

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Görthe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We have frequently remarked on the inadequacy of purely intellectual standards as applied to the facts of human life, and this applies in a high degree to psychical evidences. Isolated from each other and their life context, these are rarely able to stand the test of the rigid intellectual method. By the logical process an acute logician can quite easily reason himself out of existence altogether. Pushed too far or into regions where it does not belong, the intellectual method breaks down much more completely than any of the things which it examines and finds wanting. In this matter of psychic evidences we have sometimes felt that those who have assured themselves of the reality of human survival are not resting entirely on intellectual standards. They have felt and experienced as well as examined and considered. Their convictions are founded on interior experiences and merely clinched and confirmed by external demonstrations. There has been an interior urge as well as an outward demonstration. This, we imagine, is the reason why the man who can think, but has no inward hold on truth, is baffled by the attitude of those whose case for a future life appears to rest solely on objective evidences. A man must feel as well as see his truth.

Mr. Archibald Macintyre (Glasgow) sends us a long letter in which he describes the condition of perplexity produced in his mind by a study of certain psychic literature, especially that which purports to give descriptions of life on the "other side." He finds some of the messages hopelessly contradictory, and in a few instances difficult to understand, since they seem to put forward ideas which advanced religious teaching on this side has long outgrown. Our correspondent is, of course, far from being the only student to whom these things are stumbling-blocks. He writes:—

One wonders how such able exponents and defenders of Spiritualism as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. J. Arthur Hill have managed to steer their way through the shoals and shallows of Spiritualistic literature and come out safely to the deep waters of conviction. One would like a copy of their chart!

In this matter we can only speak for ourselves. We have proceeded on the lines of recognising that we are in touch with all grades of intelligence in the next world—communicators who are variously superior, equal, or inferior in mental ability to those with whom they communicate on this side, and that all their statements have to be brought to the bar of individual judgment. The difficulty is no

greater on the whole than that which we meet with in the affairs of this world, where we have likewise to deal with an endless amount of contradictory opinion and miscellaneous judgment on men and things. As we have said before, it is well to stick closely to central issues and refuse to be blown about by every wind of doctrine on matters of detail. The central fact for us is the survival of man as man, and not as a god or a demi-god. We commence with faith in an intelligently ordered universe and the consistency of Nature, who "never contradicts herself." Furthermore, we believe that "truth is always simple but error complex and generally incomprehensible." We find the darkness and confusion—the seemingly endless mazes of perplexity—are the product of the undeveloped human mind. It is not always easy and pleasant sailing, but it is a fine training for the character in self-reliance and the growth of critical judgment.

We take the following from "The World of Books" by "The Philistine" in the "Weekly Dispatch" of Sunday last:—

Still they come, these communications from "the other side" in the form of books to be reviewed. There is a perfect wave of psychic mania at the moment. I am not a sceptic. I am quite as ready to believe in communications as Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or any of those who are searching—and finding—in this field. But is it wise to encourage everyone who is sure he is in touch with some dear one who has "crossed over" to write a book about it? I should hate to count up how many books I have found on my desk in the last six months. It seems to me every London publishing house has brought out one such book, most of them have produced more.

After this illuminating testimony "The Philistine" proceeds to comment on the book "I Heard a Voice," by a "King's Counsel," in which he finds "nothing new, nothing of value." And then the reviewer's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of Mr. Edward Clodd, who in his new book "The Question" is discovered to be "too dogmatic."

But his calm negation of all evidence and his somewhat sardonic humour give us pause. He means to deal psychic phenomena an extinguishing blow. He does not. He simply drags it out of the region of hysteria into the realms of reasonable discussion.

That is a great thought.

A strange little book, written in a vigorously assertive and unconventional style, is "Why, Whence and Whither?" by the author of "The Religion of a Hospital Nurse" (Pelican Press, 2s.). One of its central ideas is that "this world of ours is a lost spirit creation into which the plank of matter has been thrown to aid us to escape from the lost state. . . . When we come here from the dreary, sunless spirit-world our self-will has created, our old contrary spirits are generously allowed the use of fresh new created bodies, and we remember." So the bright dreams of youth are the remembrance of heaven, and children's terror of being left alone in the dark is due to recollection of the dark abode they have come from! Our own observation

has certified the fact that a baby's gaze is always attracted by a bright light, but it never before occurred to us to connect this attraction with remembrance of heaven, and we are informed on good authority that a tiny infant is not afraid of the dark—that this fear is a later development, often the result of ideas instilled into its mind by its elders.

"LIGHT" AND THE ALLIANCE: A REMOVAL.

The expected has happened! The premises occupied by **LIGHT** and the London Spiritualist Alliance for over twenty years have been practically commandeered and almost immediate possession is required. Extensive alterations are to be made and the approach to our rooms during the remaining period of our tenancy will be repudiated inconvenient, so that the sooner we are able to "flit" the better. It seems a fitting opportunity for the provision of such a new Home as that to which we have alluded on more than one occasion of late. Those who are interested in our welfare would render a service to us and indirectly to the movement at large by assisting us in the discovery of suitable premises. We have thought ambitiously of a whole house in the West or West Central districts—in a quiet square. If we cannot soar to that just yet, we may at least hope to find a suite of rooms, one of which shall be large enough to accommodate the smaller meetings of the Alliance.

SIR WILLIAM BARRETT ON SPIRITUALISM AND RELIGION.

We take the following passages from Sir William Barrett's recent article in the "Church Family Newspaper," on "The Unseen Universe." It will be observed that he disagrees with those who claim Spiritualism to be in any sense a religion, but we do not regard the conflict of view as implying any irreconcilable difference. It is mainly the difference between a higher truth and a lower one. The former does not exclude or inhibit the latter. It merely absorbs and includes it. Worship is the same in essence, whether the object of adoration be an image, a man, or a Deity:—

Spiritualism is not in itself a religion, for it is a belief in survival after death and the possibility of communication with those who have passed on, founded upon the evidence of the senses; it is, therefore, the negation of faith, which rests not upon sense and outward things, but essentially on those higher spiritual instincts whereby the soul attaches itself to God. The intimacy and immediacy of the union between the soul and God, the Infinite manifesting itself in and through the finite, is the fundamental basis of religion, the true theme of which is not the *future* life but the *higher* life. Eternal life is not a mere survival after death, but a state that begins here and now in that self-surrender which enables the consciousness of God to enter into our life and express itself in love and service both to God and man. In justice it must be said that Spiritualists, who number many thousands, chiefly among our humbler fellow-citizens, are for the most part better than their creed; for, as I know personally, they are more earnest, devout, and reverent in their religious services than perhaps the majority of churchgoers.

Whilst I gladly recognise this, let me point out, as I have done in my recent work, "On the Threshold of the Unseen," that "no one will find in automatic writing or other Spiritualistic phenomena the channel for the 'communion of saints,' which is independent of material agency and attained only in stillness and serenity of soul. For the psychical order is not the spiritual order; it deals only with the *external*, though it be in an unseen world; and its chief value lies in the fulfilment of its work, whereby it reveals the inadequacy of the external, either here or hereafter, to satisfy the life of the soul."

We give elsewhere in this issue a very interesting article on "The Holy Thorn," by Mr. Melchior MacBride, in which he deals with some mystical aspects of Glastonbury and its Holy Thorn. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to mention that we do not identify ourselves with literal interpretations of some of the statements in the article. As we have before observed, there is apparently more than one form of truth—literal truth, that is to say truth of fact, and another form which relates to regions beyond the physical side of things and which for the present we call subjective, although for some it possesses a greater reality than material forms.

CHILDHOOD AND REINCARNATION.

Miss E. Katharine Bates, in the course of a letter referring to the extract given on page 411 from Miss Lily Dougall's contribution to the book, "Immortality," writes:—

Most of us regret and many of us resent the fact that innocent childhood must cease at a given time, and that one and all of the children we have loved so dearly must take on their own responsibilities and in greater or lesser degree eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. I remember one of my brothers bitterly deploring this fact, saying it destroyed half his pleasure in seeing young children. There was no question of reincarnation involved then. The only difference I can see between his attitude and that of Miss Lily Dougall was that his horror was excited by *future* possibilities, while a mother whom Miss Dougall suggests is or ought to be horrified only by the thought that she may be nursing a possible male or female murderer or rake of the past. Personally I should much prefer to think that the "victim or tyrant," "harlot or rake" in generations now past, might have worked out already that bit of Karma, rather than that he or she might have these gruesome possibilities facing them in the future.

Surely as pilgrim souls, all belonging to one Father, and redeemed from our illusion of the senses through the one blessed Son, our feelings of horror and repulsion in contemplating innocent (*i.e.* ignorant) childhood would be rather relieved by thinking and trusting that many of that child's sad but necessary life experiences already lie in the past, and that to us has now been given the grand opportunity of influencing these children and putting their tiny feet in the path of righteousness and happiness instead of in the dark paths of their past experiences.

The virgin soul that has never known conflict "nor endured hardness" is like the virgin uniform that has never known stains of blood nor speck of dust—that has, in fact, no value but its sartorial price. It is the frayed and blood-stained article to which we do homage. It is possible to keep a virgin soul through removing all conceivable temptations, as it is possible to keep a gorgeous uniform in silver paper and cotton wool from any tarnishing of its gold lace; but that is hardly the primary idea of it. We are here surely to fight and conquer, no matter how many times we may first have to fight and fall. So much the greater joy and thankfulness when we win through at last! We are told that "There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over the ninety-and-nine who need no repentance." This repenting sinner who adds so much to the happiness of heaven may have been a "victim or a tyrant," a reformed rake or a repentant harlot, but surely no loving mother need regret having brought into the world one who has added to the joys of heaven. We cannot measure the infinite with our little tape measures. We do not even know what are evil experiences. We do not even know what true innocence means and comprehends. We may be sure that it is not merely a negative quality. In the white light of eternity which one of us can plead our innocence or boast of our virgin souls? "Not one of us is omniscient—not even the youngest," was one of Jowett's crushing ironies. "Not one of us is absolutely innocent—not even the youngest and most virgin soul on earth" is probably axiomatic, viewed from higher planes of spirituality. So when our Lord put that little child in the midst of His disciples, surely He meant to teach them that they should come forth from their life experiences as simple and child-like in faith and trust and capacity for love as the little untried child who had yet to confront and fight his battles in the school of life, but meanwhile was very near to the kingdom of heaven. He could not possibly have meant to infer that the door of heaven could only open to undeveloped souls. If this were the case—if the earth experiences and discipline are absolutely valueless, why send us here at all? And what a magnificent philanthropist Herod and his followers must have been!

Life is a battlefield—not a crèche where mothers can sit in sensuous delight, dandling the virgin souls of their conception—the noblest mothers will be the first to give their children to the conflict—moral or physical—looking on with tears or even dry-eyed misery sometimes, but with prayers ever on their lips for victory, and eyes ever fixed on those celestial heights where the green pastures await the weary warrior—not the untried, virgin soul. What matter when or where the happy warrior won his spurs—in a past life, in this present life, or in a life beyond this? He has fought and conquered. In those happy realms there are no "aged pilgrims scarred and seamed by evil experience."

As a matter of fact, most of us have known little virgin souls indulge in such paroxysms of rage as might well wreck their careers later, were it not for the discipline of life.

These are all shadows of our earth lives. When the Day of Realisation dawns and the shadows flee away, we shall think less of the methods of our education and more of the glorious results.

HYPNOTISM AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

By W. R. MATTESON.

Great as is the value of hypnotism in therapeutics and as a subject of scientific study, that value is surely exalted to its highest when we find in hypnotism a factor in the elucidation of the greatest of all questions—that of the existence of the soul. It can do much towards bringing us to a rational understanding of the soul and its functions upon super-terrestrial planes, and this naturally, because it is independent of the usual limitations that are present with psychical investigation through inductive methods.

To convince the man in the street that there is something apart from the known order of things physical—some state of being outside the realm of his comprehension—is impossible while he is strictly confined within the limitation of his physical state, and his dogmatic explanation of all psychical phenomena by trickery andlegerdemain is the logical outcome of physical reasoning, with the inevitable sequence that he cannot even believe what he hears, because the reasons necessary to his conversion to a wider truth are foreign to him.

The advancement in the search for truth and the fundamental conception of the existence of the soul and its triumph over death does not rest with proof, however great and however convincing it may appear to the already convinced, because proof suggests something outside and exterior to the person concerned. It is in the all-important conversion from one state of reasoning to another, which is an internal process, an unfolding of spiritual perception, knowing without the aid of reason, the birth of intelligence as contrasted with intellect. This inner realisation comes to all when they are ready to receive it, and does not always depend upon psychical investigation to give it birth, but is very often brought about in the most simple way imaginable; to some it comes by a chance word in conversation, to others by a great sorrow in life. This is the awakening—a necessary step in the process of evolution.

This conversion may be likened to a definite stage in hypnosis, wherein the subject exchanges one state of consciousness for another. Thus, the hypnotic subject perceives a garland of flowers where to physical perception only bricks and mortar stand. Hallucination is but a function of the creative powers within to mould environment from the plane of thought, the character of the things perceived being conditioned by moral worth. Can this be understood in terms of a heightening of the physical faculties—faculties limited by the amount of experience and education, *i.e.*, by impression made upon them from without? There is something greater at work, and that something is the soul. Although this seems difficult to explain in words, it is really a simple matter.

What we perceive in the deep stages of hypnosis is a manifestation of soul projection, wherein the soul animates the body from without, lacking reason and discrimination as physical attributes, and showing a mode of consciousness of fourth dimensional functioning. This may become more clear by the account of the following experiment, one of a series carried out a few years ago.

The subject is seated, and by suitable suggestion passes into a light sleep, which is increased in intensity according to the degree of susceptibility shown. The eyes are bandaged to the satisfaction of all present, and the subject is ready for the experiment. Taking a pack of ordinary playing cards, I hand them to the company present for examination, and request that one card should be retained unknown to the subject. I then explain to the company that the experiment consists in the detection of the card selected. The cards are now handed to the subject, with the exception of the one selected, with the request that the impressions received through the sense of touch should be given to the company. The suggestion invariably given

was to the effect that all the cards were the same. I suggest strongly that this is so, but at the same time I suggest further that I have in my possession a special card which, while having something in common with the other cards, is just three times the thickness of those previously examined. This suggestion being enforced, the subject acquiesces in the statement that the thick card can easily be detected from the others. The card is withdrawn and placed in the pack and shuffled to the satisfaction of all. The whole pack is now handed to the subject, with the request that the thick one should be picked out from the rest. This is generally successful, and failings can nearly always be traced to the incompleteness of the hypnotic condition.

Although only a simple experiment, I am of opinion that it holds some amount of interest in psychical research and questions concerning proofs for the existence of the soul.

In the first place, can this experiment be paralleled in normal consciousness, or, in other words, by one who is consciously residing upon the physical plane? We feel we must say no. Length, breadth, thickness, &c., are applicable only to the physical senses, and perception of difference can only be possible where difference is, for example, between paper and cardboard. Heightening of the faculties may quicken perception to the most minute variations, but can it explain the perception of difference where none is supposed to exist? This must inevitably lead us to the conclusion that there is a state of consciousness which functions apart from the physical brain and can create difference or diversity of objects by the creative will perceiving without that which is reflected from within.

THE "CHERITON GHOST."

It is the custom for the newspapers to pass quickly from one topic to another, and the subject of the "disturbances" at Cheriton died out suddenly. But that, as it seems to have surprised many people to learn, did not imply that they had really come to an end. They continued after the Press lost interest in them and the boy labourer who was fondly supposed by some persons to have been the culprit had retired from the scene. We learn from a correspondent that the manifestations were resumed when the builder returned to his work. Our informant writes:—

The last of all seems to me to be the best. When the concrete had been newly laid in position and faced up, the place was locked up for the night. In the morning all the larger rocks were found carefully abstracted from the floor and placed higgledy-piggledy on the top.

The work was broken up and re-laid, with a similar result the next evening—the only difference being that the tenant in possession took a little more care and left the stones in two tidy heaps.

In the morning several people tried placing the rocks back into their holes, and they were calmly rolled out again and had to be finally kept in position with boards.

We have heard with regret that Mr. W. Tudor Pole and Mr. Percy R. Street (both serving with the colours abroad) have been wounded. We have no particulars, and have reason to hope that in neither case is the injury serious.

ALCHEMY.—The "Sunday Times," in extracts from its issue of January 6th, 1828 ("Ninety Years Ago"), gives the following: "It will scarcely be credited that there are one hundred persons in London busily employed in wasting their time in trying to discover the philosopher's stone—that is, to commute (*sic*) metals into gold." But even to-day alchemy has not quite died out, and we have heard at least one capable electrical expert talk in a sanguine way of the possibilities of transmutation on modern scientific lines.

Mr. PETER TROLOVE, of Christchurch, New Zealand, writes appreciatively of the article, "A Great Message," from the pen of our contributor "Joy," which appeared in *LIGHT* of August 25th last. He tells us that he printed five hundred leaflet copies of this article which he has distributed amongst bereaved parents, the clergy and others. Mr. Trolove is to be complimented on his public spirit. Referring to the leading article, "Points of View," in our issue of September 8th, Mr. Trolove writes: "I am quite in agreement with your views. I recognise the futility of unbalanced enthusiasm, but who can tell the far-reaching effects of a judicious word here and there and a little unobtrusive seed-sowing?"

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MEDITATIONS AND ADVENTURES.

CONCERNING THREE NEW BOOKS.

Three of the last new books, all significant of the trend of latter-day thought, strike us as representing in a rough way a kind of trilogy. There is a certain sequence about the three, and we fancifully classified them as the Normal, the Abnormal, the Supernormal, or as severally representing the Realist, the Dreamer, the Idealist. It is quite likely that some would quarrel with such a classification, and we admit at once that it is rather arbitrary and imperfect, but it will serve a temporary need.

We take first, in the order chosen, "Mountain Meditations," by Miss L. Lind-af-Hageby (Allen and Unwin, 4s. 6d. net). Here we have the reflections of a mind of clear intelligence, viewing life, literally as well as metaphorically, from a mountain height. Miss Lind, as she tells us, belongs to the "great and mystic brotherhood of mountain worshippers," and the opening essay, "Mountain Tops," finely develops the theme. Her "study window" was the casement of her Swiss chalet, and although seized, like the Roman poet, with a divine madness—as the effect of height and air and Alpine splendour—her "delirium of mountain joy" is distilled for us in sane fashion. The emotions are passed through the crucible of a mind finely attuned both to the inner and the outer side of things. There are many literary allusions—poets, sages and hermits of the mountain life are quoted and discussed—but through all the author reveals her own mind and records her own views and impressions, with many bright, imaginative and original touches.

Naturally that portion of the book which will have the most direct appeal to followers of our own subjects is the essay on "The Borderland," in which the issues of Spiritualism and Psychical Research are handled with vigour, insight, and that sympathy which is always so valuable when, as in this case, it is allied to a clear, intellectual perception of the question. Here are some passages which reflect the spirit of the essay, and, indeed, of the whole book:—

The dull materialism which smothers all signs of independent spiritual experience is the negation of all the forces which animated the Master. The earthly life of Christ, with its supernatural manifestations, its miracles and its wonders, was the supreme demonstration of the Spiritualistic conception of the power of transcending matter. The appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, whether regarded

as a vision or as a materialisation, was of the order of the phenomena which are now banned as anti-Christian. . . .

Here in the freedom of the mountains I feel something of the inscrutable certainty, the joy of a secret conviction that wisdom waits on our tortuous paths in the Borderland.

We take next "Gone West: Three Narratives of After-Death Experiences," as communicated to the author, J. S. M. Ward, B.A., who is described as late Scholar and Prizeman of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Notwithstanding this *imprimatur* of scholarship, the book is evidently one that the orthodox reviewer would class at once amongst Charles Lamb's *biblia a-biblia*—"books which are no books." But it will have (and, indeed, has) a wide appeal to that growing circle of readers which has outgrown the old limits of conventional thought. True, the strange descriptions it conveys of the life beyond will give pause to many even amongst those who have accepted psychical evidences. They are "unverifiable matter." The accounts, even if accepted, will in some quarters invite the description "subjective." That will not entirely discount them for some of us who have begun to wonder how far our life experiences here may not come under the same description. True, when we check the facts with each other we find agreement and thus corroboration of some grade of reality. But the same thing might be equally true amongst those on a certain level in that world of psychic experience which to us appears to be subjective or even illusory.

Mr. Ward's book is divided into three parts, dealing first with "the Lowest Division of the Spirit Plane," next with the after-life and experiences of a "man of evil character, described as 'The Officer,'" and finally we have W. A.'s account of "The Astral Plane." The information was gained by visions, trance conversation and automatic writings. The author, in a preface marked by an admirable frankness and simplicity, gives us the story of the genesis of the communications. They were due, he says, to the desire of H. J. L. (a departed friend) to convey to him an account of life beyond the grave. He tells us, amongst other things, that the visions contained "veridical" facts entirely unknown to him, which proved to be true on investigation. The communications, so far as they deal with general issues, are clear, reasonable and consistent enough. But the descriptions of life in the lower spheres have something of a nightmare quality—it may be even so in reality! They are strange, gruesome, repellent; they make large draughts on our powers of belief. They may be true enough in their order. The experiences of the darkened soul may be, and doubtless are, only illusory when regarded from higher states of perception. In going through the book we were occasionally struck with passages consistent with many statements from other psychic sources. Here is an extract from the story of "The Officer"; it has a significance that will be apparent to all initiated students of our subject:—

The demons created by the imagination of men fade as the men who have created them, by thinking of them, move on; but, unfortunately, they are always being recreated by other men. Some persons do quite a lot towards peopling hell with devils. While there they torment, as we have been taught to believe they would. Those who have not been taught about them don't see them.

There is a whole philosophy in that last sentence! It is, as we have indicated, a challenging book, calculated to infuriate some of those who do not stop to think over a new idea, especially one which is more than usually unattractive. And this will apply to some of those who have knowledge of psychic facts. For ourselves, we found in it curiously interesting passages, ideas full of suggestion, and things of evidential value. But there is always something difficult and elusive in judging accounts of an order of life

of which normally we have no experience, and which puts into physical terms things which clearly lie outside the physical order. It is distinctly a book concerning which there can at present be little community of opinion (except on the question of its moral teaching, which is exemplary). We lack all criteria of judgment except that of the agreement of witnesses. And the witnesses are sometimes very much at variance unless on certain fundamental questions on which there is, as we know, a general consistency.

We have left ourselves little space to deal with the last of the trio of books, "The Adventure Beautiful," by Lilian Whiting (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, Mass.). But the thousands who have read Miss Whiting's previous books, such as "After Her Death," "The World Beautiful," and "The Spiritual Significance," need only to be told that this book is infused with the same spirit of ideality and sweet reasonableness. It is a fine blend of insight, devotion, revelation and practicality, the last mentioned quality exemplified in records of psychical experiences. Miss Whiting draws on some rich veins of religious, philosophic and scientific literature. There are many fine quotations in prose and poetry, and some passages in her book recall the description of a "Boston Herald" reviewer concerning her volume of verses as being "like a bit of sunlight landscape on a May morning."

A GENERATION AGO.

(FROM "LIGHT" OF JANUARY 14TH, 1888.)

The St. Alban's, Holborn, Parish Magazine for the current month is devoted to accounts of the circumstances of the death and funeral of the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, so long and so well known in connection with St. Alban's Church, Holborn. Of his most self-sacrificing and blameless life and strange, sad death in the snowdrift amid the Scottish mountains it is needless to say anything here; but the following passage from a letter of the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles at p. 16 of the Magazine will have interest for the readers of LIGHT: "We cannot tell for certain when he breathed his last, but a thing happened which I think may give a clue. About a quarter to twelve on that terrible Thursday night, while J. W. was at his prayers in his Glencoe lodgings, he suddenly felt conscious of a presence in the room, and, looking up, he saw something white pass before him. . . . I should mention that at that time he knew nothing of our anxiety. A quarter to twelve would have given our dear friend about six hours or more of utter darkness and bewilderment, and on such a night this would have been about as much as any strong man could have endured."

[This issue of LIGHT also contains a long letter from Mr. H. Eglinton, father of the famous medium, Mr. Wm. Eglinton, to the Hon. Alexander Aksakoff, giving an account of some striking manifestations of the younger Eglinton's mediumistic powers. The letter concludes as follows: "For fourteen years I have carefully, critically, and constantly examined these phenomena in the home circle, under the most favourable circumstances, never once allowing my feelings as a father to warp my judgment in an impartial criticism of my son's powers; and I have no hesitation in affirming the phenomena to be true and only explainable by the theories propounded by the Spiritualists."]

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"RAYMOND" RE-STUDIED.

ADDRESS BY ELLIS T. POWELL, LL.B., D.Sc.

(Continued from page 6.)

If we accept the survival of Raymond as a working hypothesis, then, to paraphrase Huxley's words, "either it will prove its capacity to elucidate the facts of personal survival, or it will break down under the strain." My view (and compared with Sir Oliver, writing of his own son, I am a mere outsider) is that the records of the Raymond investigations, used as the basis of the hypothesis of Raymond's survival, do prove their capacity to elucidate the facts of personal survival, and that they do not break down under the strain. That was also the view of the late distinguished lawyer, Lord Dewar, speaking simply as a lawyer and with no prepossession in favour of Sir Oliver's feelings. For these records show, up to the point where any alternative hypothesis becomes impossible, that although the bodily presence of Raymond Lodge has vanished from the earth, there is an existent intelligence which remembers Raymond's earth-life, can still recall its incidents and still maintain its affections, and which can enter into communication both with those who have passed on and those who remain here.

Above and beyond the evidences of identity, the book is literally crammed with touches of the kind which have been called undesigned coincidences. That is to say, it abounds in passages where the communicating intelligence conveys glimpses of the life beyond, often as *obiter dicta*, or mere "asides," and yet these are found to agree in nearly every detail with knowledge derived from other psychic sources. This general consistency of statement with regard to existent conditions on the other side is one of the most remarkable, as it is one of the most encouraging, of the phenomena with which psychic researchers come in contact. For instance, at the beginning of his experiences Raymond says:—

"I have met hundreds of friends. I don't know them all." (Page 98.)

And the control adds:—

"There was confusion at first. He could not get his bearings, didn't seem to know where he was." (Page 99.)

Again, with regard to one of the most frequent and familiar paradoxes that come to us from the other plane:—

"You do not feel so real as people do where he is, and walls appear transparent to him now (p. 183) . . . things appear so solid and substantial . . . it was only for a second or two, as you count time, that it seemed a shadowy vague place (p. 184). He doesn't understand how it looks so solid." (P. 193.)

And out of this confusion of thought springs the doubt about being dead at all—the so-called "dead" ridicule the idea that they are so.

"It's awful when they have passed over and won't believe it for weeks: they just think they are dreaming (p. 202). They don't believe they have passed on (p. 127). They do not know where they are, nor why they are there (p. 127). It is so hard for them when they see us and they feel alive, and their people keep on sobbing."

Still another passage is the solution of a problem which puzzles and troubles many a bereaved heart which has the courage to inquire what has happened to the *spirit* body when the physical frame was shattered by a bomb—

"When anybody's blown to pieces it takes some time for the spirit body to complete itself, to gather itself all in and to be complete . . . The *spirit* isn't blown apart, of course . . . but it has an effect upon it (p. 195) . . . People should not be cremated for seven days" (p. 196),

because, as I was told years ago by spirit intelligences, the cremation process too soon after death frequently inflicts a violent shock on the spirit, as it precipitates too violently the final stages of the separation of the spirit from the body, which ought to be left to take their normal course and not forcibly accelerated.

But the conditions, if strange at first, soon begin to be appreciated, and then comes a glad awakening to their interest and promise—

"It isn't a dismal hole like people think," he says to his mother (p. 120). Life there is "going to be fifty times more interesting than on the earth plane." Doubtless the quickened interest is in some degree due to the widened scope of every faculty—in Rupert Brooke's paradoxical words we shall—

"Learn all we lacked before, hear, know and say,
What this tumultuous body now denies,
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away,
And see, no longer blinded by our eyes."

As another example of the statements consistent with testimony from other psychic sources, Dr. Powell quoted Raymond's remark:—

"There don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane: they don't have them here" (p. 197). This passage is so completely in accord with what we know from other such testimony, and yet was in itself so startling, that if it stood alone it would go far to establish the genuineness of communication.

Proceeding, Dr. Powell said:—

It was in the course of a sitting of Sir Oliver Lodge and Mrs. Leonard on December 3rd, 1915, that there occurred an episode which has been the subject of a great deal of criticism at once caustic and ill-founded on the part of Sir Oliver's reviewers. Let us have the passage in full before we consider it.

"People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap [that is, on the other side] came over the other day who *would* have a cigar. 'That's finished them,' he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He didn't try one himself, because he didn't care to; you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether, and now he doesn't look at one. They don't seem to get the same satisfaction out of it, so gradually it seems to drop from them. But when they first come they do want things. Some want meat and some strong drink; they call for whisky sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. But when they have had one or two, they don't seem to want it so much—not those that are near here. He has heard of drunkards who want it for months and years over here, but he hasn't seen any. Those I have seen, he says, don't want it any more—like himself with his suit, he could dispense with it under the new conditions. He wants people to realise that it's just as natural as on the earth-plane."

In some of the insulting criticisms of the book—criticisms which Sir Oliver Lodge has rightly ignored, since they were obviously the work of people without a scintilla of technical knowledge—the idea that a spirit would call for whisky sodas seems to have been regarded as stamping the whole book with the brand of fraud. The truth is that such passages demonstrate the absolute honesty of the writer—partly because their inclusion evidences his candour and his resolution to suppress no fact, however awkward at first sight it may appear, and partly because the passages themselves are in complete accord with the experimental knowledge of psychic investigators themselves. To begin with, transition to another plane involves no change in the habits or propensities of the individual. They remain just the same. But inasmuch as the animal instincts and propensities depend upon physical functions for their satisfaction, they are incapable of exercise on a plane where the physical frame no longer persists. That is to say, the desires are perpetuated without the means of gratification: and that is all the Hell which really exists in our universe. To have depended upon animalism, in one shape or another, for the pleasures of existence, and then to find oneself in a sphere where there remains only the memory of past indulgence and the propensity, hopelessly frustrated by the conditions, for its repetition—that is Hell. In that striking New Testament picture of *post-mortem* conditions, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, there is this craving for the unattainable portrayed or prefigured in the request that Lazarus shall be sent to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool the parched tongue. In these facts lies the reason why several of the great religions—Christianity is a conspicuous instance—have urged upon man the desirability, in his own interest, of mortifying his physical members, so that he shall not carry with him, into another sphere, an animalism which is impossible of gratification. But these ideal conditions are only attained in some of the most exalted spirits of our race; and therefore with many of us—and especially with lads cut off in the first flush of youth, before the experience of life has meliorated their natural physical ebullitions—there is a passion for indulgences inconsistent with the environment. I have myself heard the cry for drink uttered by a spirit who managed to get through in a direct-voice séance. And there is a case recorded, I think, by Dale Owen of a hospital nurse of indifferent character, who manifested in a very irreverent circle made up of medical students, and whose utterances were such that even their seasoned humour boggled at it and they hastily terminated the proceedings.

As the want of a cigar is a comparatively harmless craving,

it is easy to understand why the denizens of the other plane endeavoured to supply it in the case which Raymond puts on record. But as for their ability to do it, I should have thought that the fabrication of a cigar, recognisable by spirit faculty, was at least as easy a task as the production, one after another, of the lifelike figures in a materialisation séance.

Their utter unfamiliarity with the subject is the only excuse which can be urged for Sir Oliver Lodge's jesting reviewers. Ignorance is the mother of cheap ridicule—aye, and sometimes of more serious, though equally baseless, criticism. Years ago, a distinguished but eccentric journalist was appointed to the editorship of a leading daily newspaper. He decided upon an out-and-out reorganisation of every department. To begin with, he sent for the City editor, one of the heads of his profession, and pointed out to him that all the Stock Exchange securities were quoted by means of a double price. Consols (this is a good while ago) were 89½, 89¾, and certain shares were 18s. 6d. to 19s. 6d. "In future," said the new editor, "I shall only have a single price quoted for Stock Exchange securities. This double price is a palpable absurdity, since there cannot be two quotations in the same market for the same security." The critic did not possess sufficient experience to tell him that unless there are two prices in the same market for the same article, dealings will come to an end. When a jobber quotes a share at 18s. 6d. or 19s. 6d. he means that he will buy at 18s. 6d. and sell at 19s. 6d., and the difference is his means of livelihood; just as your provision dealer will buy butter at 1s. 6d. and sell it at 2s. 6d., living on the difference. Compel him to buy at 1s. 6d. and sell at the same price, and he will promptly retire from so unprofitable a business. Yet that simple economic fact was as unknown to the fervid critic of the City editor as are the elementary principles of psychic science to some of those who rush in for the purpose of demolishing Sir Oliver Lodge. The history of scientific advance is a pathway strewn with the bleached bones of ignorant critics; and I think Sir Oliver Lodge (in spite of his pathetic references to the short time which yet remains to him) may live long enough to see more than one skeleton added to the pile.

After dealing with the statements made by Raymond regarding the psychic realm as being built up from the finer essences of this world, which also agrees with statements to the like effect (but not yet satisfactorily analysed and substantiated) from other psychic sources, Dr. Powell passed on to the story of Raymond's presence in the family circle at Marimont at Christmas, already quoted in *LIGHT* (22nd ult.), and concluded:—

I am not going too far when I say that in the history of psychic science "Raymond" is destined to hold a place equivalent in honour to that occupied by Darwin's masterpiece, "The Origin of Species," among the intellectual achievements of the nineteenth century. The theories put forth in that immortal work by the greatest scientist the world has thus far ever known have revolutionised our entire outlook upon Nature—in fact, there is no department of knowledge which has not been lighted up by the principle of evolution by natural selection, first definitely and publicly enunciated in Darwin's "Origin of Species," contemporaneously with its private apprehension by Alfred Russel Wallace, himself a scientist of the first calibre, and himself, let us say with pride, a convinced believer in the reality of psychic science. Time has placed the Darwinian hypothesis amongst the foundations of Science and Religion, and will do the same for the principles expounded by Sir Oliver Lodge in "Raymond," and that, unless I am greatly mistaken, in a much shorter period than it took to justify Darwin. (Applause.)

On the motion of THE CHAIRMAN, seconded by Dr. ABRAHAM WALLACE, a cordial vote of thanks was given to Dr. Powell, and the proceedings terminated.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE STAGE.

Mr. Ernest Meads, who is not only well known in psychic circles but has won a reputation in the dramatic world as a Shakespearian reciter and actor, gave an address on the above subject on a recent Sunday at the Playgoers' Club. In the course of his remarks, which were listened to by a deeply interested audience, Mr. Meads related striking examples of psychic experiences connected with the players and playwrights of the past, notably Grimaldi and William Wycherley. On the philosophical side of his subject Mr. Meads discoursed of inspiration—the artist's dependence on an interior world for his flashes of inspiration and the perfect portrayal of the characters he assumed. His observations on the psychic side of theatrical art were highly suggestive as coinciding with the experience of some great actors.

"THE HOLY THORN."

A STUDY IN CELTIC MYSTICISM.

BY MELCHIOR MACBRIDE

(Author of "The Story of Glastonbury and the Grail" or "The Light of Avalon," "A Message from the Gods," &c.)

So far this staff hath served me well, but now,
All hard, and brown and dry, I'll plant it here;
For here in Brythton have we found a home
And shelter in the Vale of Avalon.
A gift from Jesus Christ our Lord to me,
It is the symbol of that mighty Power
Which pours through all who put their trust in Him.
That Power to Brythton now, behold, I give;
And, while the word of Everlasting Truth
With any in this blessed land abides,—
To give a promise of the Joy to be
When Christ on earth His Heavenly Bride shall wed,—
That rod shall blossom bear and pure white flowers
Between the dying old year and the new:
For Great the Light when New Truth stirs the old;
But Greater It shall be when both are One.*

So spake Joseph of Arimathea when he planted his staff at Glastonbury; and now, when the Anglo-Celtic people have returned to the Land of the Thorn to liberate Jerusalem from the servitude in which for so many centuries she has groaned, the Thorn-tree is once more in blossom at Glastonbury.

Every year since the days of Joseph of Arimathea the same "miracle" has happened.

When the Roman legions came by way of Bath to the Vale of Avalon they gazed with wonder on the mystery of the winter Thorn; and they changed their religion for the teaching of the old Church at Glastonbury.

When the Germanic barbarians broke up the civilisation of the Roman Empire, and pagan Anglo-Saxons swept down upon the culture of the Land of Avalon, they also found the Thorn-tree at Glastonbury blossoming in the depths of the wintry night.

When King Arthur reigned in the Land of Avalon, and the first Order of Chivalry of which we have any record in the Western World was formed, the Knights of the Round Table rode forth on their missions from the shelter of the Thorn; and it was ever unto that shelter after their missions were accomplished that they longed to return.

When St. Augustine brought the strange teachings of the Church of Rome to that branch of the ancient Celtic Church which had already been established for many centuries at Canterbury, the Thorn-tree still continued to blossom as before in the Land of Avalon.

Year by year it whispered its message to men concerning the true teaching of the old Church at Glastonbury; year by year it whispered to men at Christmas-time of its home on the far-off hills of Judea; year by year the spirit of the Thorn moved the hearts of men at Christmas-time to remember that the hills and valleys of its native land were trodden down beneath alien feet, that Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives from which it came were still held in bondage by an alien race.

The Norman Conquest came and swept over the land: westward flowed the invaders until they reached the Land of Avalon; and then, after they had looked upon the Thorn, their eyes, too, in turn followed the gaze of the Saxons and Celts and were directed toward the land of Palestine, whence came the Thorn.

So, gradually, in the dark ages of Germanic barbarism and Latin Christianity a great Light appeared. Men's hearts were set on fire by a great desire, their actions were directed by a great resolution; for they had heard the call of the old Church at Glastonbury and had determined to liberate the Land of the Thorn.

A single purpose ran like fire through the length and breadth of Western Christendom. Peer and peasant united as never before. The springs of every great mystic teaching

began to flow anew. And, as men's hearts turned toward the earthly Jerusalem, so their hearts began to turn toward the City of God within. The Holy Sepulchre on the physical plane became a symbol of their search for the Holy Grail in the realms of the soul.

As it was an empty sepulchre for which they fought on the physical plane, so it was an empty receptacle for which they fought on the spiritual plane. On the physical plane they fought for an empty sepulchre because of that which it had contained; but on the spiritual plane they fought for an empty receptacle because of that which it might yet be prepared to contain, even though it were buried deep in rubbish when found.

And for a time it seemed as though the quest on both planes would succeed. Jerusalem was taken from the Turks on July 15th, 1099, and men's hopes ran high.

Thus arose the celebrated Order of Knight Templars—true Crusaders and Guardians of the Holy Sepulchre on the physical plane, and true seekers after the Holy Grail on the spiritual plane. True Children of the Thorn were they, and worthy so to be remembered by us for all time.

In them the Light of Avalon dwelt awhile and found a home. And it is not to be wondered at that all such movements eventually incurred the hostility of the Church of Rome; for behind every mystic movement in the Western world has stood the old Church at Glastonbury—the Mother Church in all the world—founded by direct command of the Master Himself, and founded many years before Peter founded another Church at Rome.

But, alas, Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin in the year 1187, the Mongol Tartars in their turn took it from the Saracens in 1244, and the Latin Kingdom in Palestine finally came to an end in 1291.

So the Thorn completed its first day's work; its day of approximately one thousand years. The Great Light of Avalon, which had prevailed over Roman conquerors and northern barbarians and over the barbarism of Latin Christianity, now gave birth by means of the Crusades to the Revival of Learning in Europe and to all true humanitarian progress since those days.

And now, to-day, on the hills of Judea, our troops may from time to time catch sight of a flowering Thorn, and wonder why the Thorn-tree should blossom at such a strange season in Palestine. For all the world has heard this Christmas-tide that the city of Jerusalem has once more been delivered from the blighting influence of the Turk, never more to be trodden under alien feet.

Mysterious, indeed, is the nature of the Holy Thorn. Those who believe in it and who love it, may transplant it and carry it far away from its Glastonbury home; it always flowers at Christmas-time with them.

But let it be transplanted to the garden of one who has never seen the Holy Thorn in blossom at Glastonbury—as white as snow on Christmas Day—and who does not really believe, both consciously and subconsciously, in the power of the Thorn to blossom in this manner—then unto him the Thorn renders a return even according to the manner in which he has inwardly expected and believed.

For the Thorn is very sensitive to atmosphere; and before all things it demands faith and love. The same tree that has flowered successfully in an atmosphere which is spiritually congenial, may refuse to flower in an atmosphere where faith and love are lacking, even though the physical conditions of the environment appear to be much more favourable.

Many years ago I knew an old botanist who yearly went on Christmas Day to see if a Glastonbury Thorn at the farther end of his somewhat extensive garden was in blossom. He never found it in blossom; and I soon came to know that he never expected to; he only wanted to be able to declare for another year that there was something wrong with his tree or with the Glastonbury Legends after all.

There was, of course, something wrong; but the error lay neither in the legends nor in the tree, but in himself.

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As another example of the statements consistent with testimony from other psychic sources, Dr. Powell quoted Raymond's remark:—

"There don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane: they don't have them here" (p. 197). This passage is so completely in accord with what we know from other such testimony, and yet was in itself so startling, that if it stood alone it would go far to establish the genuineness of communication.

Proceeding, Dr. Powell said:—

It was in the course of a sitting of Sir Oliver Lodge and Mrs. Leonard on December 3rd, 1915, that there occurred an episode which has been the subject of a great deal of criticism at once caustic and ill-founded on the part of Sir Oliver's reviewers. Let us have the passage in full before we consider it.

"People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap [that is, on the other side] came over the other day who would have a cigar. 'That's finished them,' he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He didn't try one himself, because he didn't care to; you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether, and now he doesn't look at one. They don't seem to get the same satisfaction out of it, so gradually it seems to drop from them. But when they first come they do want things. Some want meat and some strong drink; they call for whisky sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. But when they have had one or two, they don't seem to want it so much—not those that are near here. He has heard of drunkards who want it for months and years over here, but he hasn't seen any. Those I have seen, he says, don't want it any more—like himself with his suit, he could dispense with it under the new conditions. He wants people to realise that it's just as natural as on the earth-plane."

In some of the insulting criticisms of the book—criticisms which Sir Oliver Lodge has rightly ignored, since they were obviously the work of people without a scintilla of technical knowledge—the idea that a spirit would call for whisky sodas seems to have been regarded as stamping the whole book with the brand of fraud. The truth is that such passages demonstrate the absolute honesty of the writer—partly because their inclusion evidences his candour and his resolution to suppress no fact, however awkward at first sight it may appear, and partly because the passages themselves are in complete accord with the experimental knowledge of psychic investigators themselves. To begin with, transition to another plane involves no change in the habits or propensities of the individual. They remain just the same. But inasmuch as the animal instincts and propensities depend upon physical functions for their satisfaction, they are incapable of exercise on a plane where the physical frame no longer persists. That is to say, the desires are perpetuated without the means of gratification: and that is all the Hell which really exists in our universe. To have depended upon animalism, in one shape or another, for the pleasures of existence, and then to find oneself in a sphere where there remains only the memory of past indulgence and the propensity, hopelessly frustrated by the conditions, for its repetition—that is Hell. In that striking New Testament picture of *post-mortem* conditions, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, there is this craving for the unattainable portrayed or prefigured in the request that Lazarus shall be sent to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool the parched tongue. In these facts lies the reason why several of the great religions—Christianity is a conspicuous instance—have urged upon man the desirability, in his own interest, of mortifying his physical members, so that he shall not carry with him, into another sphere, an animalism which is impossible of gratification. But these ideal conditions are only attained in some of the most exalted spirits of our race; and therefore with many of us—and especially with lads cut off in the first flush of youth, before the experience of life has mellowed their natural physical ebullitions—there is a passion for indulgences inconsistent with the environment. I have myself heard the cry for drink uttered by a spirit who managed to get through in a direct-voice séance. And there is a case recorded, I think, by Dale Owen of a hospital nurse of indifferent character, who manifested in a very irreverent circle made up of medical students, and whose utterances were such that even their seasoned humour boggled at it and they hastily terminated the proceedings.

As the want of a cigar is a comparatively harmless craving,

it is easy to understand why the denizens of the other plane endeavoured to supply it in the case which Raymond puts on record. But as for their ability to do it, I should have thought that the fabrication of a cigar, recognisable by spirit faculty, was at least as easy a task as the production, one after another, of the lifelike figures in a materialisation séance.

Their utter unfamiliarity with the subject is the only excuse which can be urged for Sir Oliver Lodge's jesting reviewers. Ignorance is the mother of cheap ridicule—aye, and sometimes of more serious, though equally baseless, criticism. Years ago, a distinguished but eccentric journalist was appointed to the editorship of a leading daily newspaper. He decided upon an out-and-out reorganisation of every department. To begin with, he sent for the City editor, one of the heads of his profession, and pointed out to him that all the Stock Exchange securities were quoted by means of a double price. Consols (this is a good while ago) were 89½, 89¾, and certain shares were 18s. 6d. to 19s. 6d. "In future," said the new editor, "I shall only have a single price quoted for Stock Exchange securities. This double price is a palpable absurdity, since there cannot be two quotations in the same market for the same security." The critic did not possess sufficient experience to tell him that unless there are two prices in the same market for the same article, dealings will come to an end. When a jobber quotes a share at 18s. 6d. or 19s. 6d., he means that he will buy at 18s. 6d. and sell at 19s. 6d., and the difference is his means of livelihood; just as your provision dealer will buy butter at 1s. 6d. and sell it at 2s. 6d., living on the difference. Compel him to buy at 1s. 6d. and sell at the same price, and he will promptly retire from so unprofitable a business. Yet that simple economic fact was as unknown to the fervid critic of the City editor as are the elementary principles of psychic science to some of those who rush in for the purpose of demolishing Sir Oliver Lodge. The history of scientific advance is a pathway strewn with the bleached bones of ignorant critics; and I think Sir Oliver Lodge (in spite of his pathetic references to the short time which yet remains to him) may live long enough to see more than one skeleton added to the pile.

After dealing with the statements made by Raymond regarding the psychic realm as being built up from the finer essences of this world, which also agrees with statements to the like effect (but not yet satisfactorily analysed and substantiated) from other psychic sources, Dr. Powell passed on to the story of Raymond's presence in the family circle at Marie-mont at Christmas, already quoted in *LIGHT* (22nd ult.), and concluded:—

I am not going too far when I say that in the history of psychic science "Raymond" is destined to hold a place equivalent in honour to that occupied by Darwin's masterpiece, "*The Origin of Species*," among the intellectual achievements of the nineteenth century. The theories put forth in that immortal work by the greatest scientist the world has thus far ever known have revolutionised our entire outlook upon Nature—in fact, there is no department of knowledge which has not been lighted up by the principle of evolution by natural selection, first definitely and publicly enunciated in Darwin's "*Origin of Species*," contemporaneously with its private apprehension by Alfred Russel Wallace, himself a scientist of the first calibre, and himself, let us say with pride, a convinced believer in the reality of psychic science. Time has placed the Darwinian hypothesis amongst the foundations of Science and Religion, and will do the same for the principles expounded by Sir Oliver Lodge in "Raymond," and that, unless I am greatly mistaken, in a much shorter period than it took to justify Darwin. (Applause.)

On the motion of THE CHAIRMAN, seconded by DR. ABRAHAM WALLACE, a cordial vote of thanks was given to Dr. Powell, and the proceedings terminated.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE STAGE.

Mr. Ernest Meads, who is not only well known in psychic circles but has won a reputation in the dramatic world as a Shakespearian reciter and actor, gave an address on the above subject on a recent Sunday at the Playgoers' Club. In the course of his remarks, which were listened to by a deeply interested audience, Mr. Meads related striking examples of psychic experiences connected with the players and playwrights of the past, notably Grimaldi and William Wycherley. On the philosophical side of his subject Mr. Meads discoursed of inspiration—the artist's dependence on an interior world for his flashes of inspiration and the perfect portrayal of the characters he assumed. His observations on the psychic side of theatrical art were highly suggestive as coinciding with the experience of some great actors.

"THE HOLY THORN."

A STUDY IN CELTIC MYSTICISM.

BY MELCHIOR MACBRIDE

(Author of "The Story of Glastonbury and the Grail" or "The Light of Avalon," "A Message from the Gods," &c.)

So far this staff hath served me well, but now,
All hard, and brown and dry, I'll plant it here;
For here in Brython have we found a home
And shelter in the Vale of Avalon.
A gift from Jesus Christ our Lord to me,
It is the symbol of that mighty Power
Which pours through all who put their trust in Him.
That Power to Brython now, behold, I give;
And, while the word of Everlasting Truth
With any in this blessed land abides,—
To give a promise of the Joy to be
When Christ on earth His Heavenly Bride shall wed,—
That rod shall blossoms bear and pure white flowers
Between the dying old year and the new:
For Great the Light when New Truth stirs the old;
But Greater It shall be when both are One.*

So spake Joseph of Arimathea when he planted his staff at Glastonbury; and now, when the Anglo-Celtic people have returned to the Land of the Thorn to liberate Jerusalem from the servitude in which for so many centuries she has groaned, the Thorn-tree is once more in blossom at Glastonbury.

Every year since the days of Joseph of Arimathea the same "miracle" has happened.

When the Roman legions came by way of Bath to the Vale of Avalon they gazed with wonder on the mystery of the winter Thorn: and they changed their religion for the teaching of the old Church at Glastonbury.

When the Germanic barbarians broke up the civilisation of the Roman Empire, and pagan Anglo-Saxons swept down upon the culture of the Land of Avalon, they also found the Thorn-tree at Glastonbury blossoming in the depths of the wintry night.

When King Arthur reigned in the Land of Avalon, and the first Order of Chivalry of which we have any record in the Western World was formed, the Knights of the Round Table rode forth on their missions from the shelter of the Thorn; and it was ever unto that shelter after their missions were accomplished that they longed to return.

When St. Augustine brought the strange teachings of the Church of Rome to that branch of the ancient Celtic Church which had already been established for many centuries at Canterbury, the Thorn-tree still continued to blossom as before in the Land of Avalon.

Year by year it whispered its message to men concerning the true teaching of the old Church at Glastonbury; year by year it whispered to men at Christmas-time of its home on the far-off hills of Judea; year by year the spirit of the Thorn moved the hearts of men at Christmas-time to remember that the hills and valleys of its native land were trodden down beneath alien feet, that Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives from which it came were still held in bondage by an alien race.

The Norman Conquest came and swept over the land: westward flowed the invaders until they reached the Land of Avalon; and then, after they had looked upon the Thorn, their eyes, too, in turn followed the gaze of the Saxons and Celts and were directed toward the land of Palestine, whence came the Thorn.

So, gradually, in the dark ages of Germanic barbarism and Latin Christianity a great Light appeared. Men's hearts were set on fire by a great desire, their actions were directed by a great resolution; for they had heard the call of the old Church at Glastonbury and had determined to liberate the Land of the Thorn.

A single purpose ran like fire through the length and breadth of Western Christendom. Peer and peasant united as never before. The springs of every great mystic teaching

began to flow anew. And, as men's hearts turned toward the earthly Jerusalem, so their hearts began to turn toward the City of God within. The Holy Sepulchre on the physical plane became a symbol of their search for the Holy Grail in the realms of the soul.

As it was an empty sepulchre for which they fought on the physical plane, so it was an empty receptacle for which they fought on the spiritual plane. On the physical plane they fought for an empty sepulchre because of that which it had contained; but on the spiritual plane they fought for an empty receptacle because of that which it might yet be prepared to contain, even though it were buried deep in rubbish when found.

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But, alas, Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin in the year 1187, the Mongol Tartars in their turn took it from the Saracens in 1244, and the Latin Kingdom in Palestine finally came to an end in 1291.

So the Thorn completed its first day's work; its day of approximately one thousand years. The Great Light of Avalon, which had prevailed over Roman conquerors and northern barbarians and over the barbarism of Latin Christianity, now gave birth by means of the Crusades to the Revival of Learning in Europe and to all true humanitarian progress since those days.

And now, to-day, on the hills of Judea, our troops may from time to time catch sight of a flowering Thorn, and wonder why the Thorn-tree should blossom at such a strange season in Palestine. For all the world has heard this Christmas-tide that the city of Jerusalem has once more been delivered from the blighting influence of the Turk, never more to be trodden under alien feet.

Mysterious, indeed, is the nature of the Holy Thorn. Those who believe in it and who love it, may transplant it and carry it far away from its Glastonbury home; it always flowers at Christmas-time with them.

But let it be transplanted to the garden of one who has never seen the Holy Thorn in blossom at Glastonbury—as white as snow on Christmas Day—and who does not really believe, both consciously and subconsciously, in the power of the Thorn to blossom in this manner—then unto him the Thorn renders a return even according to the manner in which he has inwardly expected and believed.

For the Thorn is very sensitive to atmosphere; and before all things it demands faith and love. The same tree that has flowered successfully in an atmosphere which is spiritually congenial, may refuse to flower in an atmosphere where faith and love are lacking, even though the physical conditions of the environment appear to be much more favourable.

Many years ago I knew an old botanist who yearly went on Christmas Day to see if a Glastonbury Thorn at the farther end of his somewhat extensive garden was in blossom. He never found it in blossom; and I soon came to know that he never expected to; he only wanted to be able to declare for another year that there was something wrong with his tree or with the Glastonbury Legends after all.

There was, of course, something wrong; but the error lay neither in the legends nor in the tree, but in himself.

So, too, it may be that perhaps not one reader in a

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thousand really knows that the Holy Thorn does actually blossom, naturally, twice a year at Glastonbury—once in the ordinary season and again at Christmas-time, “between the dying old year and the new”—an event which the inhabitants of Glastonbury in their thousands, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, have witnessed since the days of Joseph of Arimathea.

When Cromwell visited the West of England he found a very ancient specimen growing on Wearyall Hill at Glastonbury. By grafting and inarching the original Thorn-tree had been perpetuated in and around the spot on which the staff of Joseph of Arimathea was actually planted. The veneration in which it was held by the local inhabitants was great.

And so enraged was Cromwell with the Thorn-tree for daring to blossom on Christmas Day and for becoming an object of such veneration, that he determined to destroy it and gave directions for the Thorn to be cut down. And it was cut down.

But still it was not destroyed! The spirit of the Thorn, which had kept men's hearts warm in the Vale of Avalon through all the vicissitudes of the dark ages, was stronger than any power which Cromwell could bring to bear against it: the spirit of the Thorn knew how to protect its host from Cromwell's iconoclastic fury.

One man lost his sight and one man cut his leg deeply over the transaction. And then, when the soldiers in savage fury flung the beautiful head of the Holy Thorn to the ground, all unnoticed by Cromwell a tiny string of unsevered bark held fast, and refused to break with the sudden strain.

As the head fell, this tiny string of bark, peeling itself free from the stump, ran down to the surface of the earth and then lay flat upon the soil, still continuing to connect the head of the Thorn with its living roots in the ground.

From the beheaded trunk the Holy Thorn could never renew itself, for the head had been severed below the graft; but connected with its roots by this single strand of bark for years and years afterwards, lying on the ground, the head of the Holy Thorn still continued to blossom at Christmas-time as before, “between the dying old year and the new,” to the wonder and admiration of the whole countryside.

From this tree grafts were taken; and, when in due course the Thorn-tree died, many flourishing specimens of the Holy Thorn had already been established in various parts of Glastonbury. A large stone slab was then placed on Wearyall Hill to mark the original site of the tree, where it may be seen to this very day; and, by grafting, this particular specimen of the Holy Thorn has been perpetuated ever since.

As a matter of fact, it may be stated that the Thorn-tree never dies. The original Thorn-tree which continued its existence in the staff of Joseph of Arimathea has continued to exist at Glastonbury ever since.

Many are the stocks that have borne it, many are the wildlings upon which it has been inarched, many are the different roots that it has sent down deep into the ground. But, whether by inarching or grafting, the original Thorn-tree of Judea has continued to exist in the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury and will continue to exist there as long as any member of the human race remains to till the ground in the Land of Avalon.

Only in Avalon were people to be found who would continue to propagate this Thorn. And to Avalon it was sent. For not only did the original Thorn-tree in Judea supply the staff for Joseph of Arimathea, it also supplied the twigs wherefrom was woven the Crown of Thorns.

The sacred legend tells us that the Master Himself—the Lord of Bethlehem—shortly before His crucifixion cut a green staff from a thorn-tree on the Mount of Olives and presented it to Joseph of Arimathea, and bade him go forth in due season to the Isles of the West, and particularly to the Magi who dwelt in the sacred Land of Avalon; that, after the Jews had finally rejected and crucified their Messiah, Joseph and his party, consisting of the Inner Circle and more immediate friends and companions of the Master, eventually left Palestine and came by way of Marseilles and Brittany to the Land of Avalon; that here, in the land of the Magi who had travelled to the East to welcome the Saviour

at His birth, the first great Christian Church in all the world was erected at Glastonbury under the direct supervision of Joseph of Arimathea—years before any of the churches ascribed to Peter and Paul had been founded in other parts of the world—and that the Royal House of Judah, rightly and properly represented by the House of Joseph of Arimathea (the brother of the Virgin Mary), allied itself by marriage in Avalon to the Royal House of Brython—which alliance has continued to this very day, and which now gives to our present King the right to reign over the Promised Land.

The Anglican, the Protestant, the Old Catholic and Roman Catholic, and Christians orthodox and heterodox too numerous to mention, may say that these things are but legends, but we of the ancient Celtic super-Christian Church who have spiritual vision know that these things are true.

Through the great apostasy of the past two thousand years we of the deathless race, the children of the Thorn, have waited and watched and worked, in and from the Land of Avalon, for the Dawn. And now in this, the very nadir of humanity's existence on this planet, the Dawn is at hand. The Light of Avalon is breaking o'er the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Dark Seances and Direct Voice Phenomena.

SIR,—May I be permitted to give personal evidence in disproof of the somewhat hasty generalisation of “Pax” on p. 416, based in my own case on the experience not of two, but of some forty sittings, mostly with Mrs. Wriedt, during which remarkable evidence was received? On no occasion have I suffered from any feeling of exhaustion, and my wife, who was always present, and at times not in the best of health, had the same experience, being often rather benefited than the reverse by sitting.

It should be remembered that expenditure of energy is not necessarily injurious, unless excessive. Bad ventilation is obviously harmful, whether at church, theatre, or seance; but this is beside the point. The idea that absence of visible light conduces to the manifestation of low rather than high intelligences seems a relic of medievalism; its sole apparent disadvantage lies in rendering the task of obtaining conclusive evidence of physical phenomena more arduous. In the case of Mrs. Wriedt, there is no difficulty in establishing the fact that the “voices” are independent: we have heard two or more trumpet voices speaking simultaneously with Mrs. Wriedt. The internal evidence of the communications is, of course, unaffected by their occurring in light or darkness; that the “general tone” of the intelligences is of a “banal description” has not been our experience. While tests of identity are sometimes (of necessity) of a trivial nature, we have often had speeches and addresses of an elevated kind. The controls tell us that sitters bring their own friends.

The study of the luminous appearances often seen obviously needs darkness: they are certainly visible in different degrees to different sitters. On one occasion I provided myself with coloured screens, including the Kilner ones, for their observation, but the sitting was devoid of them, and further opportunity did not present itself. It seems an experiment worth trying. As a fellow “telescopist,” I can quite endorse Miss Irene Toye Warner's recommendations, and only hope her information about Mrs. Wriedt may prove incorrect. One further remark: An appliance for convenient note-taking in the dark is much to be desired. I am trying to devise one, and should like to know if any correspondent has made any successful attempt to do so.—Yours, &c.,

R. W. BUTTEMER.

St. Mary's, Godalming.

On Sunday, January 20th, at 6.30 p.m., Miss Lind-af-Hageby will deliver an address at Steinway Hall entitled “Religious Reconstruction and the Place of Spiritualism.”

I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated “magnetic,” “somnambulistic,” “mediumistic,” and others not yet explained by science, to be “impossible,” is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind is not biased by preconceived opinions—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.—CAMILLE FLAMMARION.

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, JAN. 6th, &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.*—Powerful address, "The Incarnation in the Light of Psychic Science," by Dr. Ellis T. Powell; appreciative audience. Sunday next, Dr. W. J. Vanstone. See front page.—G. C.

LONDON SPIRITUAL MISSION: 13B, *Pembroke Place, Bayswater, W.*—Addresses by Mr. E. W. Beard and Mr. H. G. Beard. Both services conducted in accordance with the King's wishes. For Sunday next see front page.—I. R.

'CHURCH OF HIGHER MYSTICISM: 22, *Princes-street, Camden-square, W.*—Morning and evening, powerful inspirational addresses by Mrs. Fairclough Smith. Morning subject, "Prayer"; evening, "Peace." For Sunday next, see front page.

FOREST GATE, E.—EARLHAM HALL, EARLHAM GROVE.—Excellent address and New Year's message by Mr. Gwinn. Sunday next, 6.30, in No. 13 room, Mr. Sarfas.—E. S.

TOTTENHAM.—684, *High-road.*—Alderman D. J. Davis spoke on "The Mission of Spiritualism." Sunday next, 3 p.m., Lyceum; 7, Mr. D. Hanneford.—D. H.

CLAPHAM.—ADJOINING REFORM CLUB, ST. LUKE'S-ROAD, HIGH-STREET, CLAPHAM, S.W.—Sunday next, 11 a.m., public circle; 7 p.m., Mrs. Mary Gordon. Friday, at 8, public meeting. 20th, Mrs. Neville.—M. C.

BATTERSEA.—45, *St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.*—Good morning circle; evening, Mrs. Podmore, address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 11.15, circle service; 5, tea; 6.30, Mr. G. Prior. 17th, 8.15, Mrs. Bloodworth.—N. B.

WIMBLEDON SPIRITUALIST MISSION.—Address and congregational prayers in connection with the National Day of Intercession, Miss Violet Burton ably concluding the service. For prospective announcements see front page.

WOOLWICH AND PLUMSTEAD.—PERSEVERANCE HALL, VILLAS-ROAD, PLUMSTEAD.—Afternoon, Lyceum; evening, Mrs. Neville, address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7, Mr. H. Boddington.—J. M. P.

MANOR PARK, E.—THIRD AVENUE, CHURCH-ROAD.—Mrs. Jamrach, address, "The Birth of the Christ," and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 6.30, Mr. Todd, address. Monday, 3 p.m., ladies, clairvoyance. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. Connor, address.—E. M.

BRIGHTON SPIRITUALIST BROTHERHOOD.—OLD STEINE HALL, 52A, OLD STEINE.—Sunday next, at 11.30 and 7, and Monday at 7.45, Mr. A. Vout Peters. Tuesday and Thursday, 7.45, meeting for inquirers. Friday, 7.30, Young People's Guild.—J. J. G.

HOLLOWAY.—GROVEDALE-ROAD (NEAR HIGHGATE TUBE STATION).—Morning, Mr. T. O. Todd, delightful address on "A Dream in a Desert"; evening, Mr. A. Punter, splendid address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, 11.15 a.m., Mr. Jones; 3 p.m., Lyceum; 7, Mr. and Mrs. Pulham, address and clairvoyance.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—Mrs. Mary Gordon, excellent address on "Universal Religion," and recognised descriptions. Sunday next, 6.30, Mrs. E. Marriott. Monday, 8 p.m., Mrs. Brookman. Tuesday, 8 p.m., Mrs. Gordon, lecture on "The Use of Colour," in aid of our funds; admission 6d.

BRIGHTON.—THE SPIRITUALISTS' CHURCH (AFFILIATED TO NATIONAL UNION OF SPIRITUALISTS), WINDSOR HALL, WINDSOR-STREET.—Sunday next, at 11.15 and 7, Mrs. Alice Jamrach, addresses and descriptions. Lyceum at 3. Wednesday at 8.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—Morning, New Year's message by Miss Lyon's guides; evening, Mrs. Cannock, excellent address and clairvoyance. Sunday next, anniversary services: 11 a.m., circle; 6.30 p.m., Mrs. A. de Beaurepaire.

The January issue of "The Young Man and Woman" contains a reply to Sir Conan Doyle's reference to the doctrine of the atonement which he made recently in his lecture on "The New Revelation." The Editor, Rev. Walter Wynn, will continue his replies in successive issues of "The Young Man and Woman."

LEWISHAM DISTRICT SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS.
THE PRIORY, HIGH STREET, LEWISHAM.

Cars Stop, George Lane.

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JANUARY 13TH.—Speaker, Mrs. E. NEVILLE, 7 p.m., and Clairvoyance.

JANUARY 20TH.—Mrs. M. O. GORDON, 7 p.m., Address and Clairvoyance; 8.30, Members' Meeting.

JANUARY 27TH.—Miss MCCREADIE, Clairvoyance.

WITCHCRAFT ACT AMENDMENT FUND.—The treasurer of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd., Mr. T. H. Wright (10, Victoria-avenue, Sowerby), sends us the following statement of the above fund to the end of December:—Amount previously acknowledged, £503 2s. 8½d. Heber-street, Keighley, Thursday Evening Circle (per Mr. E. Sutcliffe), £3 10s.; Castleford, £5; Witton Park, 15s.; Blackburn Temple, £5; Mrs. Dorothy Hutchings (London), 2s. 6d.; Hunslet Spiritual Church (per Mrs. Harrison), £1; Millom (M.O.P.), £2 2s.; Subs., 10s.; £2 12s.; per South Wales District Union: Tredegar (per Mrs. Halestrap, 6s.; per Mr. R. T. Price, £2 7s.), £2 13s.; Treforest (per Mr. Tittley, 13s.; Ystrad, per Mr. W. D. Jones, £2 12s.), £3 5s.; Mountain Ash (collected at evening service visit of S.W. Division), £1 13s. 5d.; Pontypridd (collected December 9th, 12s. 1½d.; per Mr. Ricardo, 3s. 6d.), 15s. 7½d.; Caerau (per Mr. Dale, £3 8s.; Mr. E. Morgan, £2), £5 8s.; Mardy (per Mr. E. D. Thomas), 14s.; Caerphilly (per Mrs. Withers), 10s.; Mrs. E. Hirst, Halifax, 5s.; Openshaw Spiritual Hall (per Mesdames Owen and Topham), £1 19s.; Mr. Kenneth Everley, Pontypridd, 5s.; per Mr. J. H. Mountain, Leeds Psycho, 10s.; per S.L.S. Mission, Peckham: (Mrs. Bell (189), 8s.; M.O.P., 6s.), 14s.; per Mrs. M. Lloyd (188), Liverpool, £1 2s.; Falkirk (collections taken on the visits of Mrs. Lloyd), 12s.; Batley Carr (Mrs. Begg, 10s.; friends, 8d.), 10s. 8d.; late Brighton Progressive Spiritual Society (per Mr. Curry), £5 2s. 6d.; Sowerby Bridge Society (per Mrs. J. Whiteley, M.O.P., 13s. 9d.; per Mrs. C. Horsfield (181), Hyde, 3s.; Mrs. Alice Jamrach, 10s.; Mrs. H. Wightman and friends, Leicester (Home Circle), £1 10s.; Six Bells, Abertillery (per Mrs. Phillips), 11s.; Warrington, £5; per Mrs. Stewart, Edinburgh, £1 6s. 8d.; Edinburgh Association, £14 7s.; Mrs. Whitaker, Walsall, 5s.; Mrs. E. Martin, Chesterfield, 5s.; Sub-Lieut. K. J. Riddell, R.N., £1; Mr. Percy Wilson, R.N., £2 2s.; Peter-street Lyceum, Huddersfield, £1 4s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes, Northampton, 5s.; St. Saviour's Gate, York, £5 2s. 7d.; Mrs. Whalley, Blackpool, £1 1s.; Northampton, M.O.P., 9s. 4d.; Forest-street Temple, Derby (per Mrs. Ford), £2; Spring Garden, Doncaster, £3 2s.; Crewe, £1 1s. 2½d.; Miss Hoff, Crewe, 5s.; per Ramsden-street Church, Huddersfield: (Mrs. Allured 5s., Miss Thomas 5s., Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson 11s., Mr. and Mrs. Lewis 10s.), £1 11s.; Bank interest, £5 5s. 10d.; New Shildon (sub. £5, M.O.P. 16s. 8d.), £5 16s. 8d.; Mr. J. W. Hanson, Leeds, 2s. 6d.; Liverpool (per Mrs. Raymond £1 6s. 10d., Mr. F. Williams 13s. 6d.), £2 0s. 4d.; Wakefield Church, £5. Total, £609 1s. 9½d.

"TIME and the hour runs through the roughest day." We give correctly this time a line which was misquoted last week; but we are not responsible for the grammar, which is Shakespeare's.

NOTICE.—TO SECRETARIES AND OTHERS.—Mrs. Mary Davies, late of 93, Regent-street, London, has removed, and pending the completion of her new church at West Hampstead, her address will be Flat I, 130, Portsdown-road, Maida Vale, W. 9.

MR. HORACE LEAF informs us that at the invitation of the North London Secular Society, which meets at St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria-road, N.W., he has consented to open a debate with one of the society's members next Thursday, the 17th inst., at 7.30 p.m., on the question, "Does Man Survive Death?" Mr. Leaf will, of course, take the affirmative, and he would be glad if as many Spiritualists as possible who can make it convenient to attend will support him by their presence.

SUCCESSFUL "SOCIAL."—The Little Ilford Society of Christian Spiritualists, Church-road, Manor Park, held a well-attended and enjoyable "social" and dance in aid of the New Building Fund, on Saturday the 5th inst., in the Lecture Hall, Public Library. The following artistes provided an excellent programme: Miss Edie Mott, Miss Baker, Miss Moore, Mr. Belling and Mr. Crowder (songs and duets); Miss Neville (recitation). Many dances were indulged in, and at the close a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mrs. Jamrach, who acted as M.C., to the artistes, to Mrs. Wheeler, who officiated at the piano, and to all who helped to make the evening a success.—E. MARRIOTT, Hon. Secretary.

THE Council of the Order of the Golden Age invite attendance at an excellent course of free lectures on subjects of interest, which they have arranged for Wednesday afternoons at 3 o'clock from January till the end of March, at their rooms, 153, 155, Brompton-road, S.W. Next Wednesday Mr. Paul Tyner will speak on "The Golden Age: When?" and among the subjects which will be dealt with later we note "National Health," by Dr. Hector Munro; "The Co-relation of Theosophy and Spiritualism," by Mr. W. J. Vanstone; "What is Occultism?" by Mrs. Dorothy Grenside; "The Psychology of Irish Folklore," by Mrs. Ida Rolleston; and "Reasons why I Believe in Life after Death," by Mr. Percy E. Beard.

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