

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The subject of fairies crops up from time to time in discussions on the nature and variety of spiritual existences. Some persons maintain that there are actually beings which answer to the legendary ideas of fairies, gnomes and pixies. Others as strongly contend that these notions represent only the poetical and romantic side of the activities of human spirits. In an article on "Views and Fairies," in a recent issue of the "Times (Literary Supplement)," the writer alludes to the fact that in ancient days fairies were held to be of human stature ("as tall as we are"), but that there came about, for no easily assignable reason, a progressive shrinkage of size. From a race that could, according to an ancient Irish poem, assist their earthly friends in battle, and who were "melodious in the ale-house, masterly at making songs, skilled at playing chess," they dwindled to a "whimsical littleness." Some students of psychical science find an explanation of the diminutive size in the fact that clairvoyants occasionally see spirits on a minute scale, as though through the "wrong end of a telescope." We know, of course, that such matter-of-fact explanations as that fairies are really human spirits "writ small," or that the ideas concerning them are based on varieties of clairvoyant experience by those utterly ignorant of the science of the subject, are distasteful to persons of romantic mind; but they give us a certain solid ground for our surmises. We know that human spirits exist: we have nothing but speculation concerning fairies.

* * * *

The "Times" writer offers some philosophical reflections on the question which are worth quoting. The fairy legends, he thinks, represent certain human ideals of perfection, of heroism, of poetry and romance. They—
aesthetically express a certain balance between what we "know" and the possibilities we like to "imagine"—between perception and conception. Romanticism is the destruction of that balance in favour of conception. It is, in whatever form it may appear, a withdrawal of reliance from outer experience in order to ground all its reliance on inner experience; for this, it feels, is incomparably more direct communication with truth than outer experience. For a romantic, then, the conception of a fairy is the receiving of authentic information about some kind of reality that is beyond human reality and superior to it; which is, moreover, inexpressible save with symbolic vagueness, for, alas! expression is at the mercy of perception. And what is true of romantic fairies is true of romanticism in general; the possibilities of conception are not simply real in so far as they do exist in conception, they are motions of the mind and spirit under the influence of absolute truth. Hence retreat from actuality; and hence, too, delighted concentration on the fortress of the interior with its unknown, infallible general.

This takes us into deep waters, and yet, since truth is

a duality, does not in any way weaken our hold on objective fact. For even when, for instance, we deal with man himself we can regard him at once as a fact in Nature and as an idea or principle in the Divine mind. We must make "outer experience" and "inner experience" balance. It is the concentration on one to the exclusion of the other which is such a fruitful source of disputation and denial. Imaginations and facts, dreams and deeds, are very closely allied; indeed, they are the inner and outer aspects of the same thing.

* * * *

A friend, a clear-headed practical man—he is an engineer with some excellent work to his credit—once defended the resort to methods of divination for the solution of material problems on the ground that man was entitled to take advantage of every legitimate means of overcoming his difficulties. Our reply was that, setting aside the question of what is or is not legitimate, the resort to occult means for obtaining information on mundane matters was rarely justified by results. We were leaving the beaten paths of reasonable assurance for the more tempting "short cuts" which generally land the inquirer in a morass. On one occasion, at a meeting of people assembled in the pursuit of psychic knowledge, we encountered a lady who, mistaking the objects of the meeting, had come with the idea that she would be able to get advice concerning a law suit in which she was interested. She was a little mortified when the conductor of the meeting suggested that the question might be more appropriately put to a lawyer. But that was clearly a counsel of common-sense. There are many people who, intent on making fortunes, have come to disaster by relying on advice purporting to come from the spirit side—"tips from the land of Nod," as a cynical acquaintance of ours described them. Whatever may be the developments of the future regarding communication between the two worlds, one thing is clear at present. We are in this world to rely on our own resources, and to keep the conduct of our worldly affairs as far as possible in our own hands. Only as a last emergency should we go, on such questions, to those beyond the veil. It is, indeed, very doubtful, generally speaking, whether they are able to help us in these matters as efficiently as we can help ourselves. There are exceptions, of course. We recall the case of Amanda Jones, the American poetess, who was ably assisted in her affairs by a lawyer on "the other side." But we also recall that the remarkable instances of his aid in drawing legal documents were in connection with a work designed to be of use to the world at large and not a mere personal matter.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE PRESS.

Viscountess Molesworth writes:—

I think "Victor's" idea of a "Defence Bureau" is good, if those who undertake the work will do so in a spirit of love and forbearance. There should be no controversial bitterness, such as has marred the history of the Churches, since Christ came to preach peace and goodwill towards men.

GHOSTLY VISITANTS: SOME INSTANCES AND EXPERIENCES.

By E. A. EMERSON.

Of late years the subject of spirit intercourse has grown to vast proportions; its facts are established and its propaganda extends to the four corners of the earth. In the issue of *LIGHT* of March 10th (p. 79), a few of the long list of "family omens" were recorded. There could have been added to these the story of the little "brown lady" attired in a riding habit, who (according to tradition) in the month of September haunts the courtyard and corridors of a historic residence in Norfolk, the seat of a certain noble family. Those who are acquainted with the story will be able to identify the place.

Many parts of the Eastern counties are rich in spirit-lore, and the writer is acquainted with some verified instances, which cannot be classified as mere tradition. Some years ago, a man and his only child, a little fair-haired girl of seven, lodged with a widow whose husband had been sexton of the parish church. One day the man (Nicholls by name) was brought home dead, having been accidentally killed. After the burial, Mrs. R—, the sexton's widow, saw, one night, the apparition of the dead man, and communicated the fact to a neighbour, who was a devout believer in Spiritualism. The latter told the woman what to say should the spirit-form pay her another visit. The same night the woman retired to rest as usual, and the orphan girl shared her apartment. Soon the spirit-form again appeared. Addressing him somewhat nervously the woman said: "Spirit, if that thou art, what troubles thee?" She vowed afterwards that she distinctly heard a faint voice murmur "The child," and that the form thereupon immediately vanished.

Some months ago an "unbelieving" friend of mine visited a public hall where clairvoyants were giving illustrations of their powers. One of them, addressing my friend, stated that he saw in connection with him "a large barn, and two lads toppling over trusses of hay and disporting themselves on heaps of corn." Presently one of the lads vanished and the scene was changed. "I see," the clairvoyant continued, "a large river in India, and a short distance away a mound and a cross." My friend made light of the matter, said it was "all rot and rubbish," and the assembly broke up. A week or so later he was scanning the local paper, when he came on a paragraph concerning the passing hence of an old schoolfellow who had died in India, and was buried near the banks of the river Ganges. That was the river the clairvoyant saw; he remembered the old barn and the sport among the hay, and he now "believes."

When a boy at school, at an old town in mid-Norfolk, I slept in a small room which was narrow but exceedingly lofty. The schoolhouse was a structure of the Cromwellian period, and at some time in its history had been a baronial manor. My room was wainscotted in parts, and scantily furnished, and I was compelled to retire at 8.30, but I never slept until I had received what I called my "ghostly visitation."

Usually about half-past eleven something stalked clumsily into my bedroom, seemingly poured water from the ewer into the hand-basin (I could hear the splash) and then made an equally clumsy exit. This went on nightly for over a year. I could often discover the form of a man, and on one occasion he appeared to lie across my feet, a dead weight which was far from pleasant. Being in the district recently, I determined, if possible, to discover the identity of my nocturnal intruder of other days. The old place is still standing, and is now used as a kind of technical institute. I sought out the principal, and finally obtained permission to occupy my former sleeping apartment. Apparently nobody else had ever heard of these disturbances.

After an anxious vigil of some three or four hours, I imagined I heard a door open (I had, as a measure of precaution, locked both doors opening into my narrow cell, one from the corridor and the other from an adjacent apartment). As far as I could judge it was about one o'clock. Yes, the door *did* open now from the adjoining room. Again, as of yore, I heard the thud of heavy feet, the shaking jug, the splashing water.

Now was my chance. I proceeded to hold a strictly secluded séance, and quickly found out all I wanted to know. I learned that my visitor had occupied that identical room, that he was a chief mate on a large ship in the merchant service, and was drowned off the West Coast of Africa, but the exact date I could not determine. He had come back to the place he had loved so well, the romantic neighbourhood of his youth, to communicate with any sympathetic individual who had sufficient psychic intelligence to understand the mysterious manifestations by which he sought to attract attention to his presence.

VISIONS OF THE BLIND.

A NOTE ON DREAM-LIFE.

The following story of a dream is sent to us by a lady correspondent as having been dictated to her by a blind man, Mr. Alfred Russell, who lost his sight twenty years ago. We are induced to print it not only as affording an insight into the mental life of a sightless man, but also because there is a valuable hint in the statement that he discovered the power to control his dreams—a power which may be acquired by some of those whose night visions are ugly or painful:—

In my dream I found myself in some underground passages in utter darkness and amid sulphurous vapours. Everywhere that I turned the same thing met me. I was rushing in every possible direction, but only found pitch darkness. Occasionally in the far distance I saw a light, hastened towards it, and it seemed days before I had nearly reached it, running all the time. When at last I seemed to have done so, it disappeared and only stronger vapours of sulphur, worse darkness, came in its place.

I retraced my footsteps and the same thing happened. Another light, and once more the same long tedious journey towards it, with, alas! the same result, and yet deeper darkness.

Being entirely alone in what appeared to be a stretch of some hundreds of miles of intense horror of despair, suddenly I seemed to collect myself and think—Is there no help out of this? An inspiration caused me to think of the Invisible Spirit of God being All in All, and I exclaimed aloud: "Lord, help me."

I had scarcely uttered the words when the scene changed into one of beauty. I was in the most lovely gardens possible for man to behold. The sun was shining, the birds singing, beautiful flowers and trees burst upon my sight, and also people, most happy-looking people, were all around me. They were heavenly looking, with an air of control and peace about them. I then awoke, but never to forget my night's experience. And now, should I ever have a troublous dream, I have the power, even though asleep, to say, "Lord, help me," and the scene immediately becomes something pleasant or else I awake from those things which are not into those which are.

These experiences seem to show me that such dreams, as well as all untoward things that happen to us when awake, are frequently brought on by some erroneous thought or fear, perhaps caused by our environment, or lack of knowledge.

In my long hours of leisure I have thought of all God's beautiful gifts, and have tried in vain to discover anything that was created "bad." Even a stone will give food for thought, even the atmosphere we inhale is wonderful and beautiful. When we consider that the trees and flowers, the birds and beasts, even the fish in the sea, and all mankind depend entirely upon it for their life, does it not show forth the real unity and oneness with God? He does not give one kind of air to the trees, another to the birds and beasts, and again another for man. We may live for weeks perhaps without food, but not for two minutes without God's breath, which contains more wonders in its invisibility than man can ever fathom.

Though in my nightmare the sulphurous fumes existed only in imagination, thank God the fine air we breathe is a reality and given abundantly to all. And, if taken freely, breathed in through the nostrils, always keeping the mouth closed, and holding the air in the lungs as long as possible, then exhaling it through the nostrils also, the reader will soon find the greatest benefit from this exercise. By this simple means, perseveringly practised, he is filled with invisible power and life, and the benefits both in body and soul are amazing.

A VERY striking case of the parents of a young man killed in battle obtaining convincing evidences of his survival appears in the October "*London Magazine*." We propose to deal with the story more fully next week.

SIR OLIVER LODGE AND DR. MERCIER.

A conspicuous feature in "The Sunday Times" of Sunday last is the reply by Sir Oliver Lodge to Dr. Mercier's criticism. It is quiet and restrained but singularly effective in exposing the hollowness of Dr. Mercier's pretensions to be an authority on the subject of Psychical Research. The weakness of the critic's arguments is laid bare. Example after example of his lack of accuracy in his statements is exposed, and his claims to be a logician shrivel up in the process. Quoting Dr. Mercier's remark—

Once a man's vanity, or to put it more gently, his self-respect, is engaged in the maintenance of an opinion, we shall seek in vain to shake it,

Sir Oliver observes with delicate irony, "I hope not quite in vain, but it is always rash to express a decided opinion on a basis of insufficient study."

Of another rash statement by his critic Sir Oliver gently observes, "That this is untrue appears to be of no consequence: it sounds well."

He must be a thick-skinned person indeed who could endure such a severe castigation in the Press without wincing. It is administered without any trace of heat or animosity. The analysis of the critic's methods is dignified but destructive, quiet but deadly. The moral is very obvious. For a man, however highly he may rate his own capacity as a critic, to rush into a controversy on a subject concerning which he has only a smattering of ill-digested information, is to invite a humiliating result to himself.

Sir Oliver thus summarises the general position in his concluding remarks:—

And now, before closing, let me ask your readers to consider what all this controversy is about. Certain scientific men have studied a certain subject and make careful and deliberate statements about it. They do not thereby show that they are especially afflicted with the missionary spirit; they are doing their plain duty in recording observations.

To them enter certain critics who have not previously studied the subject and pronounce that the statements and inferences are all wrong, are almost lunatic.

The simplest plan under these circumstances is for the scientific investigators to hold their peace and let the novice's mistake be discovered by further experience. For the things asserted are not in the past, but in the present; the record of the past only opens the question, and makes further investigation necessary.

If the world once more determines that it will not have these odd outstanding phenomena carefully examined, but prefers to let long-established prejudice decide against them, then the world must remain in ignorance and continue the superstition of many centuries. If it really wants to know the truth, it will gradually examine these matters for itself, and will not turn a deaf ear to those cautious and responsible persons who report in their favour.

The correspondence on the subject is continued in another part of the journal. At least one of the critics thinks it sufficient to quote cases of harm alleged to have been caused by pursuing the subject. It is apparently a matter of no consequence to him that an infinitely graver indictment on these lines could be preferred against any science or any religion, indeed any thing and every thing. Spiritualism is too vast and vital a matter not to have its dangers—for the foolish and credulous. It would be strange if it were not so. The idea that a new science shall combine the comforting qualities of a soothing balm with the ease and safety of a feather bed is hardly one that would enter the mind of a person of healthy intelligence.

THE weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers on a single object, can accomplish something; the strongest, dispersing his over many, may fail to accomplish anything. CARLYLE.

WHERE SCIENCE FAILS.—Science fails to account for life and mind, as it fails to account for matter; science observes, it is powerless to explain. As force differentiates ether into electrons to form atoms and matter, so a higher force aggregates atoms to form protoplasm and brain-substance, and a still higher manifestation of force is able to utilise brain-substance to display consciousness, with all its results. But brain-substance is only the instrument: life and consciousness themselves are beyond all accident of material manifestation.—J. B. S.

A GENERATION AGO.

(FROM "LIGHT" OF OCTOBER 1st, 1887.)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S INSPIRATIONS.

Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson is now in America and has fallen a victim to the ubiquitous interviewer. It is interesting to note the origin of his inspirations. He thinks it is always "I who am inventing." We wonder how he knows that. The following account of the interview, so far as it concerns this point, will be found interesting. We extract it from the "Pall Mall Gazette":—

"There is a great difference of opinion as to what suggested your works, particularly 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' and 'Deacon Brodie.'"

"Well, this has never been properly told. On one occasion I was very hard-up for money, and I felt that I had to do something. I thought and thought and tried hard to find a subject to write about. At night I dreamed the story, not precisely as it is written, for, of course, there are always stupidities in dreams, but practically it came to me as a gift, and what makes it appear more odd is that I am quite in the habit of dreaming stories. Thus, not long ago, I dreamed the story of 'Olalla,' which appeared in my volume of 'The Merry Men,' and I have at the present moment two unwritten stories which I likewise dreamed. The fact is that I am so much in the habit of making stories that I go on making them while asleep quite as hard, apparently, as when I am awake. They sometimes come to me in the form of nightmares, in so far that they make me cry out aloud. But I am never deceived by them. Even when fast asleep I know that it is I who am inventing, and when I cry out it is with gratification to know that the story is so good. So soon as I awake, and it always awakens me when I get on a good thing, I set to work and put it together.

"For instance, all I dreamed about Dr. Jekyll was that one man was being pressed into a cabinet, when he swallowed a drug and changed into another being. I awoke, and said at once that I had found the missing link for which I had been looking so long, and before I again went to sleep almost every detail of the story, as it stands, was clear to me. Of course, writing it was another thing."

PORTENTS IN THE SKY.

In LIGHT of the 25th ult. we quoted an account of the appearance of angelic forms in the sky witnessed at the little riverside town of Grays, in Essex. Similar apparitions were recently declared to have appeared at Waltham Abbey. According to the "Daily News," many people claim to have seen them on the night of the 17th inst. hovering over the tower of the ancient Abbey church.

The story-tellers even go into details. There were two angels, both of female form. For a moment they paused on the church tower, unfurled a scroll bearing in letters of fire the one word "Peace," and then mysteriously disappeared. It may have something to do with the genesis of the story that traditionally angels have a close association with Waltham Abbey. The central device of the coat of arms of the town is a cross supported by two angels. The cross typifies the crucifix which legend says was discovered in Somerset following on a vision of angels. Guarded by angels, this crucifix was miraculously conveyed to Waltham—sixty sufferers being healed of their infirmities by its virtue—and erected on the first parish church of Waltham, which stood on the site now occupied by Harold's historic minster.

In the "Evening News," Mr. Arthur Machen (whom the "Star" in a comic article on angels described as the inventor of the "Angels of Mons"), while finding no basis of fact for the reported apparitions, thinks it necessary to make the following protest:—

... It should not be necessary to say what follows, but experience has taught me that it is necessary. I should like to point out that I have not been jeering at angels. I am so much "on the side of the angels" that I have little patience with those who circulate inept fables about them.

SPIRIT MESSAGES.—As a rule the higher and more spiritual the content of the messages the less palpable and material is their manifestation.—"On the Threshold of the Unseen," by SIR WILLIAM BARRETT, F.R.S.

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INSTEAD OF A LEADER.

A ROMANCE AND A FABLE.

THE BELEAGUERED CASTLE.

Agos ago a great Castle was sorely beleaguered by strong enemies, and its Prince was besought by some of his Knights that he should surrender, so hard were they beset. But Lancelot, the Prince's Jester, counselled otherwise, for when looking from the Battlements he vowed he had seen in the distance gleams of light from the lances of an Army coming to their Rescue. But his report was treated with scorn by some of the Captains, who declared that the glinting was merely the Reflection of the sun on the waters or the flashing of the leaves on the Trees. The learned clerks of the Prince were of the same Opinion and drew on their parchments skilful Designs showing how beams of Light acted on reflection from Surfaces. "Moreover," said they, "the bridge which spans the River between us and the Fortress of our Allies hath been destroyed, so how could they pass to us?" But the Fool held stoutly by his story, and the Prince, who was minded to fight on to the last, was mightily Perplexed, the more so that some of the men at arms believed in the Jester's tale, for he had most excellent eyesight, never having pored over Books. "It may be that he is right," said the Prince; "peradventure there is something in it," and he took counsel of Sir Topas, the priest. "Good my lord," quoth Sir Topas, "it may be that Heaven will work a miracle on our behalf and hath sent a Message by the mouth of this Fool. Let us abide the issue." But certain craven Knights, with the Scriveners and the Bookmen, were wroth with the Jester that his word should be so set above theirs. And they conspired privily to punish him as a Rogue and Deceiver, and contrived that he should be soundly beaten and afterwards shut up in a Foul Dungeon, which was done (for he would in no wise recant his opinion). Meantime the battle went sorely against the Besieged, for the soldiers began to lose heart when Lancelot was no longer there with his Vision of an Army of Deliverance, and when also they were told by their Captains and the clerkly men that he was a Cheat and Impostor who sought to cozen them with Illusions. Natheless divers of them who had seen the Lights, as it were, of lances and shields in the sun, continued to believe, and were made a mock of by the rest.

Soon the Besiegers waxed bold and made so mighty an Onslaught that the Prince again sought advice of the Priest who counselled that he should have faith. "Gramercy, sir Priest," cried the Prince, "my faith is well-nigh gone.

I stand now only on the seeing of my Fool; Heaven send he saw truly." And lo, even as he spoke, a tucket sounded afar off, and the Enemy at the gates showed themselves to be in fear and confusion. And with that came the Spectacle of a host of Knights and men at arms riding towards the Castle and driving the Besiegers right and left as they advanced. Full soon the siege was raised, and when the Drawbridge was let down, Duke John, the leader of the Army of Deliverance, rode into the courtyard to meet the Prince. He told how the bridge across the river having been destroyed he and his Knights had, with their horses, swum the stream, and how that, to give a Signal of their coming, they had waved their lances and shields in the sun that haply the light might be seen by the defenders of the Castle.

"Truly," said the Prince, "some beheld the flashing lights, but only my Fool, Lancelot, read the meaning aright, which encouraged me to hold out, howbeit I put little faith in his report." "By the Mass," said the Duke, "a most excellent fool. He should be incontinently dubbed a Knight. Prithee where is he?" But as the false Knights and the clerks had slunk away full of shame and confusion, he could not at first be found. But anon his Dungeon was opened and he came forth nursing his sore bones. Very wroth was the Prince with those who had done this evil deed, but when he had made an end of his upbraiding, he accosted the Fool, saying, "Thou wert a true Seer and shalt have thy reward." "In good sooth, my lord," answered the Jester, making a wry mouth, "I have already had it, having received that which hath been the reward of all true Seers since the days of Adam."

"Thou hast well spoken," said the Prince, "but if it is the part of a true Seer to suffer wrong so it is also the part of a true man to tell forth what he sees without fear. And thou hast played the man. Arise, Sir Lancelot, and be the first of many Knights who shall strengthen a weak faith with a clear vision."

THE FLY ON THE CEILING.

A Fly which had been hatched in a Chimney Corner grew up so weak and ailing that he could not use his Wings so that all his Excursions were confined to a short walk on the Ceiling. From this Vantage Ground he surveyed the doings of the Human Beings below and cogitated deeply on the matter. "They are very Mighty Creatures," thought he, as he clung to the Ceiling and looked down upon them, "but they cannot be altogether Superior to me. I at least do not live in a World which is Upside Down."

D. G.

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	£	s.	d.
C. McA.	0	3	0
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EXPERIENCES OF THE DYING.—"S. D." recalls the circumstances which attended the transition nearly two years ago of a dear daughter, aged eighteen. Breathing very softly she lay with her eyes closed, and just before the end, as the members of the family stood round the bed watching, they saw her face light up with a smile, as if she recognised someone whom she knew. During her illness she described several visions or dreams she had of beautiful scenery and flowers, and of Jesus holding out His hands to her and saying "Come." Twice she asked her mother whether she could not hear a woman's voice, a lovely voice, singing, and when her mother replied in the negative she said, "I wish you could." With the natural yearning of the mother heart, "S. D." adds: "I feel sure she is happy, but I do miss her. Oh, if I could only get a few words from her, as I am told in LIGHT that some do from their loved ones!"

SPIRITUALISM AND ITS CRITICS: A CONTINUATION.

By THE REV. ELLIS G. ROBERTS, M.A. (OXON.), ALBERBURY VICARAGE, SALOP.

(Continued from page 302.)

I have in a previous article (LIGHT, August 4th, p. 245) pointed out an offence against the law of *distribuas medium*. To argue that because insane people hear voices of a certain type therefore all people who hear such voices are insane, is a lovely specimen of the "undistributed middle term." The witchcraft argument is a *petitio principii* ("begging the question"). Its validity would depend on a major premise: "No witch possessed genuine supernormal powers." This would have to be proved by a very lengthy process of induction and extremely careful investigation of the phenomena of witchcraft in "different centuries and different countries"—not exactly a holiday task. Judges, juries, victims and disinterested public opinion in the witch-hunting ages were, on the whole, agreed to the contrary: the fact is not decisive, but it cannot be ignored—*valeat quantum*. "No conjurer believes in Spiritualism." An error of observation, and a bad one. Without consulting books of reference, I could quote half a dozen instances to refute the statement. "Eusapia Paladino is a discredited witness." A false analogy, betraying very inaccurate thought. The relations between a barrister and a witness who has made a false statement is not the same as that which exists between a scientific Spiritualist and a medium once or twice detected in fraud. The barrister has to deal with the normal side and the moral character of his witness, who to him is a human individual: the Spiritualist has to deal with an abnormal power alleged to reside in the medium, who, to him, is not so much an individual as what Aristotle calls a "human instrument." A better analogy is that of an astronomer who has to use a defective telescope. He would be very glad to discard the instrument if he could obtain a more perfect one; if he cannot, then he must, so far as possible, ascertain its error, and allow for it in his calculations. The criticisms which have appeared on the alleged movements of the table at Mariemont are based upon a major premise which I must supply in order to make the reasoning clear. I do so, and present the following syllogism in "Camestres" of the second figure. "All-things-which-happen are within-the-comprehension of Brown, Jones and Robinson. This is not a thing-within-the-comprehension of Brown, Jones and Robinson. Therefore, this is not a thing-which-happens." The syllogism is perfect: all you have to do is to prove the major premise. "Natural" and "supernatural" are terms which need definition before they are used in a train of reasoning: too often they are merely "question-begging epithets." Now for arguments which come from a very distinguished quarter indeed. Mr. Clodd has, with characteristic delicacy, referred to certain things as "spurious drivel." There would seem to be some confusion here. Does he mean something which falsely claims to be drivel? His argument as to the "tainted atmosphere" alleged to have been the birthplace of modern Spiritualism may be treated in more ways than one. It may be a mere "ignoratio elenchi" avoiding the real issue. Or it may be meant to be taken seriously. If so then its validity would depend entirely upon an implied major premise: "No good thing can originate in a tainted atmosphere." This is a universal negative, technically known as E; a very imposing statement indeed. On this I bring to bear that nasty contradictory I which has demolished so many a pretentious E, and Mr. Clodd's "emphatic No" flies to pieces like a tiled roof under a Jack Johnson. Some good things, dear sir, originated in a "tainted atmosphere." Astrologers, seekers after the philosopher's stone, quack salvers of all descriptions are among the predecessors of our modern astronomers, chemists and doctors of medicine; "sorry rascals" indeed they too often were; sorrowful rascals, too, living in a "tainted atmosphere" under the shadow of the gallows: yet we owe much to the "sorry rascals": let us not grudge them some meed of honour; at any rate, *Requiescant in pace*. Religious freedom has found sturdy champions in atmospheres tainted by bigotry: political

freedom in atmospheres tainted by vice: poetry—but why enlarge? Really, Mr. Clodd, you should read a little history. And please don't use that nasty *argumentum ad hominem*, or rather, in this case, *ad feminam*; it is as futile as it is disgusting to assail the departed: it is a very contemptible cause indeed that cannot be defended without defiling dead women's graves.

My technical and obscurantist comments on the new reasoning are probably more interesting to myself than to the reader, and to continue them *seriatim* would be, even for an old professional fool-hunter, to make a toil of a pleasure. I therefore mark the papers submitted for correction with a "*non satis*," or, in undergraduate parlance, a "dead plough," and proceed to take a wider view of the situation. Others besides myself appear to be of opinion that Dr. Mercier and Mr. Clodd are disposed not so much seriously to examine the evidence as to assume that the evidence is not worth examination. The venue is therefore transferred from the court of Logic to the theatre of Pure Comedy, to which we accordingly proceed. Our critics take the pose of certain great ones who are competent, on their own authority, or an authority vested in themselves, to decide that the well-considered conclusions of some of the foremost scientists of the world, in a sphere which they have made their own, may be dismissed by a wave of the great one's hand. The humour of the situation may be presented in a line. The critics are Messrs. Mercier and Clodd. The criticised are Barrett, Lodge, Crookes and Wallace.

I shall, however, be told that our friends are pronouncing judgment, not in their individual capacity, but on the "authority of orthodox Science." Well, but who gave them this authority? And what is "orthodox Science"? Is there some secret conclave for whom the knowledge of all mysteries is reserved? Have the arcana of the universe really been committed once for all to a company of True Believers who are to dole them out through the hands of a "Knowledge Controller"? Verily, one might suppose it were so. Leaving Logic awhile, I shall rise on the wings of Fancy. I see the "Old Guard" assemble on the anniversary of some famous victory. I hear their acclamations as they pass once more those time-honoured resolutions by which they stand or fall. "Resolved: That knowledge is of the Scientists. Resolved: That *we* are the Scientists." For the erstwhile rebel against authority has now set up an authority of his own; against *his* orthodoxy no man may transgress; outside the limits of "Science as she was taught" there must be no rash excursions: "let there be no meanderings" is the order of the day. The attitude of the Rabbi of this orthodox Science towards the innovator in Physics or Psychology is that of a highly conscientious, painfully nervous grandmother towards a too enterprising infant for the nonce committed to her charge. He disturbs her afternoon slumbers with daring speculations which on *a priori* grounds she is compelled to condemn. He submits for her examination objects which have aroused in the discoverer a lively curiosity; but they are redolent of a "tainted atmosphere," and in all haste she rings for them to be thrown away; her treatment, in short, of this aspirant after unlawful knowledge may be illustrated by the injunction so often issued to the maids—"See what Master Tommy is doing, and tell him not to."

Are Spiritualists deceiving the people? The prosecution must call a different class of witness, for those already summoned "do not understand the nature of an oath." In plain language the critics do not realise the responsibility of the position they have volunteered to assume.

But mankind is not entirely composed of dogmatic piffles, and there are many in serious perplexity as to this strange, and in some ways uncanny, phenomenon of Spiritualism. The question which they would ask is not, Are these tidings welcome? but simply, Are these things true? And the only way to find an answer is by testing the evidence according to scientific method, and considering the merits of alternative interpretations. The very fairest field of inquiry, at any rate for a preliminary step, will be that of physical phenomena, and especially the experiments still being conducted by Dr. Crawford at Belfast. It is one that offers comparatively simple problems for solution.

Whether a message received through a medium comes from an incarnate, or a discarnate personality, is often very difficult to determine. Whether or not a table actually rose from the floor under certain conditions is a much simpler one. If Dr. Crawford's statements are denied, then their contradictories—falsehood or hallucination—must be clearly *affirmed*, not vaguely implied. And they must be scrutinised as severely as the statements themselves.

We shall find in our study of Spiritualism as a whole that, as in all the problems of life, we are driven to a choice of alternative explanations, or of some few different courses. Neither alternative may be wholly satisfactory: we must choose the better. Spiritualism is now a gigantic fact—of this there can be no doubt whatever. We must account for the fact, and two alternative explanations at once appear. The one is that the claims of Spiritualists are, in the main, true. This is by no means easy to accept, though its difficulties have been grossly exaggerated. They have been stated over and over again and I need not specify them.

The alternative is that the world is being invaded by Strong Delusion, and on this I must dwell, for it appears to have received no notice at all. Let me state it. The delusion is ubiquitous, and gains new victims every day. It enters the home, and turns intellectual, cultured, self-respecting ladies and gentlemen into Bedlamites, whose very sight and hearing are in abeyance—strong language, but not a whit too strong. It passes over the selfish and torpid, and takes captive the keen-witted and noble. It grips the eminently sane, eminently practical observer of mankind. It seizes alike on the college tutor and on the mechanic. It lays hold on the eminent judge who has spent year after year in balancing contradictory evidence. And, worst of all, it has now established its position in the very citadel of Reasoned Truth: in the laboratory or the workroom of the master of physical science, and wherever it goes it turns its victims into liars, lunatics, or fools. Strong language again, but not a whit too strong. They become deliberate liars, hopeless lunatics, or consummate fools. A man of unsullied honour, trained investigator into physics, skilled engineer to boot, conducts a hundred experiments, observing, measuring, weighing with all the precision of his craft. And all the while he is either acting the lie which presently he will impose upon the world, or he is being *fooled* by a simple girl who has never received a lesson in conjuring. She causes a table to rise from the floor under his hands; she causes noises to record themselves on the receiver in his presence, and he cannot detect the fraud. Another, and a still more experienced master of Science, is called in, and he is as helpless as the first. Similar experiments have been carried out before, and others may be proceeding now, but the result is the same. Everywhere the Princes of Intellect, in no smaller degree than their less distinguished brethren, are being fooled; "ignorance itself is a plummet over them": they are become fitting butts for the booby and the noodle: they can be criticised by Dr. Mercier and Mr. Clodd.

This is the alternative. To the thinker it is not an attractive one, for it breaks down all confidence in the reliability of evidence, and with that the hope of progress in knowledge. Its improbabilities are manifold. To invalidate the Belfast experiments alone we must assume a combination of factors each exceedingly unlikely in itself—the master of Science who is also a lunatic or a fool, the circle of high-principled men and women who are deceivers or deceived, the conscientious medium who is also a fraud; who is a first-rate conjurer though she has never received a lesson in *legerdemain*; who wastes skill that would make her fortune in the performance of tricks that are not even amusing; who in the joy-loving season of life devotes hour after hour and week after week to a monotonous routine of dull deception. The odds against such a combination must be very heavy indeed. Still, let the evidence for the alternative be produced and examined; only it must be evidence, not assumption; we shall not accept without scrutiny that certificate of lunacy which Dr. Mercier so light-heartedly signs: we "like not the security."

It is much to be deplored that in the conflict now raging between Spiritualism and its foes men are at present divided

by a "cross division." Christians join with so-called "Rationalists" in howling down "the necromancer of Birmingham"; Spiritualists, borrowing the foetid missiles of the "Rationalist," are exasperating progressive and friendly Christians by sarcasms anent "golden harps" and "tribal divinities." Let this petty internecine warfare cease. The broad issue for mankind lies not between those who hold varying beliefs as to the spiritual world, but between those who accept it and those who deny or ignore it. The issue is between Spiritualism in its widest sense, and—also in its widest sense—Materialism. Each has its beliefs—positive or negative—and from these beliefs, sooner or later, definite policies must proceed. The beliefs are contradictory—the policies are divergent.

Civilisation, the dwelling-place of mankind, is being swept by a cyclone of fire: and many of its stateliest edifices are crashing to the ground, and this is largely because, in their construction, incongruous elements, the material and the spiritual, were unadvisedly jumbled together. The "cloud-capped towers," the "gorgeous palaces," even the "solemn temples" were built of fabrics not only perishable but *incoherent*; they do not bind together, and the masonry falls to pieces under the beating of the blast. The materialist will endeavour to reconstruct his shattered home according to his own conceptions, and with what security and magnificence he may, for it is the only home he expects to know. He who has the wider vision, and cherishes the larger hope, may well content himself with a less imposing structure; he needs no temporal magnificence in what can never be an "abiding city," neither has he much to fear from external foe. His temporary dwelling need be but a tabernacle of rough-hewn beams; he reserves his masonry for the spiritual sphere, and on this he will labour diligently indeed, but without fret or impatience, for "he that believeth shall not make haste."

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!

Leave thy low-vaulted past!

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,

Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,

Till thou at last art free,

Leaving thine out-grown shell by life's unresting sea.

MISLEADING MESSAGES: A POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

By PAX.

Viscountess Molesworth asks in your issue of the 15th inst. whether those on the other side always distinguish between the souls that wander in sleep and those that have actually left the body in death. I have been told several times that it is most difficult to distinguish the souls of the unconscious, or of the departing, from those of the so-called "dead" on account of the extreme fragility of the nexus or cord that binds spirit and body together. This is especially the case when any great *shock* produces unconsciousness—such as shell explosion or burial for the time under *débris*. A soldier posted as "missing" ten days ago was reported to me by my "guides" as "with us"—but now they tell me he was gassed and temporarily buried and is a prisoner.

On another occasion an old lady of ninety-four was notified as "passed away," but recovered—for a short time. On making inquiries from her family I found that, at the time my "friends" told me this, she was nearly dead, but most unfortunately, as it turned out, she was recalled to life by a favourite nephew's action. May I ask if Miss Hyde ever inquired if "Alec" had an accident producing unconsciousness at the time she received her message? Even in very heavy sleep under abnormal circumstances the soul sometimes resembles a freed one, and mistakes *do* occur on the "border-line," and we must face that fact.

"PRIVATE DOWDING."—That remarkable little book, "Private Dowding," described as "A plain Record of After Death Experiences of a Soldier Killed in Battle," is now in its second edition, the first edition having been exhausted within a short time after issue. It is published by Mr. J. M. Watkins, and can be obtained at this office at 2s. 6d. *net*, or post free 2s. 10d.

OMENS AND APPARITIONS.

WARNING MESSENGERS FROM THE BORDERLAND.

Writing in the "Star" of the 14th inst., Mrs. Hinkson (Katharine Tyman), the well-known Irish novelist and poet, in an interesting article entitled "The Middle World," treats of "certain mysterious happenings" which belong to the borderland between the natural and the supernatural. They consist for the most part of accounts of mysterious death warnings peculiar to particular families.

Thus we are told of the "Gormanston foxes," the legend being that when a Gormanston dies "all the foxes in the country, real living foxes, come into Gormanston Castle." Abandoning their natural shyness of man they "fill the courtyard and enter the house wherever they can find an opening." A weird spectacle indeed!

Following comes a "banshee" story. The author relates that the head of an old Irish family said to her: "We have a banshee if you can call it that. It is not the crying women. It is an animal—a little animal like a small dog or a fox. It runs suddenly across a room you enter, or it looks at you from behind a tree. You can't be sure you've seen it." He had seen it or something like it a short time before on the occasion of the death in battle of a distinguished soldier, a member of his family.

Of the warnings which take the form of birds, real or phantasmal, Mrs. Hinkson tells some strange stories: birds, by the way, figure very noticeably in the general lore of death warnings. After narrating some instances in the case of one particular family, Mrs. Hinkson writes.—

But the strangest experience happened to two sisters of this family. These were grown women, living together. The other members were dead or scattered. One February night one sister was awakened by the sound of the other feeling about in the darkness.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

The other sister answered her, wide-awake, "There's a bird in the room. I caught it in my hands, but it has escaped. It must be a penguin. It had no wings—only just the soft body of a bird."

A candle was lit, but there was no bird. Some months later word came through a lawyer, who had been trying to trace their whereabouts, of the death of an aunt who had been forty years—long enough for everyone to have forgotten her—in a lunatic asylum. They had never heard of her existence, but she had died on that particular night.

Just think of it, the wingless bird, for the poor unminded body that had surely lost—and found—its wings!

A little later, and before they had heard of the death, one of the sisters, looking up, saw a beautiful sea-swallow in the room. When she looked steadily it was not there. This second apparition of a bird brought great comfort to someone who had loved the poor mad creature, giving assurance that the soul had found its wings.

We are also told of a case in which the illness and death of an old uncle of a friend of the writer were heralded by the apparition of a pigeon flying about his room. Mrs. Hinkson herself, when visiting the house in which someone very near and dear to her was passing away, was awakened at three o'clock in the morning by a tapping as of a little hammer. On mentioning it at breakfast a shepp was told that it was a jackdaw, which pecked every morning at the window of the dying man's chamber, and that it had done the same thing at a house a little distance away during the illness of a young relative who had died in the preceding autumn.

Dog-lovers, especially those who are interested in the question of animal survival, will find comfort in the following:—

In an old house I know, an invisible dog runs across the floor, stops short as though discouraged, and goes back again. Sometimes he follows one of the two ladies of the house. Once in the twilight a young niece saw him scratching at the door of her aunt's room to come in. "Aunt Mary, Aunt Mary!" she calls, "come and see the dog!" But there is no dog there when Aunt Mary comes. The niece describes him as a little brown dog—not at all alarming. There is a living dog in the house who does not like it. He retires into a corner bristling and growling when the invisible dog comes in. Probably the little spirit of a dog, visiting familiar scenes, looking for friends long departed.

There is a story of an English country house where a big dog shakes himself and flings himself contentedly with a deep sigh on the rug in front of the billiard-room fire. The guests stare: there is no dog. "It is only old Grouse, who died in such a year," the host explains.

I can believe that story, although I am immune from superstitions. A certain very wise and dear little dog of my own died. While he was yet unburied, we, and a third—an unimaginative, common-sense person—sitting at table, heard the dog rush downstairs as he always did at the postman's knock. Again, we heard him lie down and get up under the table. We heard him about the house for a time. Well, all that is explicable. Where would the little unhouse-dog spirit be but with those who were the light of his eyes?

THE SPLENDID MOMENT.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox in a touching letter to the "Occult Review" for September describes her anguish of mind, after a bereavement, while endeavouring to obtain direct proof of the continuance of life after death. In her despair she wrote to an intimate friend who had lost a beloved sister. The friend's reply gave her so much help and comfort that she obtained permission to make it public in the hope that it might be of service to others similarly situated. The friend, Mrs. Vermilye, a gifted and brilliant woman well known to American readers, wrote as follows:—

Du Maurier says in "Peter Ibbetson" what makes it all so logical in a way—that what is Beyond may be at times so incommunicable to mortals that it is not always possible to get even frayed edges of it over to our understanding. I know this was conveyed to me one dark, wet day, when I sat alone in deep grief for Martha, thinking how rebellious she must be at having to leave the world she loved so young. Then suddenly and softly the most ineffable joy touched me. I sat as one with every pore expectant—not moving. It was a breath of a feeling for which there is no name in language, and I had a sense as of golden sunlight rolling through the room and out. I came to reality, to find myself in the corner of the sofa, open-eyed, just as I had been, the room shadowy, the rain pouring. It was afternoon, and I was, and had been, wide awake. Something out of the Great Secret had touched me, so beautiful, so belittling to everything that humans call happiness, that I was thrilled and could not move. One thing this wonderful moment did for me—I never did, never could again, think of Martha as rebellious for having died. I knew she was happy, mine alone was the grief.

On other occasions, before and since that marvellous moment, I have felt Martha with me, entirely in a vague, subjective way. I am sure that which you seek will yet come to you, perhaps most unexpectedly.

THE PETERS TESTIMONIAL FUND.

Mr. H. Withall is happy to acknowledge the following additional subscriptions towards the proposed testimonial to Mr. Alfred Vout Peters:—

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PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATION.—Investigators who, taking an exalted view of their own sagacity, enter upon this inquiry with their minds made up as to the possible or impossible, are sure to fail. Such people should be shunned, as their habit of thought and mode of action are inappropriate and therefore essentially vulgar, for the essence of vulgarity is inappropriateness.—"On the Threshold of the Unseen," by SIR WILLIAM BARRETT, F.R.S.

BIGOTRY.—In all customary societies bigotry is the ruling principle. In rude places to this day anyone who says anything new is looked upon with suspicion, and is persecuted by opinion if not injured by penalty. One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It is, as common people say, so "upsetting"; it makes you think that, after all, your favourite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded; it is certain that till now there was no place allotted in your mind to the new and startling inhabitant, and now that it has conquered an entrance, you do not at once see which of your old ideas it will or will not turn out, with which of them it can be reconciled, and with which it is at essential enmity. Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed, more or less, to illtreat the original man who brought it.—WALTER BAGEHOT, "Physics and Politics."

"IPSISSIMA VERBA."

A CONCESSION TO A CRITIC.

In our Notes of the 18th ult. we gave a summary of a letter sent us by Mrs. M. Le F. Shepherd, of West Bank, Henley-on-Thames, in reply to the Rev. Ellis G. Roberts' article, "Spiritualism and its Critics," which appeared a fortnight before. We have received several letters from Mrs. Shepherd protesting that she has been unjustly treated by reason of the fact that we gave only a digest of her letter while we inserted in full Mr. Roberts' rejoinder to it in *LIGHT* of the 25th ult. Mrs. Shepherd affirms that by our neglect to print the entire text of her letter her statements were not properly represented and that Mr. Roberts was consequently misled. Rather than rest under the imputation of injustice or discourtesy we give Mrs. Shepherd's letter in full. We hope she will now be satisfied.

THE CASE AGAINST SPIRITUALISM.

SIR,—May I be permitted to pass one or two criticisms upon Mr. Ellis Roberts' letter—though not as replying for Dr. Mercier, who can very well reply for himself, but as one who is in the position of an "anti-Spiritualist"?

Mr. Ellis Roberts states that he is "not a Spiritualist," and "not very anxious to investigate the phenomena of the séance-room"; yet, in spite of this, he says: "Spiritualists have made out a very good case indeed." "The evidence seems well attested, the inductions appear to be cautiously made—very cautiously indeed in some instances." "The Spiritistic hypothesis . . . gives a fairly satisfactory explanation." The testimony recorded on pp. 221-224 in "Raymond" is so strong, in his opinion, that only "an *alibi*" could upset it (if Mr. Ellis Roberts means anything less than this he is trifling with the attention of his readers); therefore I take it he certifies the case for Spiritualism as proven on this one piece of testimony alone! He also points to two cases investigated by himself, privately, as irrefutable—at least, such is the inference. Previous to this he refers to having been the subject or recipient of "spontaneous phenomena" (whatever this may mean); and he finishes his article with a very noble eulogy on the efforts of "Myers and Lodge," tantamount to a declaration of belief which is glaringly inconsistent with his opening statements! Mr. Ellis Roberts is not to be considered an anti-Spiritualist; for he designates all these as "a mob" and invites them to "come on!" so to speak—laying about him in fine style, like a skilled wielder of clubs! He requests a "dispassionate statement" from "the other side," postulating that none has ever appeared; and he is evidently quite prepared to see the case "go by default"!

This being so there is only one thing to be done and that is to call upon Mr. Ellis Roberts to explain his own position in face of the overwhelming testimony he cites in favour of Spiritualism. Will he kindly tell us why he is "not a Spiritualist," and why he is "not very anxious to investigate the phenomena of the séance-room"? I await his explanation with interest, feeling sorry to have to reply to such a letter as his, because I recognise that it is necessary to argue on this subject impersonally, that is to say "dispassionately," because it affects the spiritual welfare of mankind so seriously.—Yours, &c.,

M. LE F. SHEPHERD.

A HUMAN DOCUMENT.

He did not look at the still, peaceful face: he knelt by the bedside, his head low, buried in his hands. Absorbed in himself, conscious only of his own personal loss, he cried aloud and he cursed God.

In vision, his soul left its body; escaped from time so that, in transcendence, he saw the long, long future all before him. And what had been, was not: she lived still on earth.

Long years passed; years of constant suffering, years of naught but suffering; years of bodily suffering for her, years of mental suffering for himself. But now he suffered not for himself, he suffered for her. And, in his vision, he cried to God, "Oh, God! All Powerful! Would that you had taken her then."

The vision passed and again he was in the body kneeling by the bedside, his head, low, buried in his hands. But now he was not absorbed in self; he was free, had found *himself* in others. And he rose up from his knees and bent over the bed and kissed the still, peaceful face. And, praying forgiveness

for the past, he thanked God that He had done what He had done. For now he knew his little loss was swallowed up in her great gain: he, though on earth, shared himself in the great gain.

When he left the still, peaceful room and its flowers framing the still, peaceful face, he knew all earthly ties were broken. But he carried away something. He carried away full peace at heart—peace never before known. He was conscious, conscious with the fullest of full assurance, that she was still with him, nearer and dearer and purer than ever on earth.

So, humbled, but content and firm at heart, he went back to the world, praying that the God of All might help him to set well the little part cast for him in the drama of man's universe.

GERALD TULLY.

VISUALISING THE SPIRITUAL.

We take the following from "Excelsior," the Burton Wood Parish Magazine, edited by the vicar, the Rev. A. M. Mitchell, M.A.:—

Few of us, nominal Christians, realise the spiritual for this reason—we are not concerned about it, if we are not altogether indifferent. "To visualise" involves too much effort, too much "fag." To successful visualising of the spiritual at least two things are necessary.

1. Firm, unflinching faith in the existence of the Unseen, that it is a living and bright reality very close at hand—a world which surrounds, encircles, envelops this "terrestrial ball," a life supernatural which interpenetrates the natural. The all-embracing ether, earth's immense envelope through which the vibration of light, heat and electric action are propagated, is said to be the world invisible in which rejoice the discarnate spirits, the happy ones delivered from the burden of the flesh.

2. Effort to live in the spiritual world, to think in it, to speak and act from out of it. We are spiritual beings, "trailing clouds of glory do we come from God Who is our Home."

To speak correctly as to myself, I should say, "I am spirit," "I have a body." "I am" is spiritual, "I have" is physical. For purposes of evolution—evolution of the Divine within us—the "I am" has taken to it a material body and clothed itself in a robe of human flesh.

The daily effort to grip the Unseen World, if it extends over a few brief moments only, will result in visualising a vast, beautiful, eternal world; a joyous life of fellowship and peace will rise upon our view; we shall feel how truly we belong to that Other World and Other Side of Life whilst our sphere of action is for the time being on this, the Earth Side of our being.

It is in our power so to visualise the spiritual that the things which belong to it become the great, the only realities; the things which are seen comparatively of little worth.

Concentration of thought, affections, will on the spiritual world, spiritual things, spiritual beings will cause "the ether world" to vibrate for us with light and heat and spiritual power.

DR. MERCIER AND SPIRITUALISM.

"An Observer" writes:—

A recent criticism in "LIGHT" of Dr. Mercier's article in the July "Hibbert" seeks to put him out of court altogether. Dr. Mercier is a psychologist—Sir Oliver Lodge is not. We may accept provisionally all that Dr. Mercier says about the morbid; we may accept in the same way all that Sir Oliver Lodge has to say about true psychic experience. A correct perspective of the domain of insanity may be attained, perhaps, by an additional study of such a book as Lombroso's "Man of Genius." In any case the theories which we adopt must include facts from as many different regions of psychic experience as possible. The most important question we can ask Dr. Mercier is: Can he assure us that the view of medical psychology in relation to Spiritualism and the experimental searching of patients' minds for their contents do not in some cases "retard recovery from insanity" and may not "render permanent what might otherwise have been a temporary affection"? Spiritualism has much to tell medical psychology. Judging by Dr. Mercier's article the latter has nothing to tell the former. A noted Churchman warned the Church against mistaking "the dawn for a conflagration." Is not medical psychology making the same mistake, and this in the face of such an appeal as Lombroso's, in which he called the attention of science without delay to phenomena of "colossal importance"?

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 23rd, &c.

Reports and prospective announcements are charged at the rate of twenty-four words for 1s.; and 3d. for every additional ten words.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION.—*Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W. 1.*—Mrs. Mary Davies, address; soloist, Mrs. Fox; large attendance; Mr. Douglas Neal presided.—77, *New Oxford-street, W.C. 1.*—Monday, 17th, convincing clairvoyance by Mrs. A. Brittain. Sunday next, see front page.—G. C.

LONDON SPIRITUAL MISSION: 13B, *Pembridge Place, Bayswater, W.*—Mr. E. W. Beard, "Dartmoor, and some Spiritualism"; Mrs. A. Jamrach, "Man, his Origin and Destiny." For Sunday next, see front page.—I. R.

TOTTENHAM.—684, *HIGH-ROAD.*—Interesting address by Mr. G. Tayler Gwinn. Sunday next, 7 p.m., Mrs. A. Boddington, address and clairvoyance; 3 p.m., Lyceum.—D. H.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—*SURREY MASONIC HALL.*—Morning, Mr. Baily, address; Mrs. Ball, messages; evening, Mr. Nickels, of Luton, splendid trance address. Sunday next, 11 a.m., Mr. Brown and Mrs. Ball; 6.30 p.m., Mr. H. Ernest Hunt.

WIMBLEDON SPIRITUALIST MISSION.—Pleasant address and good clairvoyance by Mrs. E. Neville. For prospective announcements see front page.—R. A. B.

CROYDON.—*GYMNASIUM HALL, HIGH-STREET.*—Address by Mrs. Julie Scholey much appreciated; circle well attended. Sunday next, at 11, service and circle; at 6.30, Mr. George Prior.

MANOR PARK, E.—*THIRD AVENUE, CHURCH-ROAD.*—Address by Mr. Symons. Sunday next, 6.30, Mr. Smyth, address. Monday, 3 p.m., ladies, Mrs. Greenwood. Wednesday, 7.30, Rev. D. Stewart, address. October 6th, 3 p.m., social and dance.

BATTERSEA.—45, *ST. JOHN'S HILL, CLAPHAM JUNCTION.*—Morning, good circle; evening, Mrs. Brittain, address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 11.15, circle service; 6.30, Mr. Wright. October 4th, 8.15, Mrs. Fielder. Sunday, 7th, tea and harvest festival.—N. B.

FOREST GATE, E.—*EARLHAM HALL, EARLHAM GROVE.*—Address by Alderman D. J. Davis highly appreciated. Sunday next, Mr. Conner. Miss E. Shead, 30, Thornhill-road, Leyton, is now acting as secretary.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, *BECKLOW-ROAD.*—Mr. F. Eveleigh addressed a crowded audience. Sunday next, 11 a.m., public circle; 7 p.m., Mr. Symons. Thursday, public meeting.—M. S.

BRIGHTON SPIRITUAL MISSION.—1, *UPPER NORTH-STREET* (close to Clock Tower).—Sunday next, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mr. Spencer, of Birmingham. Tuesday and Thursday, 8 p.m., Windsor Hall. Friday, 8, "Dramatic Recital" at Unitarian Hall, New-road.—R. G.

HOLLOWAY.—*GROVEDALE-ROAD (NEAR HIGHGATE TUBE STATION).*—Morning, Mr. T. O. Todd's fine lecture, "A Speechless World's Interpreter"; evening, Mr. H. Boddington, inspiring address. Sunday next, Harvest Festival: 11.15, Mrs. Adams, address; 3 p.m., Lyceum (all welcome); 7, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. A. W. Parry, and others. Gifts of flowers, fruit and vegetables thankfully received.

CLAPHAM.—*HOWARD-STREET, WANDSWORTH-ROAD, S.W.*—Sunday next, 11.15 a.m., public circle; 7 p.m., Mrs. Mary Gordon. Friday, at 8, public meeting. October 7th, Mr. H. Wright.—M. C.

READING.—*SPIRITUAL MISSION, 16, BLAGRAVE-STREET.*—Services, 11.30 and 6.45 p.m., addresses by Mr. Howard Mundy. Sunday next, Mr. George Craze.—T. W. L.

RICHMOND.—14, *PARKSHOT (OPPOSITE PUBLIC BATHS).*—Mrs. Podmore, address and splendid clairvoyance. Sunday next, Mrs. Brown, of Kingston. Wednesday, Mrs. Neville, descriptions of spirit guides.

WOOLWICH AND PLUMSTEAD.—*PERSEVERANCE HALL, VILLAS-ROAD, PLUMSTEAD.*—Mrs. Maunder, address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 3 p.m., Lyceum; 7, Mrs. Clempson, address and clairvoyance.—J. M. P.

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STUDIES IN SPIRITUALISM.

Mr. W. H. Robinson, who is popularly known as "the Father of Spiritualism in the North," has, we regret to hear, been ill, and consequently forced to cancel some of his lectures. He delivered his last address on the 16th inst., at Gateshead, under the auspices of the Advanced Spiritualist Society, and a report appeared in the Newcastle-on-Tyne "North Mail" of the next morning. Taking for his subject "Studies in Spiritualism," Mr. Robinson said that Spiritualism was not modern: it was simply a reinauguration of what was known in ancient times. It was practised in India thousands of years ago, and also in China; it had been borrowed by the Egyptians, and the Hebrew philosophy had been taken from Egypt. Since then the movement had spread. Mediumship was a fact of Nature, and, therefore, ought not to be ridiculed, but reverently treated. The philosophy of Spiritualism was not salvation in the orthodox fashion; it was the development of the will in the direction of human progress and righteousness. In the course of his lecture Mr. Robinson showed several photos of "materialisation" of spirits taken in Newcastle and London, and he pointed out that spirit photography was a scientific fact.

THE "Review of Reviews" for September contains Miss F. R. Scatcherd's fourth article on the solution of the Russian problem. In this she deals with "Russia's Own Contribution." The cause of the lack of organisation and system which constitutes the Russian crisis lies, in Miss Scatcherd's opinion, in the fact that under the domination of the bureaucracy the people were free to think but never to act, with the consequence that the organs of national and individual life became atrophied. This lack of freedom is especially illustrated by the dependent position of women in Russia. The needs of Russia which must be met by herself are (a) the achievement of national unity, and (b) education and technical training. Mr. Joseph Thorp's article on "America and the Settlement" will also well repay perusal. The usual features of the "Review" are maintained at their customary high level. For frontispiece the number has an illustration of the Journalists' Memorial to Mr. W. T. Stead, which has been executed by Sir George Frampton and is to be erected on the Victoria Embankment.

ONE of our correspondents having asked that those who have had any definite vision of the Christ-presence should share their experience with others, Mrs. R. J. Fox sends us, by leave of the writer, a copy of a letter from a lady describing a two-fold vision which came to her one afternoon while sitting alone in her room. First she saw a huge grey cross and on it, with drooping head, the figure of the Crucified One. She closed her eyes to shut out the awful spectacle, and when she reopened them it was to see before her a cross of golden light and standing by it a glorious being, clad in a robe of dazzling whiteness, his face illumined by love, pity and compassion. Ever since this experience Mrs. Fox's correspondent has felt confident that Jesus is moving among us, striving to clear away the darkened conditions which surround our planet at the present time.

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