

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul

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London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.,

[6, QUEEN SQUARE, SOUTHAMPTON ROW. W.C. 1.

Programme of Meetings for the Coming Week.

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For Members ONLY.

Séance for Clairvoyant Descriptions.

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COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. F. W. South, the Manager, to whom Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In the recently published book, "A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln," by the Hon. Ralph Shirley, editor of the "Occult Review" (Rider's, 3s. 6d. net) an admirably concise account of Lincoln's career, some allusion is made to his interest in psychic matters. Thus we read:—

Lincoln even went so far as to dabble in Spiritualism. His mind was an open one and he brought all experiences of this nature to the test of his own shrewd common sense. On one occasion he invited a celebrated medium to display his powers at the White House when several members of the Cabinet were present, and on other occasions it is recorded of him that he consulted a clairvoyante in times of political stress and difficulty.

We recall a long account of President Lincoln's dealings with a clairvoyante which appears in a book by Mrs. Colburn Maynard, the clairvoyante in question. The book is in the L.S.A. Library. Other "borderland" experiences of Lincoln recounted by Mr. Shirley include his vision of two images of himself in a looking glass. This, while, as the author observes, serving "to illustrate the strong vein of superstition in his character," was taken by Mrs. Lincoln "as a psychic intimation of her husband's second election to the Presidency, for it occurred at the time of his first nomination at the Chicago Convention of 1860. As most people know, he was twice President, being re-elected in November, 1865. However, this psychic episode (if such it was) is very slight. His dreams, which appear to have had some symbolic and prophetic significance, according to his own account, are of more interest.

* * *

We are sometimes tempted to think that the cult of the "practical man" is in danger of being over-done. Time and again we are told of such-and-such a psychical marvel as coming within the experience of So-and-so, who is "a hard-headed, practical man"—the description is given in impressive tones, obviously intended to convey that he is not one of your imaginative, dreamy kind of people. Sometimes the hard-headed practical one comes in to investigate psychic science, and gives his invaluable testimony to the reality of the matter. But too often at that point his usefulness ends. He cannot "get on with it." He cannot see that this or that can be true; he is continually being brought up short by stone walls. "How this can be so," he writes, after analysing a statement concerning other-world conditions, "I am unable to imagine." That is precisely his difficulty. He is unable to imagine. He could not imagine steam engines, or the electric light, or the telephone, or "wireless," or aviation, although he was tremendously useful when they became facts, because he is equipped only to deal with facts. He

has so long been the pride and glory of our race that it is a little sad to think that he is no longer the power he used to be. For it becomes plainer every day that to handle the latest developments of life, which is now moving on to higher levels, our special need is for men of vision, insight and the creative imagination.

* * *

We were led into this train of thought by observing some of the queer doctrines in connection with Spiritualism that seem to come of a strict application of the principles which govern the "practical" mind. There is the materialistic conception of the life beyond, for instance, obviously emanating from minds which are "unable to imagine" any kind of life but that in which they live or lived. Another doctrine requires that spirits shall continually be sent back to earth to acquire their necessary experience, the followers of that doctrine being "unable to imagine" something of the infinite resources of other states of being. Disraeli had his own opinion of the "practical man," whom he described in his cynical way as "the man who practices the errors of his forefathers." The fact is that the only man who can truly be described as practical is the man who tries to do the work for which he has been qualified by Nature, and does it. The engineer who exposes his incompetence by attempting the rôle of prophet is no more a "practical" man than the poet who is found blundering amongst the mechanism in the machine shop, under the mistaken impression that he is an engineer.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

THE REAL CONDITIONS OF SPIRIT LIFE.

On Friday evening, the 31st ult., at the usual weekly meeting for "Talks with a Spirit Control" at the hall of the London Spiritualist Alliance, 6, Queen Square, the guide of Mrs. M. H. Wallis answered written questions from the audience, the proceedings commencing with a pianoforte solo by Mr. Field.

Mr. H. Withall, the President, referring to one of the questions, said that he did not think the real conditions of spirit life were properly understood. That was because we were all in a spiritual world here and now, everything around was essentially spiritual, only we did not see the inner side of it; we only saw the phenomenal aspects. As to the conditions of independent spirit life, it seemed to him that some of the misunderstanding arose from the fact that some clairvoyants only penetrated to the inner conditions of this world and described them as representing the spiritual world proper. This would apply also to spirits themselves who had not outgrown earthly conditions and who would report the merely phenomenal aspects as being those which actually obtained. This in his opinion was the reason why conflicting accounts were given—some spirits maintaining that the next world was simply a replica of this one, and that the processes of life were much the same, i.e., spirit houses were built brick by brick and spirit clothing manufactured much in the way in which it is produced here. We knew, however, that quite different accounts of the matter were received from spirits of more advanced intelligence. He then put the question offered, which ran:—

"Can you explain briefly why some spirits tell us that in their world houses are built and clothes woven just as they are in this world, while others assert that these things are the results of thought or life processes of an automatic character?"

This question, it may be mentioned, was put to settle a frequently debated point, arising out of conflicting accounts clearly emanating from independent spirit sources. The reply of Mrs. Wallis's control, "Morambo," which seems to clear up the matter satisfactorily, is dealt with on the leader page this week.

SOME SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

[In *LIGHT* of March 26th, 1910, we published an extract from some automatic writings received by a clergyman of the Church of England. In the course of a deeply interesting letter recently received from this clergyman he referred to the fact, and on turning back to the contribution we found it so full of instructive teaching that it is reproduced below. Two of those who dictated the script are represented as having been themselves clergymen when on earth.]

The mind of man readily absorbs whatever is presented to it as an idea, providing it is in sympathy with the train of thought to which the idea belongs. When ideas arise in the mind spontaneously, or are suggested by the seeing or hearing of anything that may attract attention, we call them personal ideas, but when the idea has its origin in another mind and was imparted to you, we should call it a suggested idea—the spontaneous idea is a personal thought, the imparted idea is a received impression.

THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION.

The word "inspiration" has been used to convey the idea of God forcing into man the breath of life. "God breathed into man the breath of life" it may be argued, and so He breathes into man the power of the Spirit. We must dismiss the idea of force entirely, both in the case of the first creation and of the re-creation of man. By inspiration we should understand a subjective rather than an objective breathing in. The soul of man inhales the spiritual atmosphere, with which he is surrounded, just as man inhales the natural atmosphere and is vitalised by the spiritual power it inspires. The inspired prophet or writer is one who has breathed into himself of God's power, and has thus come to have knowledge. No servant of God is an automaton—all are free agents.

Those who look with dread or suspicion upon spirit communications are in the wrong. Careful everyone should be, but, for all that, they lose much who say that God never communicates with the world now. God never did personally communicate with man, of this we are positive, but did and still does communicate with the world through the agency of His ministering spirits.

To teach morality and to reason respecting the immortality of the soul is not to bring life and immortality to light; a single definite fact is better than any amount of speculative theory.

The higher we rise in the spirit state the more assured we become of the existence of the All-Wise God of infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness—infinite in truth, purity and love.

The "Guide" never forces or compels; he shows the way, and those whom he guides should follow of their own free wills and without any compulsion.

Great watchfulness is needed or you may acquire the habit of forming rash judgments, which are the results of prejudice rather than of the experience of the psychic power of feeling.

HOW TO DEAL WITH "EVIL SPIRITS."

It is possible for most people to open up some form of communication with the spiritual world, but all do not come into contact with the purest aspects of the spirit life. Like attracts like, and therefore if you are not careful to keep your mind free from impure or unworthy thoughts, you will naturally attract evil influences; while, on the other hand, if you keep your mind attentively fixed on what is pure and ennobling, such evil influences will not approach you. The life lived under the influences of purity, truth and love attracts only the best influences. We have never seen any evil spirits other than those who were once men and women on the earth, but some of these are bad enough for anything. Still, they need not be feared, as their powers are only human powers, and decreasing powers. They might have injured you much more when they were in the flesh than they can out of it. Keep your mind closed against them that they may not communicate with you, and they are practically helpless so far as personally injuring you is concerned.

The power of evil is not so much to be dreaded as people sometimes think, providing, of course, they do not give actual encouragement to it. You may take it for granted that there are as bad people in the world as out of it, and that none of the evil spirits who hover around are morally worse than many people to be found in the haunts of wickedness on the earth; while, for the most part, when they leave the world they are less capable of doing mischief than while they are in the flesh. Evil disposed spirits, of some ability and power, are only influentially powerful, they cannot influence you against your will, but, like many public speakers, they have acquired the power of influencing the mind contrary to the conviction previously held, at least for a time, but on maturer consideration, if you watch and pray—that is, keep yourself in harmony with what is divinely spiritual, you need not fear such wandering spirits, however powerful. They can influence you not one iota in the way of evil unless you allow yourself to be persuaded by them. Still they are a power to be reckoned with, for many readily turn a willing ear to them and follow their evil suggestions, and were it not for the watchfulness of guardian spirits of God, much evil would result which is now prevented.

Spirits of less ability for mischief are often attracted towards their old earthly associations, and by the general atmosphere of psychic influence which their presence tends to create, mischief ensues.

SPIRIT INFLUENCES AND SPIRIT COMMUNICATION.

The amount of influence which is directed upon your world from the realm of pure spirit is far greater than you realise; the effect is to draw all who are open to influence to the consideration of eternal truths. Man has a faculty whereby he personally apprehends and absorbs the spiritual power and influence. Every human soul has this receptivity by nature; it is not acquired, it is inherent, but like many other powers it may lie dormant and unheeded; it may even approach extinction, but none can truthfully say he absolutely lacks the power of spiritual apprehension. This receptive power of the human soul naturally awakens from a dormant state as soon as the interest in things spiritual is aroused.

The minds of men are so differently affected that what is proof positive to one will in no way convince another; the proofs, therefore, of the reality of the spiritual state must be as varied as the moods and phases of the human mind; for this reason nothing should be despised that will set people thinking in the right direction, but at the same time we must, if we would act wisely, never make use of a lower means when the high ones would better serve the purpose.

When two spirits in our world communicate we give attention to, or think of one another, and thus a bond of sympathy is established between us; we are mentally in harmony for the time being, and any thought directed from one to the other produces much the same impression on us as spoken words do in your state. We are fully aware of emphasis, force and power, light and shade of tone, pitch and rhythm, just as you are when you listen to an eloquent speaker. Though, from this description, it may always seem to you that we dwell in a state of silence, it is not really so. In our state sound is produced in a manner not unlike with you, but our atmosphere is of a much more delicate nature, and the waves of sound are so in consequence. We virtually speak audibly to one another, for our thought waves impress each other as sound waves do with you. We readily receive your communications to us, but you do not so readily receive from us. The power of receiving ideas will grow like the power of writing has done. The first need is that of psychic sympathy, so that two minds are in harmony or concord; then there must be a certain attitude of passivity, and this is impossible when the attention is drawn away by passing sounds; then there must be an active faculty for the reception and assimilation of the message, for mere passivity alone would be worse than useless. Thus, three mental states are necessary: harmony, with a view to maintaining a sympathetic relationship; passivity, with a view to receiving; and activity, with a view to retaining impressions; and the body should be at rest—perfectly quiet, and not unduly tired. The greater the capacity to receive, the greater will be the amount received. The power is in most cases in such an undeveloped state that it can be used only in a most rudimentary manner, but it might be developed to almost any degree until receptive of truths, now known to the few, which would convince all that life is not merely an existence fraught with toil and sorrow but that it brings with it its own special blessings, even the certain knowledge of the things which belong to the eternal life.

CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE.

Since eternal life consists in the knowledge of God, there must, in the first instance, be some acquaintance, more or less, with God. To serve God we must be assured "that He is," that He exists; we must be convinced that in His nature He is divine, self-existent and eternal—that in His character He is the perfection of truth, purity and love, and that His will is that all shall learn to love and serve Him and come more and more to a knowledge of the truth. But no one who has these convictions attains to the fulness of them all at once, and certainly not in the earthly life. We are far more certain about them than you are, but for all this there is room for much growth in knowledge on our part. When our Lord said "This is the life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God," he had in his mind the knowledge which aims for conscious personal intercourse and experience. This may not be profound in the earlier stages, but it is such as grows deeper and stronger as time goes on. By prayer directed to God the soul of man is brought into direct contact with the highest spiritual influence, and no prayer is ever offered up with sincerity but what brings an answer for the good of the one who prays; but the answer always comes through the ministrations of attendant spirits, who, by their presence, influence those with whom they come in contact, but whose mental power has a much greater effect.

HUSK FUND.—Mrs. Etta Duffus, of Penniwells, Elstree, Herts., acknowledges with thanks the following contribution: Emma, £2.

DR. ELLIS POWELL will speak in Rochdale on Sunday next on "Our Soldiers in the West." On the Saturday night he is addressing the Rochdale Pioneers on the question "Why the War has Lasted so Long."

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DEATH.

A sermon preached at the 14th Hussars' Memorial Service, at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane-street, on January 31st, 1919, by the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, M.A.

"He raiseth up the soul and lighteneth the eyes:
He giveth health, life and blessing."

—Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 117.

Death is a kind of bogey which has been frightening the children of men since the beginning. It is dressed up in a winding sheet, has the face of a skull, and is connected in our minds with dismal grave-yards and all that is ugly and horrible—and we all run away in a panic! But the whole thing really is a fantastic illusion, we have been misled, as so often before, by appearances; we have been judging the tree by its decayed and fallen leaves; we have been looking at death from the standpoint of those who remain behind instead of with the eyes of the friend who passes over, or of those who welcome him there.

To the mourner who has lost a loved one death is cruel; to the survivor who watches the process from the earth side the material aspect of the transaction is repellent enough. But be sure from beyond the veil the thing looks quite differently, for "death and resurrection are but two sides of the same thing." As for the traveller himself he is like a man who should pass through the Simplon tunnel in his sleep, his last look rests upon the snowy slopes and bleak glaciers of Switzerland, but he wakes amid the sunshine and glorious colour of Italy.

Death is not a hideous and outrageous calamity to be resisted and avoided as the very climax of Evil, so that we should speak of "poor So-and-so" as having fallen into a dire misfortune which we luckier ones have as yet escaped. Death is simply a natural process, no more wonderful or mysterious than birth, and is the orderly method of transition to a higher stage in our long evolution. To the Saint it is the pearly gate into a joy and glory beyond all expression and imagination, and I believe that even for the average man, the decent-living, well-intentioned weakling, with a thousand shortcomings, it is an immediate and tremendous gain.

"There is a natural and there is a spiritual body," says St. Paul, but the point which has been overlooked is that we have both those bodies *now*. As an orange has an outer and inner peel, so has man's spirit, and death is simply the shedding of the outer casing, a stepping forth from the material framework in which he has lived.

For our education we are incarnate for a few years, at death we are withdrawn, we become discarnate but not disembodied, for we are still clothed in the spiritual or etheric body. We leave school; it is not the end of life any more than is his last "breaking up" day to the school boy—on the contrary it is for both the entering upon a fuller and wider life.

A thing is not shadowy and unreal because it is invisible to our rudimentary eyes of flesh, and a man who has passed over is no misty ghost wafted about on the moaning winds, as the old Greeks thought. The world in which he finds himself is just as real and solid to him who has a suitable body for such an environment as our world is to us. Indeed there is abundant evidence that many newly arrived feel so well, so natural and so much in possession of all their faculties that they are only with the utmost difficulty persuaded of what has befallen them.

To the degraded, the cruel, the utterly selfish, death is "the arrest of the criminal"; his misused freedom is over and he is now brought strictly to book. But we are not thinking of such to-day, but of those who died a noble death. In the sodden and bloodstained trenches, among the barbed wire out in the moonlight, in the shameful ruins of some pretty village or once prosperous town, or it may be in the bare hospital ward with fevered phantoms of their distant loved ones whispering round the cots. Look at it as we will, they died fighting for right and for Good against Evil, they died, we may reverently say, like their Master for the Salvation of the world. They may have been—they necessarily were—immature, inexperienced, comparatively undeveloped spiritually, but it was not altogether their fault, for they were deprived of the normal span of years which God has assigned for man's unfolding. They shall not suffer on that account, for "he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it unto life Eternal." "Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years—he being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time" (Wisdom xlviii. 13). Are we quite sure that they would have benefited by living on into old age? Are all old people saints of God, unworldly, gentle and kind, full of devotion and good works? If the call had come long afterwards in some darkened room, among medicine bottles and the ugly litter of infirmity and decay, would it necessarily have met a more willing and glad response?

These young lives offered up in the flush of dawning manhood remind one of flowers cut by some gentle hand. If they had been left alone they would have grown and spread and made a brave show in the garden, but it is as though they had been plucked for a higher destiny—to cheer a sick room or to beautify the altar of some quiet church. I

always think it is the pride and glory of flowers to be so selected, and how joyfully do they give their lives for such an honour!

This life is simply the preparation for another; this world is but a vestibule where we get ready to enter the lighted gallery in which the King Himself awaits our coming. Presently it will be *our* turn, the herald will call our names and we too must enter the Presence. The manner of our passing matters little, a cold wind, a shower of rain, a slip upon the pavement will be enough to bring it about. The important matter will be the quality of that *character* which we take with us. What are we? What has life's varied experience made us? Is the world a hair's-breadth better for our visit to it, is any single soul happier or nearer God for our companionship?

We are but children after all, playing upon the sunlit shores of Eternity. Like children we take our little affairs so seriously, we put much earnestness into all our restless activities; we sail our little boats on the warm pools and build our castles on the sand—and presently, without hurry and without delay, at the exact hour of destiny, the rising tide sweeps all away. Our footprints are obliterated as though they had never been, the names we wrote in this or that little patch of society, of art, or of literature, are washed out altogether—the call of authority is heard and we must go home, home in the twilight, tired and with perhaps a wistful look behind, for the day, the little anxious pleasing day of life on earth is done. *Laus Deo!*

A DEFENCE OF ISLAMISM.

Abdul Khalik Ismail writes:—

"I have read the review of 'Akibat' in *LIGHT* for January 4th (p. 5), and as a Moslem I should like to correct some misunderstandings which I noticed in that article. The reviewer says that 'there is so much in the Quran that is fierce and vindictive or that is material and even gross, that it is difficult to read into other portions the pure and spiritual meanings attributed to them by Sufism.'

"It seems to me that the reviewer cannot have read the Quran in Arabic, otherwise he could not have brought such an accusation against it. All Islamic teachings are in direct opposition to anything wholly 'material' or 'gross.' The Quran teaches the principle of the golden medium, *i.e.*, a balanced life that suits the temper of the world. We refrain from being entirely material or entirely spiritual. We live by an ordered combination of the two.

"That the Quran contains many a pure and spiritual statement cannot be denied by any impartial reader of it in Arabic.

"In the opinion of people who judge by results, the Sufi movement in this country is bringing comfort, hope, and a balanced life to many.

"Therefore it would be only seemly of the people of this country to view such movements with impartial toleration, especially in view of the fact that the whole of the East has been for years flooded with Christian missionaries."

"LIGHT" SUSTENTATION FUND, 1919.

In addition to the donations already recorded we have to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following sums:—

	£	s.	d.
Col. C. E. B.	5	0	0
Mrs. Gibson (of Guernsey)	1	10	0
G. Hoseason	1	1	0
Mrs. Bilton	1	1	0
C. H. Pedley	1	1	0
Mrs. Cumming Smith	1	0	0
Miss C. Simmons	0	10	6
Mrs. Meneilly	0	10	0
Mrs. Leigh Lye	0	6	6

"THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS."

(REPRINTED FROM "LIGHT" OF FEBRUARY 16TH, 1889.)

We record, with deep regret, the sudden death of Dr. Speer. He was stricken with apoplexy and subsequent paralysis, and succumbed to the attack on February 9th, at Clifton, where he was temporarily residing on account of Mrs. Speer's health.

Archdeacon Colley, of Natal, whose name is very familiar to Spiritualists, will be in London shortly. He is to occupy Mr. Haweis's pulpit at St. James's, Westmoreland-street, on the morning of February 24th. We hope that he may be able to be present at our next Assembly on the 19th inst.

London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.,

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ILLUSION AND REALITY IN SPIRIT LIFE.

We have referred more than once in the past to the apparent discrepancy between two classes of spirit communicators. While one class gives a "materialistic" account of its surroundings, the descriptions received from the other class are less definite, alluding to things and processes which appear to be indescribable in the language of earth, and which call for the aid of symbol and allegory. Those who have read some recent books which describe in a very literal way the nature of the next state, and who are at the same time acquainted with such works as "From Matter to Spirit," by Professor and Mrs. de Morgan, will know precisely what we mean. At any rate the general nature of the supposed contradictions will be apparent to most of our readers.

It occurred to us lately to record the views of a reliable spirit communicator on the matter, and we give them in substance here. Those who object, as some of our friends have objected, that a conversation with an entranced medium cannot strictly be described as a conversation with a spirit are no doubt technically correct. But to us who recognise that we are all spirits, whether in the flesh or out of it, the point is not of any vital importance. The really important question is whether we are getting reasonable and instructive statements or not. We thought the remarks of Mrs. Wallis's inspirer, in reply to the question put to him (see "Answers to Questions," p. 49), very sensible and suggestive.

He began by observing that many people are incapable of clear perception and discernment, while others are constitutionally unable to give a precise account of what they actually perceive. But it seemed to him that the explanation of the difficulty lay in the incomplete understanding of some of the new-comers to spirit life of the real condition in which they found themselves. The apparent proximity to each other of spirit communicators was no criterion of their degree of unfoldment. As all who had made themselves familiar with the subject knew, one spirit in a condition of darkness might be as it were standing next to another whose state was one of radiant light.

Again, it was to be remembered that in our quest of truth we had to give something as well as to receive it; to impart something of ourselves was a condition of receiving a revelation. In other words, every mind contributed something of its own to all that which it received from without. It was to be remembered also that there was an inner side to earth conditions, which for the undeveloped spirit was an illusory phase through which it had to pass before it became fully conscious of its true surroundings. While the spirit was in that condition there was an appearance very suggestive of the idea that it was living a life closely akin to that from which it had lately departed. Really such a spirit was surrounded by spiritual activities, but being unable to recognise these with any degree of clearness, it was liable to clothe them in mundane forms. A person in this state was limited by his preconceptions and prejudices, and consequently unable to take in the true nature of his surroundings. If he communicated with his friends on earth his report of his experiences would be coloured accordingly; and he would give a very materialistic account of himself.

But there was another side to the question. It was the difficulty which even an advanced spirit would feel in giving an account of his life in spiritual conditions such as would be intelligible to his friends on the earth, especially if he had to rely upon a medium in whose

mind the communication was translated into physical terms.

Many mediums and psychics had a tendency to transfer any ideas presented to them from the spirit side into earthly forms. It was only occasionally that anything like clear and exact expression could be attained.

As to the question of spirit homes, the Control said he did not know of houses built in the external physical fashion, "brick by brick," but he did know of thought concentration directed upon spiritual substance, causing it to assume forms in accordance with the desire of the spirit manipulating it; that was a part of the creative power possessed by all spirits in some measure, great or small. He was inclined to think that those who gave descriptions in the old physical terms of these and other processes were simply "jumping to conclusions." They assumed that such things could not be done except by the old-time laborious methods of the earth whose ideas they had not yet outgrown. They translated into physical terms the powers and potencies of thought activity on the spirit side, being unable to perceive the true nature of those activities.

The shadows of their old earth life, apart from which they are not yet able to think, are still upon such spirits. They seemed to themselves to eat and drink just as they did while still in their physical bodies, being unaware that such processes were no longer necessary, but in this condition they were ministered to by more enlightened souls until they were sufficiently awake to the realities of their new life to intelligently participate in them. But while they clung to the old forms of thought, the old habits and experiences, so long were they in a state of illusion, misunderstanding and mis-reporting their actual conditions.

Reviewing mentally all we have heard and read on the subject, this strikes us as a highly reasonable and suggestive explanation of the divergent statements which it is sought to reconcile. We have remarked that many of the materialistic accounts of the next life emanated from, or at any rate were communicated through, minds of the "matter of fact" type—people who were intolerant of the idea that spirit homes or garments are really the creations of thought and will. Such things they regarded as merely poetic fancies, the product of the imagination, unconscious of the fact that poetry and imagination bring us far nearer to true reality than the most exact science or unerring logic. Moreover, even on earth (as Rudyard Kipling has pointed out in a well-known poem) we are living in a world of romance. Those who look out on life with the discernment of true imagination will have no difficulty in seeing that the romance of the next life is really a sequel to the romance of this. The same characters appear, but the episodes are a little more splendid and the "action" quicker; but the thread of continuity runs through it all. Thus we hear of the creation of spirit homes and garments by the action of thought, will and desire. But when we reflect upon it, we remember that precisely the same forces are at work here on the same things. The only difference is that in the other world the process is quickened and intensified.

"Love bridges the gulf," said Diotima, and the two worlds may be indeed linked by the affections. But for the purposes of the understanding, the gulf between the two orders of life is best bridged by the imagination.

APHORISMS FROM THE "HIBBERT JOURNAL."—"Men draw to what is natural and to that alone" (PROFESSOR JAMES MOFFATT, D.D.). "Peace conceived as not-fighting, affords no basis for active co-operation—the secret of all community life, which invariably reposes on a positive deed-to-be-done, and abhors the negative as surely as Nature abhors a vacuum" (PROFESSOR I. P. JACKS).—"As no nation resolute on keeping separate from other nations can be fit or worthy to join the League of Nations, neither can any Church which stands apart from other Churches be meet or ready to join a League of Churches" (THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE).

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE WAR: THE CHURCHES.

I.

By E. WAKE COOK.

In this era of reconstruction the Church will incur a grave responsibility if it misses its chance of keeping abreast of the new order of things. Rooted in a lengthening past, it trails a heavy, hampering load of old-world barbarisms which must be got rid of ere it can bring itself up to date and fit itself anew for its vital tasks. The war has raised a batch of perplexing problems—how are we to solve them? by what standard of Divine justice are we to assess the guilt of its authors? By the primitive idea that it was just to punish countless myriads of unborn generations for the fault of our first parents? Perish the thought! If we assume a God of Love, then we need a fuller philosophy than the Church has yet given us. We are involved in endless perplexities. A contradiction cleaves right through the whole fabric of our thought. In religion we have the evil for evil, "an eye for an eye," of the Old Testament; and the "resist not evil," and the "good for evil," of the New. We have the aspiration of the angels: "On earth Peace, goodwill toward men," and we have the "Prince of Peace," the Master, declaring: "I come not to bring peace, but a sword." Spencer pointed out that we have two co-existing religions, the religion of enmity and the religion of amity, of egoism and of altruism. Mr. Bryce said: "We have two moralities for public life, the one conventional or ideal, the other actual." With such ever-present contradictions, such mixed criteria, can we wonder at the difficulty of framing a sound judgment on the moral and religious aspects of the war?

The Church should strive strenuously to straighten out these matters and bring consistency into its teaching. It should denounce as dishonouring to God, Religion, and itself, the many barbarities of the Old Testament, and the frightfulness of everlasting torments in the New. The shock to the dead-and-alive in religion, and the disturbance of foundations would be great, and the Church might lose some of its members; but not nearly so many as it is losing through the lack of these vitally necessary reforms. It should take its cue from Westcott, and affirm, not that God has spoken, but that *He is speaking*. Then the flood of new revelations which have baptised the world could be embraced and shaped into a consistent and growing religion, and an up-to-date philosophy of life. The materials are here in overwhelming abundance; there is the flood of new light by science on that "Garment of God," the Material Universe, there is the outpouring of Pentecostal gifts and revelations of Modern Spiritualism, and Psychical Research; and there is the revival of that mental and spiritual healing which played such an important part in Christ's work, which has been so lamentably lost by the Churches.

Man's measure is given by his idea of God, and his highest working ideal is his conception of the Divine Will; so, to elevate man in the scale, the idea of God should be the highest conceivable by the highest minds, and all other earlier conceptions be repudiated as primitive and fitted only for primitive peoples. That should be the first task. The second should be to grasp the World-Plan; the Divine Idea or Purpose; then we shall be doing the Divine Will, then we "hitch our wagon to a star" and our work will increasingly prosper. Until that Divine Plan is discerned and consciously carried out, we shall blunder into catastrophes such as that from which we have just emerged. The destiny of man is to a large extent a foregone conclusion; we may recognise the Purpose and co-operate with it; or be driven by the scorpion whips of harsh evolutionary methods into the way we should go. In the one case we are like dumb, driven cattle; in the other we may be heroes in the strife.

OTHER-WORLD PURPOSE.

Growing out of this World-Purpose is what might be called the Other-World-Purpose. The scheme of an after-life should be propounded in a way to give the key to the whole, and its reality scientifically demonstrated. In this matter, the all-important matter, God has been speaking through Modern Spiritualism in Pentecostal tones. By accepting these new Revelations the Churches would gain infinitely more than they would lose by discarding the barbarisms which disfigure the Bible. Spiritualism and Psychical Research offer the Churches an inexhaustible mine of wealth on which they could draw endlessly. From Science, they could take just as much as suited their purpose, leaving our more advanced teaching for a later date after stagnating minds had been roused to activity. Communications from the next plane of existence would carry more weight, give them more authority, than can now be got from the multiplex Bible from which can be drawn the *pro* and *con* of almost every doctrine ever preached. The Key-Doctrine of the after-life could be taken in its entirety with immeasurable benefit, and it would enable them to meet the supreme need of the time, and offer boundless blessings and consolation in place of the cold comfort which is the best they can now offer. The doctrine of eternal torments, preached by Christ Himself, stands unrepealed in the New Testament. These threats are a nightmare, causing un-

speakable agony to those afflicted parents wonderingly questioning as to the destiny of their soldier sons who have given their all for their country. Think of these brave fellows, Christ-like, making the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives for the Right, and that others might be saved from hell-like horrors, being possibly damned to all eternity because they have not met the requirements formulated by the Church! The whole soul recoils from such a proposition as dishonouring to God and the Church and iniquitously unjust to man. This atheist-making doctrine, so inconsistent with a God of Love, and with the whole spirit of Christianity, which is the fairest flower of human aspiration, can be openly repudiated by Christians boldly following Christ's own example and transcending the New Dispensation as He transcended the Old. Let the Church enthrone what is called the Spirit of Christianity, which is the eclectic cream of the whole, leaving the old-world diags, enrich it with all the wondrous Revelations which have been pouring from the Eternal Fount, and boldly give us a Newer Dispensation!

It seems to be "Hobson's choice" for the Church, it must do something of that sort or go under as unfit. Outside movements are doing its work, and will supplant it unless it does its manifest duty. The narrow rationalising tendencies of the Protestant Churches impoverished the early Christianity.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALING.

Spiritual Healing played a most important part in Christ's work, and it survived for centuries, but of late was so neglected that those holding to Christ's promise that the works He did we should do, and greater works, were sneeringly regarded as a "Peculiar People"! But of late mental and spiritual healing has asserted itself with conquering force. There have been natural healers who have done marvels almost equalling those of Christ and the Apostles. But the "Father of Modern Spiritualism" was the first to reveal its principles. He discovered that all disease resulted from a lack of balance of the spiritual forces, which could be influenced by the mind, especially by the power of suggestion. He held that healing should be done largely through teaching, and that the physician and the teacher should be one and the same person. Sixteen years later Mrs. Eddy discovered much the same things, grafted them on to the Bible, and started the flourishing cult of "Christian Science," which, despite some absurdities and misunderstandings, contains much wholesome teaching, and does marvels of healing in some cases, but is powerless in others where the teaching falls flat and cannot free the spirit from old-world ideas and give it a wider spiritual outlook. It is doing great work in freeing its followers from the tyranny of the letter of the Bible. Mrs. Eddy interprets it in any fashion she chooses, and makes it fit her scheme. She gets away from the "Fall of Man," and all anthropomorphism, by a sort of Spiritual Pantheism, reducing God to a Principle, and the Symbol of the Good. Good is all, and Good is God. Good is affirmed; evil, sin, sickness and death are denied, together with Matter—they are unreal, the product of an entity outside the "All," which is called "Mortal Mind," which seems to play the part the Devil plays in other religions. The power of suggestion is the active factor, and where accompanied by spiritual exaltation, is potent for good in many forms besides healing. But the system has two grave defects. Mrs. Eddy is so anxious to be the centre and circumference of the cult that she insists on a more rigid orthodoxy than even the Church of Rome, bars progress, and gives her followers the fatal conceit that they have the whole of Truth and all understanding. Good Heavens! Truth is infinite, God is infinite, and it will take an eternity with ever-expanding faculty for the human spirit to know all Truth; and as for plenary understanding, that is reserved to God Himself. Christian Science is a mere drop in the great ocean of Truth, yet Mrs. Eddy bolts and bars the minds of her followers against everything but her own teachings.

The other defect is that on the supreme need for an assurance of an after-life, and a rational conception of it, Mrs. Eddy is silent or utterly misleading, and she prejudices her followers against the only avenue of approach to the truth. She confuses the issue, and at times seems to incline to the Buddhist conception of absorption in the ocean of Spirit. At other times she cuts the continuity of existence by declaring that the so-called dead enter another state of consciousness, making communication with this world impossible: and she boldly declares there can be no communication between them. This is demonstrably false, yet the only promise of an after-life in Christian Science rests on her word. She ridicules the idea that there are spirits, as there is only one Spirit. This is equal to saying that there are no men and women, but only one Humanity! If for greater assurance of continued existence she falls back on Christ and His "Divine Science," that opens for them the possibility of a Hell in which there shall be "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." So Eddyism is only a section of Religion, just a stepping-stone to something higher and larger, more fitted to meet the needs of the real Man, whose latent faculties are almost infinite in scope by virtue of his Divine Sonship.

THE PROOFS OF HUMAN SURVIVAL.

Long before the war Modern Spiritualism had by oceans of evidence demonstrated the vital fact of continued exist-

ence, and given a scientific conception of it; had given us the grandest conception of the Cosmos, the whole scheme of Existence, which ever got through the mind of man; had demonstrated the existence of potencies and powers quite beyond the ken of Science; shown that man has higher soul-faculties giving access to vast treasures of Divine knowledge; and opened to us wondrous revelations of an inner and greater Universe, stupendous, and beautiful beyond a poet's dreaming. Starting from the idea of a spiritual, or etheric body, with higher human faculties, and with latencies of transcendent development, it insists that continuity, on which our personality depends, is never broken. On awakening on the next plane of existence no sense of change is felt at first. As the revelations of those brilliant young heroes, Raymond and Claude—in "Claude's Book"—show, for the spiritually immature cut off in the flower of youth, on their reception in the next world their kindly guides surround them with conditions seemingly like their earthly homes until their opening eyes can bear the dazzling splendour of the realities. The second plane, or sphere, is like an idealisation of this world; but with ever-expanding faculties, deeper beauties are discerned, and plane beyond plane succeeds, in ever-increasing splendour. An endless variety of blissful occupations is there for the exercise of manifold faculties of inconceivable range and power. Such is the Godward progress sooner or later of all; progress in realms thought-beggar in vastness and indescribable in beauty, and the bliss of ever-increasing realisation of the presence of God. The idea of "Heaven" is sublimed to unutterable magnificence, and offers consolations and compensations so bounteous that all the sorrows and sufferings of this life become mere spots on the sun! On the mundane plane the Father of Modern Spiritualism, Andrew Jackson Davis, solved those social and industrial problems which now threaten an after-the-war Armageddon between Labour and Bolshevism, and the rest of the community. But the blind old world jogged on its blind old way, with averted eye, hands over ears, a jest, a sneer, or a libel on its lips, and with a self-satisfied smirk of superiority; it was too clever to believe the truth! It has taken this catastrophic war to break down this soul-stultifying attitude of mind. Is the Church alone to maintain its stiff-necked attitude and refuse the mines of wealth we offer it, without money and without price? Is it to remain deaf to our proofs that God is speaking, and to the marvellous new revelations coming through so many sources and which put us under a Newer Dispensation?

"AN APPEAL FOR UNITY."

(IN ANSWER TO MISS IRENE TOYE WARNER.)

The union of Christians is a thing which the "Author of Peace and Lover of Concord," and all His servants desire. But some are apt to picture a merely superficial and mechanical unity. The unity of a party of soldiers which consists in their stepping in time, looking the same way and carrying an identical equipment, is a poor thing compared with the union which is founded on the *esprit de corps*, allegiance and set purpose which animate the regiment.

The Church of England, with all her extraordinary diversity of expression, is, I suspect, more truly united and infinitely richer than that of Rome, where every detail of practice and of belief is standardised and kept within exact limits. What we need is a common foundation of loving tolerance; a disposition to rejoice in virtue and welcome Truth wherever it may be found; a glad realisation that there are as many ways of looking at things as there are people in the world, and that, though our own view of Truth may be a very little more elevated than that of our neighbour, we shall not help him to see it by scorning what he has so far been able to apprehend. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

The exchanging of pulpits between those who do not see things alike can only lead to confusion. Loving kindness must not run on without her slower footed sister, wisdom. One's own vision and conception of Truth is to the possessor a most precious thing which has grown and ripened through many changing seasons, and be it exalted or comparatively base, it is the light by which we are bound to walk and the standard by which alone we shall be judged. My neighbour's may be equally good or better, but we cannot exchange what are organic growths and part of ourselves, nor, love him as I may, can I take at will his point of view. If I speak from his platform I must either argue against his position, which would be discourteous, or ignore our differences, which would seem to leave things very much as they were before. But these divergencies are not as serious as they look; the Church is One because of the one Spirit which inspires and sustains everything which is good in every part, and by that test a great many who from their dress, speech and customs seem to be strangers are in reality brothers and sisters of the same great Family of God—greetings and peace to every one!

F. FIELDING-OULD.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ATOM.

BY ERNEST C. CRAVEN.

By the courtesy of Colonel Johnson, I have been enabled to make a brief examination of the works on "Occult Chemistry" referred to in his letters in *LIGHT* of December 28th (p. 415) and January 18th (p. 22).

The works contain diagrams of the structure of the atoms of various elements, alleged to have been observed by clairvoyants working in conjunction. The details of the experiments are extremely meagre, no mention being made of how the various atoms were isolated from the molecular complexes and the effect of the molecular motion nullified. In fact, the whole of the practical points which would appeal to the scientific mind are missing. The result, on the other hand are presented with the dogmatic finality of which few but Theosophists dare be guilty. The atom structures are represented as various geometrical figures carrying points representing the "ultimate physical atom," presumably the electron of modern science.

As far as the results of a necessarily imperfect study of the works in question will take me, I should like to discuss in how far they substantiate the reality of the faculty of clairvoyance. The claims of the system to credence, and thus as evidence of clairvoyance, depend on: (1) Prediction of "new" elements; (2) Derivation of atomic weights; (3) Harmony and usefulness of the system itself.

Let us take each section in turn.

(1) In discussion with Colonel Johnson, I gather that as various unknown elements were predicted clairvoyantly, the clairvoyant should claim the credit of discovering them. The prediction of new elements is not a power confined to clairvoyance alone. In 1871 Mendeléeff, in developing his well-known periodic arrangement of the elements, predicted the existence and the properties of three metals, which were subsequently discovered, and the predicted properties confirmed in a most striking fashion. Nevertheless Mendeléeff is not credited with the discovery of those elements, nor is the verification of his prediction taken as more than a certain amount of evidence in favour of the periodic system itself.

The new elements claimed to have been "discovered" by the clairvoyant method include "occultum," atomic weight 3, and "meta neon," atomic weight 22.3. The gas neon has been shown by atomolysis and by Prof. J. J. Thomson's "positive ray analysis" to consist of two bodies, atomic weights 20 and 22. By the "positive ray" method curves have been obtained corresponding to elements of atomic weights between those of hydrogen ($H = 1$) and Helium ($He = 4$). By astro-spectroscopic work the existence of elements of low atomic weight—"asterium," "nebulium," "coronium"—has been indicated, such elements not being known on this planet. Nevertheless the authors of these observations have not been credited with the discovery of such elements, nor will the elements themselves be found in the International list.

A good deal of this work had been done before the occult system was published, and scientific speculation regarding unknown elements was common many years before that.

(2) The atom of hydrogen is clairvoyantly observed to have 18 electrons, and other elements more, approximately in proportion to their atomic weights. For example, oxygen has 290 electrons; $290/18 = 16.11$, the occult atomic weight. The accepted value is 15.88, and the difference is much more than can be accounted for by experimental error. Nevertheless, on the whole the atomic weights given are roughly in agreement with accepted values. This is supposed to show that the weight of an atom lies in its electrons and not in the nucleus, as in the more orthodox theory. It may not be out of place to make the perhaps obvious criticism that as the weight of a large crowd of men is in proportion to the number of noses present, arguing on the same lines, we must assume the rest of the crowd is imponderable.

The mass of an electron, according to electro-magnetic measurements, is $1/1700$ of the mass of an hydrogen atom—according to the occult theory $1/18$.

(3) The brief study made of the interrelations within the system itself shows that elements of the same family have their structure on similar lines, but whether this is carried out consistently or not cannot be stated without further comparison.

The supposed forms of the atoms as given are of a most weird and unlikely type. As Sir Oliver Lodge points out in correspondence with Colonel Johnson, there is no trace of dynamic structure whatever. Nor is there any variation of structure which might determine the valency, absolute size, atomic heat, atomic volume, or ionic mobility of the element. Added to this, we are rather left in the dark as to the precise significance of the triangles, circles and other geometrical forms containing the electrons.

In short, a system could not well be invented more useless and less worthy of credence from the scientist's point of view.

Summing up, I think it is not too much to say that under the three headings discussed, we have no clear evidence for clairvoyance. Rather would I attribute the whole scheme to

the vagaries of the sub-conscious mind which, as is well known, builds very elaborate and quite plausible superstructures on very small foundations. As an instance, an exact parallel may be found in the case of Hélène Smith, who "clairvoyantly" visited the planet Mars, and brought back the language with her. This language she later wrote and spoke freely. Unfortunately, upon investigation by M. Flournoy, the new language proved to be—in the words of Beckles Willson ("Occultism and Common Sense")—"such a work of art as one might form by substituting for each word in the French dictionary an arbitrary collocation of letters and for each letter a new and arbitrary symbol. . . If it is childish as a work of art, it is miraculous enough as a feat of memory." This latter remark might apply very well to the occult chemical system discussed.

In conclusion let me make it quite clear that I am not questioning the reality of the clairvoyant faculty, of the operation of which I have seen many examples undoubtedly genuine. The only point I am up against is that definite proof of its reality can be obtained in the manner suggested by Colonel Johnson.

On the other hand, a really convincing test might be arranged somewhat on the following lines. Suppose the clairvoyant were given half a dozen colourless gases sealed separately in glass bulbs. The chances against their being named correctly or matched against six similar bulbs would be about 4,000 to 1. Or ten white metals might be taken and sorted out in the same manner, the experimenter using precautions to avoid suggestion, etc. The chances against complete success would be more than a million to one. If any clairvoyant friend cares to distinguish himself in this direction, I should be happy to supply the gases and metals and to assist in the test.

Only in some simple fashion of this kind will decisive results be attained, and such results will impress "orthodox science" far more than any complex mystical system, however beautiful, can, or ever will do!

THE REINCARNATION PROBLEM.

Mrs. S. F. Ross Smith (page 34) in comparing a mixed musical audience to your more or less intelligent weekly readers, seems to forget that some individuals listening to an oratorio, even if not musical experts, are, by their very presence in a musical atmosphere, being educated to appreciate beautiful combinations of sound, and may eventually begin to study the principles of music. In a somewhat similar way, many of us who enjoy *LIGHT* from week to week may at first be disposed to accept without questioning the statements in the various articles, but soon our minds become very critical and we do not accept mere assertions, but are anxious to seek further help from those who contribute to its columns, especially those who set themselves up as authorities and who have carefully studied all the aspects of the particular subject under discussion. We naturally look to these writers for the production of substantiating evidence, so that we too may understand something of the underlying psychical and spiritual laws.

The problem of reincarnation is a case in point. As a student of Theosophy, one is disposed to admit that reincarnation as a *hypothesis* helps to explain the inequalities at the very beginning of life, and to reconcile them with the principle of eternal justice.

But when definite statements are made by Mrs. Ross Smith that certain historical individuals have "lived hundreds of earth lives" before they had qualified for certain duties, one is justified in asking what real evidence exists for such dogmatic assertions: when and where did these highly evolved individuals live and function in their gradually expanding successive lives?

Then there is the other statement made regarding "the great World Teacher (known in the West as the Christ and to all Eastern nations under their own appropriate names)" that He "overshadows some high initiate such as the Master Jesus," &c.

If this overshadowing of a great initiate by the great World Teacher be a something "beyond spirit guidance," what is it? Is it a substitution of personality more or less permanent? Take the case of Jesus of Nazareth. In this so-called overshadowing, was it Jesus who was sacrificed, or was it the "great World Teacher (known as the Christ)" Who died on the cross, and what individual is deserving of the credit of that noble sacrifice?

When one carefully studies this question, one asks whether there is any evidence of duality at all. The apostle Paul refers to this important matter in Galatians iv. 19, and says "until Christ be formed in you." Is not this a reference to a state of spiritual evolution rather than a duality, a substitution of personality, or overshadowing by another, even if that other be "the great World Teacher"? Will Mrs. Ross Smith kindly throw some light on these points?

TRUTH SEEKER.

Mr. G. R. Dennis writes:—

Mr. Vale Owen asks: "Had Elijah become reincarnate as John, would he not now have appeared in the character

of his last reincarnation?" The answer is, No. According to the doctrine of reincarnation, it is not the personality that reincarnates, but the ego, the individuality. The usual simile is that of the actor, who plays various parts, while remaining the same individual through them all. And just as the actor displays the same characteristics in every part, however different they may be, so do the successive personalities assumed by the ego display the same general characteristics. Further, as the actor gains experience from every new part he plays, so does the ego gather experience from each incarnation.

As to the case of John the Baptist, the meaning of Matthew xi. 14 is, I think, made clear by reference to Malachi iv. 5 and Matthew xvii. 12. The Jews were expecting the return of Elijah, as prophesied by Malachi, and Jesus said: "If ye will receive it, this is Elijah, whose coming is expected." (The A. V. gives the true sense.) And again: "I say unto you that Elijah has come already and they knew him not." Then understood his disciples that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist." That John should deny his identity with Elijah is to be expected, as knowledge of past lives is very unusual. The similarities in the lives and characters of Elijah and John have often been noted.

In many other passages in the New Testament the doctrine of reincarnation seems to be taken for granted, and it was certainly taught by the early Fathers. In fact not until A.D. 553 was it condemned as a heresy, and by that time the Church had lost much of her original spirituality and most of her esoteric wisdom. To those who are interested in this side of the subject, may I recommend a most helpful and illuminating little book by Ramacharaka entitled "Mystic Christianity"? Though written by a Hindu, it throws a flood of light on the inner meaning of Christianity, and indeed is, in my opinion, truly inspired.

PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

"LORD KITCHENER'S ROMANCE."

Under this title in the "Weekly Dispatch" of Sunday last, Hayden Church tells the delightful story of the late Lord Kitchener's friendship with Miss Hutchison, who passed from earth on February 24th, 1917, and who had a fine influence on the career of the famous soldier. Miss Hutchison was a Scotswoman of strong character and high intelligence, a social worker and philanthropist, and her friendship for Kitchener was an outstanding illustration of the idea that no influence is finer in the life of a great man than that of a good woman.

We were especially struck with the statement in the article under notice that Miss Hutchison implicitly believed that her hero had been miraculously saved after the sinking of the "Hampshire." As we know, there are still many people who have the same belief. Miss Hutchison's impression was strengthened (according to the "Dispatch") by a story brought to her notice:—

"It is said that a British nurse who possessed psychic powers had come to London after lengthy service at the front. Walking along Park-lane one day with a friend she suddenly pointed to one of the houses and declared, 'That house contains a wireless installation. It is hidden behind panels before which jars containing flowers and plants are placed.' Her acquaintance is said to have brought this statement to the notice of the authorities, who investigated and found the wireless installation which she had described, and which was being used for communicating with the enemy."

We reproduce the story for what it is worth; we have no proof of its truth.

The account then goes on to say that this same nurse had a remarkable vision in trance in which she saw Lord Kitchener who was "in perfect health living in a small cottage built upon a sea shore."

Those who are acquainted with the facts of clairvoyance will be well aware that it is sometimes difficult for a clairvoyant to tell from a vision whether the persons seen in it are on this side of life or the other. Moreover, it may happen that a man of strong will and character, cut off suddenly in the vigour of life, and finding himself after his transition as much alive as ever he was, will contrive to project powerfully on the minds of those in sympathy with him a strong impression to that effect. That is why we hear so often from a bereaved person such words as "I cannot realise that he is dead," or "I cannot get out of my mind that he is living somewhere." Well, of course he is, whoever he may be, only—he is not alive in the sense of the word alone accepted in a world which has lost its vision, and which until lately was accustomed to pour fierce scorn upon those who told it the truth. We had some time ago a curious experience of the strong impression existing in the mind of a departed friend that he was not dead—even in the physical sense—but had in some mysterious way escaped what to him was the last calamity. However, we had been to his funeral, and had no doubts, and it was not difficult to explain his rooted conviction. His claim that he was still living was true enough, but not in the

sense he meant. Unfortunately for him he had cultivated no acquaintance with any life but that of earth.

MR. W. B. YEATS AND SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

In the same issue of the "Dispatch," under the title of "A Poet and His Ghosts," "The Bookworm" tells of Mr. Yeats' ruined castle in Galway, his investigation into the "spectres" which haunt the castle, and a lecture delivered by him recently on the subject at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. "He accompanied his oratory with a series of lantern slides showing luminous materialisations." Our readers will be interested to learn that Mr. Yeats was accompanied by Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, who also "told some amazing things and appeared to prove them completely." No doubt. The general Press seems to be awakening to the reality of the matter; but the awakening is still very slow.

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

The discussion in the "Daily Mail" on this subject has continued. Lieut.-General Sir A. Lyttelton-Annesley writes that during sixteen years in India, visiting all three presidencies, also the Punjab, North-West, Kashmir, Ladakh, and Gilgit, he "inquired about the rope-trick, but no one knew of it." He also asked several native princes to arrange for him to see it, but they all said it did not exist. On the other hand, Mrs. Lulu Nicholl says that she, her mother, and her brother saw it performed and were with a party of five other persons. Here is her description:—

"An Indian and a small boy arrived outside the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, and sat down by the roadside. From around his waist the Indian unwound a long thick rope. He threw one end up into the air, where, to our amazement, it remained, fairly straight, with just one big kink near the top. I think I am right in saying that about one coil and a half of the rope remained on the ground. The boy climbed up the rope and, when he descended, it collapsed and fell to the earth, as an ordinary rope would. The Indian then slowly gathered it up and wound it round his waist again. We were not asked to examine the rope. The man seemed totally uninterested in his audience."

At the Magic Circle at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, a meeting was held on the 5th inst., at which Lieut. F. W. Holmes, V.C., produced his photographs showing the rope trick. Mr. S. W. Clarke, editor of the "Magic Circular," said the great peculiarity of the Indian rope trick was that nobody who wanted to see it had done so. Music-hall managers had scoured the world for it. Major Branson, of the Indian Army, stated he had offered 205 rupees (thirteen guineas) to any soldier in India who could give the name of a magician who had performed the trick. He had come into contact with half the regiments of India, but the reward was still unclaimed.

We have received the following account of the meeting from an old contributor:—

"I do not think I ever attended a more disappointing or unconvincing discussion on any subject. It was of course to be expected that all members of the Circle would adhere closely to the principles of their late chief, Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, and, like him, contend that as they claim to produce all phenomena by mechanical means, anything he, or they, cannot produce must, *ipso facto*, be fake! It is a very comforting solution to themselves, no doubt, but fails to satisfy the minds of all who listen to them, as was plainly evident at the meeting in question.

"The chief point noticeable was the extreme variance in the statements made by those taking part in the discussion, to put it mildly and courteously. Mr. Leon Berkely, a member of the Inner Circle, who was in service dress, drew a diagram on a large slate on the stage of 'how it is done,' showing that by performing at noon, or close to midday, with a solitary spectator seated under a projecting verandah roof, the upwards and downwards effects of the refraction of the sun-rays formed a shield for the performer; the boy, supposed to climb the rope, simply jumped backwards from the man's shoulders, concealed by the light, and the angle of the observer's vision, and concealed himself in the very voluminous breeches which these conjurers always wear for the purpose."

"He was followed by a Major, long resident in India, who inclined to the belief, as these performances always took place in the open and before a crowd of people, no apparatus or preparation could be possible, and it must be a case of hypnotising the spectators into seeing what was not actually taking place."

"Lieut. Holmes, V.C., produced a photograph, handed round for inspection, which he had himself taken at one of these performances, showing the boy actually on the rope, in his waist-cloth, 'the customary dress of all these performers, which adds so to the mystery of their feats.' Lieut. Holmes had a most ingenious theory, which he evidently firmly believed in. The rope, which he had described as an ordinary one of about three-quarters of an inch diameter, twenty yards long, wound round the chief performer's waist, of course contained inside it a collapsible pole, sufficiently rigid when extended to support

the light weight of the boy who climbed up, and slid down it.' But Colonel Elliott, who declared he had spent forty years in the East, was extremely vehement in his assertion that the rope trick *never had been performed at all, anywhere!* He had himself offered, years ago, a sum of two hundred guineas to anyone who could produce such a performer before him, and the offer still remained unclaimed. Of a truth, here are some very strong differences of opinion, from men wearing His Majesty's uniform, usually to be taken as a sign of good faith. Another speaker, whose name I forget, had himself seen the trick performed, as a boy, in the open, by practically naked performers."

"The sanest views, to my mind, were expressed by Dr. Chris. Van Bern, a member of the Inner Circle but fortunately not a bigoted one. He had seen, in Liverpool, a Yogi producing the levitation and similar phenomena, and was ready, therefore, to allow of other occult powers being possibly attained by those who sufficiently trained themselves. But for admitting as much he was held up to ridicule by a distinguished member of the Circle who followed him on the platform."

"None of those taking part in the discussion, except Dr. Van Bern, seemed to be aware of any distinction whatever between Indian Conjurers, Fakirs, and Yogis! All were equally to be described as 'impostors,' clamouring for payment!"

"With our present-day knowledge of psychic phenomena, and their real origin, it is not difficult to attribute this particular power of an Indian Fakir, of many years' practice, to its rightful source, or to understand the dislike of such men to appear in the unwholesome atmosphere of an English music-hall, for which they have had, and refused, for years such pressing invitations. The purer air, and sun-lit sky of their own land is unquestionably more suited to the development of their powers for public demonstration when considered advisable."

A NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL TO MR. J. J. MORSE.

The Spiritualists' National Union have issued an appeal, with which *LIGHT* and the London Spiritualist Alliance cordially associate themselves. It refers to a proposed Testimonial to Mr. J. J. Morse, the veteran medium. Old files of this journal contain many of his trance discourses, some of them of rare eloquence, and all notable for their wisdom, mingled with a rich fund of humour, and their high literary quality. We propose to refer again to Mr. J. J. Morse's career and achievements. In the meantime we give the circular sent out by the Union: premising that Mr. Morse will have completed fifty years of public service in October next, during which time the fine sane teachings of his inspirers have immensely assisted to maintain the level of high thinking so necessary to Spiritualism on its philosophical side:—

As you are no doubt aware, our respected colleague, Mr. J. J. Morse, has recently sustained a heavy bereavement by the promotion (after a long illness) of his partner of forty-seven years.

During all this time Mr. Morse has been a diligent and faithful servant of the spirit world, and has kept our platform dignified by a clear presentation of spiritualistic teaching. The eloquent discourses of his chief guide, "Tien," and his band of spirit helpers are known throughout Australia, New Zealand, North America and the United Kingdom, and have done much to establish our movement.

Mr. Morse has been President of the National Federation; he was in the chair at the launching of the Spiritualists' National Union (of which he is the Vice-President); he has also been President of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, and was the founder of the "Lyceum Banner." He is at present the Editor of the "Two Worlds," in which capacity he brought to a successful issue the Spiritualists' Motor Ambulance Fund. He has held the highest offices in the British Mediums' Union and the Manchester District Union, and in all capacities has given of his best.

Advancing age and the mental strain of nearly fifty years of public work for an unpopular cause have obliged him to curtail his activities, and the Council of the S.N.U. feel that the present is an opportune time for Spiritualists to testify their appreciation of faithful service.

"Practical sympathy is better than flowers on a grave." We, therefore, as representative Spiritualists, invite all friends of our body to honour one of the pioneers by subscribing to a substantial purse to be presented to Mr. Morse at an early date.

All donations will be received and thankfully acknowledged by Mr. John Jackson,

30, Buxton-road, New Mills,
Stockport.

In the assured hope of a generous response,

We are, yours faithfully,

E. W. Oaten, President, S.N.U.; R. Boddington, S.N.U.; R. A. Owen, S.N.U.; A. W. Orr, Director, "Two Worlds"; John Jackson, Director, "Two Worlds"; Jas. Lawrence, Spiritualists' League of Defence; W. H. Evans.

All enquiries will be gladly answered by Mrs. A. C. Oaten, Sycamore House, Worrall, Nr. Sheffield.

TO-MORROW'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

These notices are confined to announcements of meetings on the coming Sunday, with the addition only of other engagements in the same week. They are charged at the rate of 1s. for two lines (including the name of the society) and 6d. for every additional line.

Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W. 1.—Mr. Ernest Hunt. February 23rd, Mrs. E. A. Cannock.
The London Spiritual Mission, 18, Pembroke-place, W. 2.—11, Mr. H. G. Beard; 6.30, Miss Violet Burton. Wednesday, February 19th, at 7.30, Mr. Horace Leaf, lecture on "Materialisations," with limelight illustrations.
Spiritualist Church of the New Revelation, 181, West End Lane, Hampstead.—Closed till first Sunday in March.
Lewisham.—The Priory, High-street.—6.30, Mrs. Graddon Kent
Tottenham.—684, High-road—7, Rev. Susanna Harris.
Camberwell—Masonic Hall—11, service; 6.30, Mr. Nickels. Monday, 17th, social; tickets 1s. 3d.
Kingston-on-Thames.—Bishop's Hall.—6.30, Mrs. Cannock, address and clairvoyance.
Croydon, 117b, High-street.—11, service and circle; 6.30, Mr. H. Leaf.
Harrow and Wealdstone.—Gayton Rooms, Station-road, Harrow-on-the-Hill.—6.30, Mrs. Alice Jamrach, address and clairvoyance.
Battersea.—45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.—11.15, circle service; 6.30, address and clairvoyance. 20th 8.15, Mrs. Neville.
Holloway.—Grove Dale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station). 11.15, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Jones; 3, Lyceum; 7, Mr. T. O. Todd. Wednesday, 19th, at 8, Mrs. E. Neville.
Woolwich and Plumstead.—Perseverance Hall, Villas-road, Plumstead.—7, Mr. R. G. Jones, address and clairvoyance. Wednesday, 8, Mr. W. R. Matteson, address.
Brighton.—Windsor Hall, Windsor-street.—11.15 and 7, Mr. F. T. Blake, addresses and descriptions. All Sunday evening services in future will be held at the Athenæum Hall, North street.
Brighton Spiritualist Brotherhood.—Old Steine Hall.—3, Lyceum; 11.30 and 7, and Monday, 7.45, Miss Butcher, addresses and clairvoyance. Tuesday, 7.45, lecture on Astrology, Miss Samson. Thursday, 7.45, inquirers' questions and clairvoyance. Friday, Guild Whist Drive. Forward Movement, Athenæum Hall: February 23rd, 3 p.m., Mr. A. Vout Peters, lecture, "Heaven, Where is It?" followed by clairvoyance. Admission free. Collection. Reserved seats, 2s. and 1s.

OBITUARY.—Mr. William Haughton, of 109, Sycamore-road, Smethwick, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, January 28th, after a very short illness, at the age of 58 years. A most sincere Spiritualist, he was extremely grateful for the great joy that had come to him during his thirty years' experiences in Spiritualism. At the interment at Uplands Cemetery on Sunday, a most impressive and sympathetic service was conducted by Mr. Albert Cook. A goodly number of his friends and fellow-workmen gathered to honour him and to show their sympathy towards the bereaved widow, Mrs. Marie Haughton, and her daughter. Beautiful floral tributes, numbering among them fourteen wreaths, from friends and his co-workers, expressed the great esteem in which he was held by all who knew him. Mrs. Haughton begs to thank all friends for their kindly thoughts of condolence in her hour of trial.

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THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

By 'M.A. (Oxon.)'

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STANDARD BOOKS SUPPLIED TO ORDER FOR CASH ONLY.

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