrs. Willison Edwards (the President), and Mr. Percy R. Street. The stalls were decorated with trellis work and flowers. Mrs. P. R. Street had the fancy stall, Mrs. Lovelock the useful stall, and Mrs. Matvielf the refreshment buffet; Miss Lovelock and Miss Clark had the Lyceum and sweet departments. A very successful feature of the bazaar was the remarkable psychic readings of "Kama Dhu" (Miss Kathleen Mason), who gave many striking tests of spirit presence and aid. Half the proceeds have been devoted to the benefit of the local funds for the wounded.—P. R. S.

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THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

By 'M.A. (OXON.)'

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestation. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sance.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with, it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let someone take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restriction on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

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