

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In the course of his address at the Queen's Hall last Sunday Sir Arthur Conan Doyle effectively answered some of his critics in the Press. Incidentally he noticed the method of that one of them who, in analysing the letters, in which visitors to the medium, Mrs. B., had recorded their experiences, referred to the failures and the "successes," the latter word being put in inverted commas, to convey a slur by innuendo. We remember how the trick of the inverted commas was used some time ago by Mr. Edward Clodd in the case of Dr. Crawford's degree: "D.Sc." It was designed to suggest a bogus degree. This was very rash, because it was a real degree conferred by a Scottish University, and Mr. Clodd had to apologise. These petty methods, which are worthy of our opponents, suggest a poverty of mental resource and produce on the impartial observer an effect the reverse of that designed. Then there was the argument that the descriptions given by the medium were attributable to "thought reading." Sir Arthur made mince-meat of this objection when he pointed out that "thought reading" involves an experiment in the possibility of transferring from one mind to another some special idea or image. It could not apply to such cases as the visit of a stranger to the medium, who must, on that theory, be able to select from innumerable ideas, memories and experiences in the visitor's mind the identical ones which would alone fit the occasion. That would be wonderful enough, but in some instances visitors to this particular medium received communications on matters quite unknown to them, but afterwards verified. All this, of course, is elementary knowledge to the experienced Spiritualist, who is getting very weary of the asinine stupidity of some of his critics.

* * * *

Recent events in connection with real or reputed psychical phenomena — we refer particularly to the affair of the "Masked Medium"—have drawn attention to the possibility of performances of this kind being sometimes a mixture of the genuine and the bogus. Speaking from experience, we can assert that supernatural power may make its appearance in the queerest way in the middle of proceedings which set out as mere make-believe. To give one instance out of several, we recall the case of a young friend in the Army, who, as a popular entertainer, set out to give sham palmistry, and half-way through the performance found that he was delineating actual events in the lives of those he was amusing. He was very much startled and surprised, and so were his "clients." Telling us of the experience afterwards, he said that "something came over" him and the stream of comic patter became suddenly transformed into curiously accurate descriptions. There had been, as it seemed, an unexpected liberation of

psychic power, doubtless assisted by the hilarious atmosphere of the occasion. It does not follow that a bogus display designed to mimic psychic phenomena is *all* bogus. Telepathy may creep in, and other examples of supernormal faculty.

* * * *

It is this possible mixture of things which gives rise to so much perplexity, and occasionally reduces the inexperienced enquirer to something like despair. It has always been our rule to insist that the resources of the normal shall be exhausted before we venture on explanations based on the supernormal. That is why we cannot admit the argument that because some performance by a conjurer seems beyond the power of conjuring, therefore it must be of a psychic nature. The cleverest conjurers are equal to feats that astonish even the seasoned spectator. Yet they are pure "tricks" as some of our friends who are old hands at the business are able to assure us. When the performance is along mental lines, however—"thought reading" and "clairvoyance"—there is sometimes a strong suggestion that we are getting flashes of the real thing. And why not? The psychic faculty is not confined to genuine mediums and genuine séances. It sometimes flashes out, like a "will-o'-the-wisp," in other directions. The difficulty is that many people cannot take in more than one idea at a time. To them a thing must be either black or white, all real or all fraudulent. We could wish it were really so. It would simplify the problem immensely. But we realise that we are dealing with something very complex and that makes for caution.

THE TASK OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

(FROM SUSAN, COUNTESS OF MALMESBURY.)

Every great discovery has been wrested from its secret storehouse by the hard toil, self-sacrifice, and, not least, the moral courage of scientists. Patience and time are needed, and, in the case of Psychic Research, the advance may seem slow, but it is sure.

Workers must build foundations and buttress arches before they can erect the delicate traceries of pinnacle or spire.

Cool, careful investigation by men trained to accurate observation is the only way to what I believe will eventually crown their efforts: the establishment, beyond doubt, in the sight of all, of the fact that the spirit of man survives the death of the body and can communicate with us who have not yet stripped off the mask of life.

We must wander, as Longfellow said,

"Into regions yet untrod
And read what is still unread
In the manuscript of God."

Weigh evidence, expose fraud, and, if may be, lead sorrowing humanity a step further on the road to light and knowledge. "The spirit of man is as the Lamp of God, wherewith He searcheth every marvel."

Much has been done, but more remains, and surely the result, which may revolutionise the world, is worth the labour.

S. H. MALMESBURY.

DANIEL DEFOE ON SPIRIT MINISTRY.—Let no man despise the secret hints and notices of danger which sometimes are given him when he may think there is no possibility of its being real. That such hints and notices are given us, I believe few that have made any observation of things can deny: that they are certain discoveries of an invisible world and a converse of spirits we cannot doubt, and if the tendency of them seems to be to warn us of danger, why should we not suppose they are from some friendly agent (whether supreme, or inferior and subordinate, is not the question) and that they are given us for our good?

PROBLEM OF SPIRIT IDENTITY.

THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ENQUIRY EXAMINED.

ADDRESS BY DR. ELLIS T. POWELL.

(Continued from page 205).

THE "DISCERNING OF SPIRITS."

Our analysis of the expression "discerning of spirits" has yielded amazing results. But amazing as they are, they must take the second place when we go on to apply the same process to that other passage in the First Epistle of John—"Try the spirits whether they be of God," or better, "Examine the spirits." Here is a direct command to test the pretensions and identities of the spirits: for the purpose of ascertaining whether they are of God or whether they are ranked among the lower types of those intelligences which inhabit the spirit planes. I will not pause to consider the authorship of the First Epistle of John. We may concede all that the critics have argued, and still the fact remains that this epistle comes down to us from the earliest ages of the most distinctively psychic religion that the world has ever seen—or, as I believe, is ever likely to see. Now, what did the author exactly mean when he said, "Examine the spirits"? He chose about the strongest and most precise word he could have found if he had looked one thousand eight hundred years ahead, and been anxious to justify your position and mine as students of psychic manifestations. His Greek word *dokimazein* has not entered our language in any form, but its pregnancy of meaning can easily be made clear to an intelligent audience. It signifies to test whether a thing is genuine or not. A classical Greek orator, Isocrates, uses it of testing gold by means of fire. It is the word used by Christ in that parable where He tells of the man who excused himself from the feast because, he said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to prove them." It is used by St. Paul (I. Cor. iii. 13) when he affirms that "the fire shall try every man's work," and again when he exhorts us (I. Thess. ii. 4) to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." St. Paul employs the allied noun in II. Cor. ix. 13, "by the *experiment* of this ministration they glorify God." But I ought to add that "experiment," as understood by our translators, meant rather "experience" than what we understand by it, namely, the deliberate production of some phenomenon for the purpose of observation and analysis.

One might justifiably stop there, and claim that those who maintain the authority of the New Testament cannot possibly object to the investigation of spirit identity, when it is so positively inculcated in the First Epistle of John. But let us clinch the argument by looking at the papyri and inscriptions so as to see in what sense this verb to "try" or "examine" was understood by other people than the classical writers and the authors of the Notes on the New Testament. A papyrus in the Rylands Library at Manchester has a sentence (about 280 A.D.) with this same word—"His Excellency shall *sift* the matter with the utmost equity." Well, we claim to *sift* the spirits. In A.D. 140 we have a plea put forward on behalf of certain physicians for exemption from public services, on the ground that they have "passed the examination." We desire that manifesting spirits shall "pass the examination," either of the scientific enquirer, or else the more rapid, intuitive tests supplied by the affectionate and intimate knowledge of those to whom they manifest. In the inscriptions the verb is all but a technical term for the act of passing a person as fit for a public office. In fact there is an inscription of the time of Nero (whose reign would be roughly contemporaneous with the First Epistle of John) in which the verb is used with reference to the examination and character certificate of a candidate for admission to the medical profession. Could conclusiveness be more utter than this? We are to test the spirits, both as to character and claims, in the same way as we would a candidate for some public office where honour, knowledge and probity are among the peremptory essentials of his qualifications.

OLD RECORDS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

So much for the legitimacy of the enquiry, judged by tests which must appeal to all who acknowledge the psychic character, or the authority, of the New Testament. But what about the manifesting intelligences themselves? The answer is that they meet our desire for tests with an eager and strenuous response. Let me remind you, to begin with, of the experiments in psychic force which Dr. Crawford has been conducting. There, perhaps, the *identity* of the spirits does not immediately arise; but the genuineness of their claim to be disembodied intelligences is proved by their co-operation with Dr. Crawford. They could not co-operate more willingly and effectively if they were his assistants in an ordinary terrestrial laboratory. But as the question of identity does not arise in the forefront of that enquiry, let me give you some instances from my own long experience of successful spirit efforts at the demonstration of personal identity.

The lecturer then gave a number of instances of proofs of spirit identity, many of them extremely delicate and subtle. He divided them into two classes: (1) those which

were the considered and deliberate efforts of the communicating intelligences to demonstrate their identity; (2) those in which the purported identity was strongly supported by mannerisms, modes of thought, acquaintance with professional knowledge and methods, identity of voice with that of the individual when in the flesh, and so forth.

In conclusion, Dr. Powell said it would be foolish to shrink the fact that there was occasional personation on the part of the unseen intelligences. Some of them now and then essayed to play the part of Shakespeare, Cromwell, Milton, or other of the great ones of the past, though very little cross-examination sufficed, as a rule, to prove their incompetence for the roles they attempted to sustain. What was the explanation of these manifestations? Surely it was to be found in the existence of a multitude of spirits who had never, while on earth, realised the truth of progressive spirit life, and who were struggling desperately to keep in contact with earthly things. Thus bound down to the terrestrial sphere by their own ignorance and reluctance, they sought to while away the tedium of the years by playing practical jokes upon the investigator. They doubtless found a solace in this contact with flesh and blood, and, being in their own genuine identities totally unknown to the circles where they manifested, they sought to gain a welcome by spurious claims. Dr. Powell thought that in course of time these fraudulent manifestations would decline, even if they did not altogether cease. The wide dissemination of wholesome knowledge of the other life, and of the necessity of preparing for it, would supply a training which tended to slacken this mistaken yet desperate clinging to the earth sphere, so that the spirit would be anxious to progress rather than to perpetuate its frantic clutch upon terrestrial surroundings. In the dissemination of this knowledge all their societies were doing noble and wholesome work not only in changing the focus of man's ideas and aspirations on this side, but also in gradually dissipating ignorance and fear on the other side. They were bringing the two worlds closer and closer together, with results which must react beneficially upon the inhabitants of both.

A JOURNALIST'S INVESTIGATIONS.

We have already referred to the book, "An Amazing Séance and an Exposure," by Mr. Sydney A. Moseley, author of "With Kitchener in Cairo," "The Fleet from Within," and other volumes. It is published by Sampson Low, Marston and Co., Ltd. (price 3s.), and contains an introduction by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose opening sentence gives an indication of Mr. Moseley's attitude of mind towards the subject. Sir Arthur writes:—

"Mr. Sydney Moseley is the latest example of a gentleman who has approached the subject of spirit survival and spirit communion with an open mind, and has been convinced by the evidence."

In his foreword Mr. Moseley himself says:—

"The paramount importance of Spiritualism lies in the fact of its being able to give men faith and hope."

The book contains an account of Mr. Moseley's investigation of the mediumship of Mr. Will Thomas, both in Wales and London, and has all the value of being the testimony of an impartial observer from the inside. He deals very fully with the affair of "The Medium in the Mask," and is able to clear up the mystery by citing the admissions of Mr. Selbit, her manager, and to explain the ingenious devices by which the results are produced. Those devices have been clever enough to convince the uninitiated of the genuineness of the affair and to leave even some experienced investigators a little bewildered. There are chapters on investigations with other mediums, Mr. W. E. Foster and "Mrs. B." (Mrs. Annie Brittain). With the latter the results were a failure, but Mr. Moseley adds:—

"I am very sorry for 'Mrs. B.' because I feel that she made a genuine effort to satisfy me. I offered her a fee, but she said that she preferred not to take it, since the séance was a failure."

Other chapters deal with some fearsome adventures of Mr. Moseley as ghost-hunter, and the story of Sir Ian Hamilton's adventure is sufficiently weird, involving strange experiences on the part both of the ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Dardanelles Expedition and Mr. Moseley.

Finally, we may cite the closing passage of the book in which the author embodies his "conclusion":—

"My experiences in South Wales were healthy and instructive: my experiences in the West of England show me that there are dangerous and dark forces behind the study of occult science. I thoroughly enjoyed my investigations before I touched on the more unpleasant and unhealthy fringe; I think that the case for the continuation of consciousness is proved beyond a doubt, but as I have said, it is not a subject for any Tom, Dick or Harry, and so far as I am concerned, I am sure it were best to leave the probing of the veil of death to scientists, to whose province it belongs."

It is a record of surprising experiences and original conclusions.

ALL the great ages have been ages of belief.—EMERSON.

FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS TO THE CONSCIOUS.

By STANLEY DE BRATH, M.Inst.C.E. ("V.C. Desertis.")

"De l'Inconscient au Conscient," by Dr. Gustave Geley, laureate of the Medical Faculty (Felix Alcan, 108, Boulevard St. Germain, Paris, 346pp., 10fr.), is a book in which spiritualists will be profoundly interested. It is nothing more than a reconciliation of psychic facts with the most modern evolutionary theories, more especially with Bergson's *Evolution Créatrice*, which refers to the Unconscious, the source of that "tendency to variation" in living things which Darwin expressly declared to be governed by unknown laws ("Origin of Species," Ch. 1). Dr. Geley, however, objects to several points in Bergson's philosophy, more especially to his classification of human sub-conscious instincts as residues of a past stage of evolution.

He shows that the older materialistic theories which preme the development of genera and species leading up to man to have been produced by minute variations continually enforced in specific directions by the influence of the environment, by natural selection, and sexual selection, do not account (1) for the abrupt appearance in the geologic record of new forms; (2) for the absence of rudimentary organs, as, in the transformation of the reptile into the bird, though there are many instances of disused organs; (3) for the origin of the animal instincts, such as the "homing" faculty, and the unerring instincts of insects; nor, (4) for the large body of "occult" faculties in the sub-conscious mind of man. They do account for the preservation or destruction of species once established, and have an undoubted part to play, but they are not the whole—very far from the whole.

His basis of reasoning is not spiritualistic or metaphysical. He puts aside, not as false, but as foreign to his method, all metaphysical concepts—such as God, the Absolute, Beginning and End, and the like—all doctrinal views of causation, and confines himself to observed facts. His final experiments are given in detail in "*La Physiologie dite Supra-Normale*," a paper contributed to the Proceedings of the Institut Général Psychologique, Paris, in January, 1918, of which an English résumé appeared in the "*Occult Magazine*" for March, 1919. These experiments were conducted by him and Madame Bisson in continuation of the work of the latter in conjunction with Dr. Schrenck-Notzing: they were made in the light, and in presence of a number of medical men, who, starting from absolute scepticism, have been fully convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena. Under the eyes of the observers the amorphous emanation from the body of the lightly hypnotised medium formed heads, faces, and hands, added to the touch, and having the same functional activities as similar living forms; the hands can grasp, the features move. The stages of the whole process of emanation, incarnation into living forms, their disintegration, and reabsorption into the body of the medium were repeatedly photographed, both stereoscopically and with the ordinary camera.

These experiments were continued for over a year, with every possible precaution, and show (1) the existence of a primordial form of matter from which organic forms can be deduced; (2) that this formation takes place by an energy which is directed by an intelligent Idea.

Dr. Geley shows that what takes place is strikingly paralleled by the transformation of the caterpillar in the chrysalis. In that dark chamber the larva is reduced to a white emulsion, in which nearly all trace of organs is lost. In formless pulp, new organs and a wonderful colour-scheme adapted to an entirely different mode of life are developed; this process is essentially the same as that which takes place in every animal embryo. "Everything in biology takes place as if the physical being were built up from a single primordial substance."

This substance is actually moulded by an energy similar to that which produces all organic forms. In the materialisation it builds up a presentment which is perhaps not necessarily cellular; in ordinary life it creates, out of the primordial substance, bone-cells, muscle-cells, nerve-cells, and the innumerable forms of cellular tissue which make up the plant, the animal, and the man.

But Energy, if it is not to produce chaotic results, must be directed. Dr. Geley, reasoning from the fact that individual evolution proceeds to a definite end in the growth of every individual, finds that the formative energy, to which he gives the name "dynamo-psychism," is directed by an Idea. Other than this, there is a Cosmic Idea which directs the whole course of Evolution, and we may transpose this into the words of the poet, and say:—

"Some people call it Nature,
And others call it God."

Next he deals with instincts, showing that they cannot, in their origin, be attributed to hereditary transmission: for to be transmitted, they must have been successful from the very first; e.g., the Spheg wasp, which stings its caterpillar-prey at the precise nervous centre which paralyses without killing it, so that the living grub may serve as food for the Spheg as it hatched in its body, must, to be operative in preserving the species, have been successful from the outset. This

skill, and the many hundred such instances in the insect-world, arise from Unconscious Mind.

Similarly, many forms of sub-conscious action which are frequently referred to mediumship—materialisations which are not personal presentments, telekinesis (movement of objects without contact), telepathy, vision at a distance, the latent memory which restores incidents or languages once heard and completely forgotten by the normal memory, lucidity (the prophetic faculty), and the like—are, whatever their exciting causes may be, an uprush from the Unconscious into consciousness. Dr. Geley does not refer *all* mediumship to these sub-conscious actions of the Unconscious Self; he says that "if this is done we must admit a formidable extension of unconscious psychic faculty," for which there is no proof. Spiritualists have abundant positive proofs that these faculties form the link by which our friends in the Unseen can and do communicate with us here. But, taking the gradual manifestation of increased consciousness from the lowest to the highest organisms, he shows that the development of our higher and higher states of consciousness is the general drift of evolution; and he deduces the probability that in this life the human being stores up in the unconscious Self those influences which develop character and lead into higher states of consciousness. The end of the process, as far as we are immediately concerned, is the development of ethical consciousness—the Wisdom of the Spirit.

The importance of this presentment is manifest, and much more will be heard of the theory in the near future. Myers proved conclusively the existence of faculties in the "subliminal Self" which are great extensions of normal faculty; but he did not extend this to the whole animal world and the evolutionary process. Spiritualists will have no difficulty in finding, in Dr. Geley's well-reasoned synthesis, at once a confirmation of the possibility of authentic messages from the Beyond and an answer to the objections raised by the holders of materialistic theories (which can now fairly be called antiquated) as if *all* phenomena of mediumship were referable to "spirits" on the one hand, or *all* produced by the sub-conscious Self on the other. Dr. Geley's conclusion is that though unusual facts may fairly be called "super-normal," there is no supernormal, as soon as we come to causes, for one primary law pervades all Nature and directs both normal and "super-normal" physiology.

PAST AND PRESENT.

We take the following from "Notes by the Way," by "M.A. (Oxon.)," in *LIGHT* of June 22nd, 1889:—

It is an accepted truth that no cause can be worthily advanced the votaries of which are not willing to sacrifice selfish aims and to throw into it that vitalising energy which comes of strong conviction, and of a readiness to bear witness to the truth that they hold, even at some personal risk of loss, at some self-sacrifice, at some cost of time and money, or money's worth. Bricks cannot be made without straw: great efforts to disseminate truth cost money: workers ought to be and must be adequately paid, unless self-respect is to be forfeited. How much do you believe—a shilling, a crown, a pound? is a question that is habitually found inconvenient by the average Spiritualist. He is content to let a few willing souls bear all the burden and heat of the long day, slaving in unrequited toil, or sacrificing of their substance for duty's sake, the while he frisks in heedless abandonment, sublimely self-contained and self-satisfied. Give tithes of his possessions? Not he. Tithes are a remnant of an ecclesiastical system happily passed away. Give according to his ability, as the humblest sect gives to the necessary support of its minister and his work? No, he sees no reason. He has got all he wants out of Spiritualism, and the whole fabric may rot for aught he cares. Responsibility for knowledge? Not at all: he does not see it. He will instruct (save the mark!) any who place themselves in his hands, but he draws the line at subscriptions. And so while he and his sort enwrap themselves thus in a mantle of selfishness, work lags, men who would do good service drop out of the ranks of public workers because they must earn a living somewhere else, and Spiritualism becomes a by-word for yet another cause than that which distinguishes it in the police-courts. These are a poor folk, men say, they cannot even support and maintain their own work, which they vaunt as Divine, and advertise as immediately introductory to the Millennium. These are plain truths, and it behoves Spiritualists to weigh and consider them. For such a work as ours has grown to is not done by vapouring, by bumptious talk about what we know—the more we know the less we are likely to say about it; it is the sciolist who shrieks—by selfish isolation, by feline scratches at a neighbour who sees not as we would have him see, by internal dissension, by quarrelling and strife; by none of these, but by a resolute performance of the duty laid on each, by cohesion, by self-sacrifice, by steady determination, in short, by the employment in our specific work of those methods which have been found successful elsewhere and everywhere the world through.

"It is an offence to some to take a ghost too seriously; with others it is a still greater offence not to take ghosts seriously enough."—W. T. STREAD in "More Ghost Stories."

London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.,

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SPIRIT MINISTRY AND SPIRIT DIRECTION.

Of the communication between spirits incarnate and discarnate it may be said that it is constant, active and immediate so far as our deeper affections and thoughts are concerned. The chain of life is continuous, unbroken. In the depths of his being every man is aware of his spiritual nature, but only here and there does that consciousness well up to the surface of the mind as a definite conviction. Hence the necessity for psychic evidences of a specific kind, such as we group under the term phenomena. That necessity arises as the result of a continual direction of the mind towards matter and the visible world, so that at last the man becomes almost unconscious of interior realities. Were his intuitions not so blunted he would see abundant evidence of the activity of a spirit world in the phenomena of his daily life, and that not merely in the normal course of things, but also in special instances of direction and guidance of the lives of certain of his fellows. In an experience of Spiritualism covering some thirty years we have seen more "psychic phenomena" in the affairs of our everyday life than ever we had seen in the séance room. Long ago we noticed that the influence of discarnate spirit intelligence came mainly in the form of silent monition. Delicate impulses were imparted, thoughts sown in prepared minds, so that specially selected persons should be brought into contact to carry out actively some beneficent plan originated on the other side. Sometimes this was led up to through painful ordeals and by devious ways. At other times it seemed more instant and direct, resulting in a succession of strange "coincidences," with the plain suggestion of a "guiding hand" throughout. But it was clear that although there was impulsion, there was no compulsion. The sacredness of individual rights was never invaded, even though these might result in mistaken judgments.

Little by little we came to see that along this line we might look for the truest and most normal and natural methods of spirit action. When these had to be translated into human speech and activity it was, generally speaking, a matter for those in this world. Hence, at the outset, there was a good deal of misunderstanding and misdirection. The man *here* failed, either because he mistranslated the idea of those on the other side of the veil, or relied upon them too much, leaving it to "the spirits" to do what was plainly his own duty, something, moreover, that only *he* could do. This enabled us to understand the failure of many cherished schemes, the apparent breaking of many promises, the downfall of many who gave themselves out as great leaders and ambassadors charged with spiritual missions. These things, however, belong mainly to the past, when, under the intoxication of the spiritual influx (it went like strong wine to the weaker heads), many foolish statements were made and absurd acts committed. The level mind and the critical judgment were rarer then than they are to-day. We used to hear of the agency of "evil spirits" in some particular case where glowing schemes came to nothing. Close investigation of such cases usually resulted in the discovery that the only "evil spirits" connected with the matter were the rashness, dulness or self-conceit of the human beings concerned. They were not even misled except to the extent that they misled themselves. They did not think out the question or realise that spirit communications travel normally only along interior lines and are apt to be strangely distorted when translated into literal forms. When a person tells us that some

undertaking or organisation in his charge is managed by the spirit world, we are apt to think poorly of his judgment. We know that our friends on the other side are deeply and actively interested in many movements for the improvement of this one. Of that we have convincing evidence. But we also know their limitations. They cannot do from there what we can do who are here on the spot. They can inspire, advise, aid and direct, but only if they have the active co-operation of those who are receptive and responsive to such inspiration and direction. The things of the material world can only be properly managed by the people of that world. The degree of aid they can receive from co-operators in the spirit world is governed entirely by their own fitness for the work. Any band of spirit co-adjutors in the undertaking, whatever it may be, can at best be little more than an "advisory committee." This applies with equal force to individual cases. Let no one suppose that any spirit friend will be raised up to do for him that which the laws of life require that he shall do for himself. Yet he is not asked to do more than his best, however poor it may be. When he has done that he has fulfilled the law of his being, and may calmly leave the rest to Heaven. A frenzied struggle to achieve the impossible is as foolish as complete apathy.

When we have realised that the most "direct" spirit message is that which is unspoken and unwritten, that the most conspicuous examples of spirit agency are those which are unobserved by any but ourselves individually, and the closest companionship of spirits that which is remotest from our physical surroundings, we shall have gone far to understand the true meaning of Spiritualism. No amount of physical phenomena can prove that man is a spirit. It can only awaken the mind to a realisation of an idea that has got buried under a mass of rubbish—the rubbish of false teaching, false thinking, and the multitude of shams of which the world to-day is being painfully cleared to reveal the soul like "the star in the dust heap." In that work the signs of spirit ministry and spirit direction are plainly apparent to all those who have eyes to see.

THE FINANCIAL QUESTION: SOME DONATIONS.

Viscountess Molesworth, in forwarding £10, on behalf of herself and Lord Molesworth, writes:—

"We think Mr. Stanley Gordon's suggestion most excellent, and as he heads the list of 100 subscribers at £10 each, we herewith enclose that amount as seconders, and hope the rest will follow quickly."

Mr. Charlton Templeman Speer writes:—

"I think the suggestion of the Rev. Stanley Gordon in *LIGHT* of June 21st a most excellent one, and it should be helpful if a fairly general response be given. I have very great pleasure for my part in enclosing a cheque for £10 and trust you will receive many others."

THE CASE OF MR. F. T. MUNNINGS.

We are told that Mr. Munnings is ill as a consequence of the adverse criticism directed towards his appearances as a medium. Having regard to the reports sent to us, we may, without raising the question of the genuineness of his powers, suggest that in any case he will be wise to refrain from giving further public séances, as the results appear to be so uneventful.

Since writing the foregoing we have received a visit from Mr. Percy R. Street, who has been good enough to visit Bournemouth and make an exhaustive inquiry into this case. Mr. Street informs us that there is no evidence whatever, either direct or circumstantial, of actual fraud, and that the charges appear to be based entirely upon assumptions and appearances. The first sittings, which were claimed by several of the people chiefly concerned as highly satisfactory and evidential, were held under circumstances which Mr. Street considers to have been of an exceedingly lax and inconclusive character; and were, therefore, open to the gravest objections on this ground alone. The medium was not held or searched, nor were the necessary precautions against manipulation adopted: the position of the bells and tambourine (which were sounded) and other objects which were handed to sitters, being such as to leave those objects well within the reach of the medium. As we said before, the only satisfactory solution of the matter is that Mr. Munnings should give a séance under scientifically test conditions. Mr. Street made a proposal to the medium to this effect, which Mr. Munnings states that he will consider.

LORD GLENCONNER ON PSYCHIC RESEARCH.

We are now able to present a full report of the speech of Lord Glenconner, as chairman, on the occasion of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's address at Queen's Hall, on Sunday, the 22nd ult. :—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am glad to be on this platform to-day not only to support Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the work he is so strenuously undertaking, but also to say a few words on a subject that is exercising the minds of many people to-day. It is a subject that has interested me for some years past, and one aspect of which has been brought vividly upon my notice during the last three years.

It is not my intention to deal this morning with any personal experiences that have been the result of my investigation of this subject. I intend, rather, to give expression to the opinion these results have led me to form, together with one or two observations that have a direct bearing on the position that Spiritualism holds in the public mind to-day.

The path of wisdom is that of an open mind and an ordered judgment; the path of knowledge that of observed fact and inductive method. Only by a slow and tedious accumulation of facts tending to show that mind works independently of the physical organism, can the scientific materialist be met on his own ground.

It is this work that the Society for Psychical Research is patiently undertaking. The value of its work is inestimable, and I would like to see the Society working under the ægis of the Church, for their paths lie, as I see it, in the same direction: the destruction of materialistic views, and a fuller and more scientific knowledge of the constitution of Man.

I regret the attitude the Church holds towards this movement. To maintain, as she does, a rigid inflexibility in the face of the great mass of evidence that is daily accumulating—evidence that shows communication between the two worlds to be possible—is to chain herself to a rock in a rising tide.

As a Scot, I am proud of my national Church in this respect. A leading Minister of the Church of Scotland, one of the outstanding preachers of the day, is a member of the Society for Psychical Research, and it is known to me that among the smaller country parishes, the ministers, characteristically awake to religious issues of moment, are examining the subject, and taking in the literature with an open mind.

If this line were pursued by the Church at large, I believe she would discover that in fighting the Higher Spiritualism she is fighting a benefactor.

For, apart from the phenomena, which often and justifiably give rise to objection, but which, nevertheless, are of immense significance, apart from the phenomena, I say, what is the teaching of Spiritualism?

Its tenets may be given as seven principles :—

- (1) The Fatherhood of God;
- (2) The brotherhood of man;
- (3) Continuous existence;
- (4) The communion of souls, and the ministry of angels;
- (5) Personal responsibility;
- (6) Compensation and retribution hereafter for good or evil done on earth; and
- (7) A path of infinite progression.

In these seven principles is much that is identical with the teaching of the Churches, save only the fifth principle, which distinctly implies the inefficacy of substituted atonement. Spiritualism rejects—and I think rightly rejects—the idea that man may escape the consequences of his past, by belief in the goodness of another.

And here it is in absolute accord with the words of Christ Himself (Matt. vii. 21). But let me make myself clear on one point. Spiritualism is not a religion, but it throws light on the New Testament, and establishes our faith on the truth of the immortality of the spirit, rather than on the resurrection of the body.

I believe much mis-apprehension upon this subject arises from a confusion of the two aspects of Spiritualism, the two parts that make one whole, I mean the phenomena connected with it, and its ethical teaching.

The one pertains to the scientists, the other to the Church, and research work has been carried out to this extent that the problem of Immortality may be now looked on as a scientific problem.

The attitude of some scientists in this matter, however, provides one of the anomalies of human nature. It is the spectacle of a group of men, claiming to be seekers of knowledge, yet along this particular road closing their minds to serious investigation in a thoroughly unscientific manner.

This, of itself, would be of less consequence were they to be content with a negative attitude; but on the contrary they publish their views on a subject in which they are specifically uninstructed, giving to the side of ignorance and prejudice the support of their names. In this connection great honour is due to such investigators as Dr. Schrenck-Notzing and Professor Crawford, who are willing to give fifteen or twenty years to a close study of the phenomena before they open their lips or take up a pen—these are the investigators of value; may their tribe increase!

And—happily—we have among us some men whose position in the forefront of science is equalled by their courage and liberty of mind; whose unselfish devotion to the cause of Truth leads them to give of their innermost for the common good.

But now the time at my disposal this morning is drawing short. Let me conclude by saying that I stand on this platform to-day to tell you that I know communication with those we call the dead is possible: that I believe it to be permitted, and that I have learnt it is equally consoling to those who have passed on as it is to us who remain.

I have arrived at no hasty conclusion in the matter. It is not in my nature to do so, but the evidence I have obtained I consider to be conclusive, and I hold my belief in a better world assured.

Man, in his long journey, has taken many wrong turnings upon the road, but none that has led him into more rocky and barren country than this misprision of the true nature of Death.

Let me glance at one of the results of a right understanding of it.

I have seen the currents of home life once more take up their accustomed flow, lit by the sunshine of well-remembered and recovered characteristics; deepened, moreover, by a serene tranquillity, so that it has been, at times, almost as if the great affliction had never been. I have seen the tears of desolation changed into the tears of joy, and I take this opportunity to publicly attest my recognition of the unchanged energy and undying affection that has compassed this.

And is this consolation—I ask you—this balm of the spirit, is this the outcome of an evil thing? Do we gather figs from thistles? By the fruit shall you know the nature of the tree. No, Death is not the last enemy that shall be overcome, for Death is a process of Nature; it is the separation of Death, that to some of us has already been greatly mitigated, and which, one day, may be abolished from the earth. I find it more in consonance with my conception of a Divine Love that this should be so. Death is a gateless Barrier. Such of us who know this, on each side, walk through.

The separation that exists between this world and the next exists, I say, because of our ignorance, and not by the decree of God.

A BUREAU FOR INQUIRERS.

To meet the present great demand for information on matters relating to Spiritualism, it has been decided to establish an Inquiry Bureau in connection with the London Spiritualist Alliance, of which Mr. Percy R. Street has kindly consented to take charge as Honorary Director. Mr. Street will attend at the offices of the Alliance, 6, Queen Square, on Tuesday afternoons from three to four, and on Friday evenings from six to eight, to meet inquirers and give them information and advice.

EVENING.

There is deep silence in the house of God;
Now falls the day, and feet which softly trod
The long and lonely aisles are far away—
Some like poor sheep, already going astray.
Round the old rafters and the timbers dim
Of the high vault an echo of the hymn
Last sung rolls on and on and may not die,
Being spirit-born, seeking the open sky.
The angels, too, are gone; with steady flight
Some mount towards heaven's love-begotten light;
And some unseen with those who here have prayed
Are gone rejoicing home, and there have stayed.
E'en now the silent shades of evening bring
A veil and gently shroud each holy thing.
But round the altar where a while ago
He came, there lingers still a golden glow.

F. F.-O.

Mrs. M. P. SLACK, certificated nurse, wishes publicly and gratefully to acknowledge the efficacy of the treatment received by her during a painful illness, from the healing mediumship of Mr. E. J. Lofts, of the Wimbledon Spiritualist Church. She states that she was relieved from pain, with the disappearance of some of the symptoms after the first treatment.

On the 19th ult. a meeting of the newly-formed National Jewish Spiritualists' Society was held at the Pioneer Rooms, 25, Princelet-street, E.1, the President, Mr. Thomas Pugh, in the chair, when a very able lecture was given by Mr. F. Merry on "Life on the Astral Plane." Early in the proceedings a resolution was unanimously passed protesting against the massacres of the Jews in Poland, and at the close a good collection was taken for the "Pogrom [Anti-Pogrom?] Propaganda Fund" of the "Jewish Times." The nucleus of a library has been formed, and friends are cordially invited to attend the society's meetings, which will continue to be held at the above rooms every Thursday, at 8 p.m.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AT QUEEN'S HALL.

FINAL ADDRESS: VISCOUNT MOLESWORTH PRESIDES.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle delivered the last of his three addresses on "Death and the Hereafter" at the Queen's Hall on Sunday last. The lecturer was in splendid form, and his remarks were constantly interrupted by applause. Though in substance the same as the previous addresses, Sir Arthur introduced some new matter. For instance, he supplied a trenchant reply to criticisms contained in an article in the Press by Mr. E. F. Benson.

Lord Molesworth, who presided, said:—

"I feel it a great honour to preside here this morning and to have the pleasure of introducing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as a lecturer on Spiritualism. It is a subject which deals with spirit communion and the continuity of life in the great hereafter. I am very glad to be associated with Sir Arthur in this great crusade. As one who has been personally convinced, I am very glad of the opportunity of marking to some extent my gratitude for the comfort and hope that I, or I should say we, have derived from the researches of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and other great authorities. Sir Arthur's name is well-known to you. He is entitled to be listened to with respect, and on this subject I might even say with reverence."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, referring to the fact that the present was the last of his meetings in London, said that from the considerable correspondence which had reached him the effect of the presentation of the truths of Spiritualism seemed to have been to bring conviction and comfort to a large number of people. He believed in his heart that it was the religious teaching that came from Spiritualism which would prove to be the greatest thing the war had left behind it.

Dealing with the darkness of séances, Sir Arthur said that this was peculiar to the phenomena séance, which depended on etheric causes. Ether was a transmitter of light, and if the ether was so engaged, it was not available for the transmission of psychic power. Wireless was governed by the same laws: it was known wireless messages could be sent further at night than by day, because the ether was not engaged in transmitting light.

"Why are spirit powers not used to locate missing people?" was a question often asked. The idea that a sailor, drowned in mid-Atlantic, who knew nothing of mediums or of Spiritualism, should convey information as to his drowning, was preposterous. It was like asking a man to send a telegram from a village where there was no telegraph office. "But that psychic laws can be extended and used for the detection of crime, I have no doubt whatever," said Sir Arthur, "and they should be used more than they are. But we must not ask for the impossible."

The lecturer made a spirited reply to a recent article by Mr. E. F. Benson. Reviewing what he described as the extraordinarily convincing tests obtained through the clairvoyance of Mrs. B., he said that he had sent the letters containing the particulars to Mr. Benson, because the latter had said that "mediumship was an odious trade." He sent him the whole forty-six letters, and Mr. Benson examined them and published an article in reference to them. In this, when speaking of successes, he had childishly put the word in inverted commas, but when alluding to failures the word was printed in the ordinary way. That was not decent controversy at all. (Applause.) Mr. Benson's explanation was that what was told to the sitters was the result of thought reading, and he expressed this opinion in a cock-sure way. In saying that he was only throwing dust in the eyes of the world.

"Thought reading," the lecturer proceeded, "is when I have a definite idea in my mind and another person is receptive and I convey the thought of, say, the ace of spades into his brain. If I do that I consider I have done well. In that sense thought reading does exist. But to take it for granted that in thirty-seven cases out of forty-six the medium could look at people and take out of their brains the knowledge of their friends, incidents in their lives, as well as their names—that has never been proved in the world, no, never."

To give thought reading as an explanation for what had occurred was a perfectly preposterous thing. Granting the existence of thought reading, it would not cover the facts. One lady who visited the medium said she had to write to a number of her relatives before she established the correctness of things told to her. The medium certainly could not have got that information by any process of thought reading, because the facts were unknown to the sitter. Other cases were quoted where it was shown that the medium, instead of following the thoughts of the sitter, corrected those thoughts where they were in error. The results achieved by the medium were most astounding. "Either Mr. Benson is not a man to appreciate evidence," said the lecturer with some warmth, "or he has read the evidence most carelessly." Referring to the tone of arrogance in the remarks, Sir Arthur added, "There is a mental insolence about them which I very greatly resent." (Applause.)

Dealing with the allegation that a certain medium had been prosecuted by the police, and that this was something which reflected on her character, Sir Arthur said: "Every medium in England is liable to be prosecuted by the police. It is

due to the rotten state of the law. There is not an early Christian, not an apostle, not St. Paul, who would not have been up at Bow-street if he had been alive to-day." (Applause.)

In conclusion the lecturer asked what was Christianity going to do about Spiritualism? Were the Churches going to take his volume of evidence and digest it, or were they going to stand aloof and call it diabolism? If they did not admit the truth of the revelations, sooner or later a Church would rise which would displace them.

POINTS IN SIR A. CONAN DOYLE'S ADDRESSES.

I am not here to proselytise—I am here to tell you the truth.

Father Vaughan was talking through his biretta! (in reference to evil spirits).

Our opponents are divided into two classes—those who don't believe, and those who make impossible claims for the subject.

The London Spiritualist Alliance is like a big ship with very small engines.

I started with every prejudice against Spiritualism. There is no sceptic who can be more prejudiced than I was.

There is no difficulty you can have, that I was not also confronted with.

It was no less than twenty-five years before I made up my mind.

Do you think the spirit world is going to stoop to satisfy a policeman disguised as a farmer??

You must remember that a medium does nothing himself, but merely acts as a transmitter of intelligence.

D. D. Home never took money for his gift. He was once offered two thousand pounds to place himself at the disposal of a circle—the Union Circle—in Paris—but he refused the offer.

I believe in my heart that it is the religious teaching coming from Spiritualism which will be the greatest thing the war has left behind it.

HUMOURS OF WITCHCRAFT.

By HORACE LEAF.

The "witchcraft persecution" which afflicted Europe and America for several centuries like a terrible scourge, was not without its humorous side. Naturally, the more sincere the persecutors the more laughable were many of the incidents that arose. In Scotland, where the craze appears to have been worse than in England, the humours of witchcraft were perhaps more frequent. It was King James I. (James VI. of Scotland) who ventured to put in print his great knowledge of devils, and he deals so explicitly with the matter that one is constrained to admit he must have known more about imps than about angels. To James we are indebted for the explanation why women more than men were addicted to converse with Satan. To him it was "easier, for as that sex is frailer than man is, so is it easier to be intrapped in these grosse snares of the divell, as was overwell proved to be trew, by the serpent's deceiving of Eve at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sexe." This shrewd man well deserved to be called "the wisest fool in Christendom."

There can be no reasonable doubt that if witches and wizards were guilty of doing all that was attributed to them they richly deserved many of the terrible things that befell them. No punishment seems to have been too severe for the manner in which they pestered good William Montgomerie, of Burnside. To infest a respectable man's house "with cats these three months bygone," was bad enough, but to permit them to make a "fearfull and unnatural noise" so as to terribly frighten his wife, was past all endurance, hence his urgent petition to the "Sherrif-Depute, of Caithness," to run his persecutor to earth in a very literal sense.

But Satan himself was often a great nuisance. Not content always to leave his nefarious schemes to the care of his misguided human emissaries, he would make his appearance in all kinds of odd places and forms. "Sometimes he appeared in the likeness of a great black horse and other times riding on a black horse." Then by way of variation he would appear as a black cloud, and again as a black hen. On more than one occasion he came as a dandy, well-dressed, and with a neatly trimmed beard of a hue commonly called ginger. Nor was he exclusively fond of old toothless hags, as is commonly reported, for at more than one important witch-gathering he was observed to show great preference

for "sonsie braw lassies," and who can honestly blame him? Of course, it caused trouble in the camp, for his devotees seem to have considered that since their oaths binding them to his service were equally strict, he should have been sportsman enough to show them equal appreciation. By the "unco guid," this was all as clear as daylight. They expected nothing else than that the arch-enemy of the human race should deceive even his own best friends.

The degradation to which witches and wizards descended passes all comprehension. The strange devices they adopted can be compared in awfulness only with the notions that arose in the terror-stricken minds of those who warred so successfully against them. They tried to drown King James by hurling a specially prepared dead cat into the sea. No decent sea could hope to remain passive under such treatment, and so a terrible storm arose, which very nearly deprived the world of that masterly piece of literature, "Daemonologie in forme of a Dialogue, written by the high and mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc."

In 1603 a witch employed a cat to destroy three hogs and a cow belonging to a farmer she hated. The farmer, who evidently believed in employing witchcraft to overcome witchcraft, saved the situation to some extent by burning a pig alive. The cat could not stand this, "and would never go thither any more." The farmer probably burnt the pig alive to get some idea of how the witch would act when she was led to the stake to undergo a similar fate. Another witch, who had several witnesses against her, showed a predilection for taking on the form of a toad and crawling along the hearth of anyone she did not like. Woe betide them if they swept her away, for, her anger thus kindled, she would cause every hen of the offending party to die unless a hen was burnt alive to counteract her evil spell. To one poor fellow she acted in a dreadful manner, simply because she had once been angry with him. He had a dun cow which he had tied up in his house. Under the insidious influence of the witch he became filled with fear lest any evil befall her and needs must caress her tail and kiss her every time he came near her! To a dun-cow in the house he had no objection, but an irresistible impulse to fondle the animal in such an ungallant way was more than he cared for, and so he applied to the proper authority for the removal of the witch.

Spells are dangerous things, and like boomerangs often return to those who cast them, as witness the following.

Dr. Fian, a notable sorcerer, "who was burned in Edinboro' in Januarie last, 1591," desiring to bewitch the sister of one of his scholars for his own wicked purpose, requested the boy to procure three of her hairs, and for this purpose gave him a piece of conjured paper wherein to deposit them. But the mother, becoming alarmed at these suspicious circumstances—probably knowing Dr. Fian was no less important a personage than the "Devil's secretary," as was later amply proved by his own confession when under torture—determined to circumvent the magician. So she "clipped off three haire from the udder of a cow, and wrapped them in the same paper, which she again delivered to the boy, then willing him to give the same to his said maister, which he immediately did." The schoolmaster, not being wizard enough to tell the difference between hairs from a cow and those of a young lady, cast his spell and—paid the price. The heifer straightway fell in love with him and showed it in a very forward manner. Every time she saw the doctor she made towards him, "leaping and dauncing upon him, and following him forth of the church, and to what place soever he went, to the great admiration of all the townsmen of Saltpans, and many other who did beholde the same"; and it is to be hoped to their edification. Meantime we may imagine Satan enjoying the humour of the situation and refraining from going to the aid of his oppressed and misguided secretary and thus spoiling the joke.

Casting spells for love-making was always regarded as a particular gift and even weakness on the part of magic-workers of either sex. It seems to have been quite dangerous for old men or women to win the affection of members of the opposite sex much younger than themselves. John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, realised this, for one of his disputants, Nicol Burne, bitterly inveighs against him as a sorcerer for having in his old age secured the affections of Lord Ochiltree's daughter, "one damosil of nobil blude, and he ane old decrepit creature of maist bais degree of onie that could be found in the country." The disparity between their ages was certainly considerable, as Knox was nearly sixty, whilst the young lady was not yet twenty. The remarks about the reformer's "bais degree" must be attributed to the kind of zeal that characterised religious disputants of the sixteenth century.

It is well known that, as death approaches, some are able to see the dwellers on the threshold or those who have drawn near to help them put off the heavy mantle of the flesh. . . . We are told of a friar who lay on his deathbed during that night in which St. Francis passed over into the light. The friar saw the beloved founder of his Order, and cried aloud to him, "Stay a moment, father; behold, I am coming with thee!" and immediately departing from the tabernacle of the body, he followed after St. Francis, even as he had said—"The Wonders of the Saints," by F. FIELDING-OLD, M.A.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

A. M. H., who has quietly devoted himself to work for the blind by producing books on psychic science in Braille type, tells us of a visit to a medium to whom this was unknown and who described a spirit form near our correspondent, a guide as was supposed, "carrying a staff, with a silver lamp." The medium then asked, "Why does he [the spirit] say 'Light to the Blind'?" A.M.H. was much impressed by the experience.

* * * *

Telepathy crops up everywhere. In his speech on the Tuesday of last week in defence of Mr. Philip de Laszlo, Sir John Simon referred to a curious telepathic experience of the artist in regard to the death of his mother, related by him in a letter to his sister. "Yesterday, Friday morning," wrote Mr. de Laszlo, "I could not explain it but, contrary to my usual custom, I had a desire to put on a black tie, and when we went in to breakfast I received the news of mother's death."

* * * *

In a speech last week Lord Haldane said he did not intend to discuss Spiritualism. There was a good deal of fraud and imposture in it, and at the only séance he attended he defeated the medium. But there was one test of Spiritualism. He thought that was quality, and up to the present that had been lacking. Yes, there is a deficiency of quality in many things nowadays, even politics. We observe that Lord Haldane has attended one séance, and are only surprised that he has not written a book on the subject. So many do.

* * * *

The letters home of the late Lieutenant G. H. Whyte, of the London Irish Rifles, which have been edited by his wife and issued by the Theosophical Publishing House under the title, "Glimpses of the Great War" (cloth, 3/6) are dated from three fronts—France, Macedonia and Malta, and Egypt and Palestine—and present, therefore, very varied pictures of scenery and incident, but through the whole narrative (as the foreword points out) runs a splendid note of confidence in the Divine plan—that out of all the misery and slaughter will arise a sweeter and better state of society.

* * * *

The ripples in the sea of propaganda reach a long way. Our contemporary, "The Message of Life" (New Zealand), tells of a commercial traveller deeply interested in the subject who takes this method of spreading the truth: "I don't broach Spiritualism all at once, but take this way; I perhaps say, 'Conan Doyle is making a stir in England with his lectures on the New Revelation. Have you read about it?' As a rule the answer is 'No, what is the revelation?' This opens the way to a conversation, and generally ends up by my saying, 'I'll send you something to read on the subject.'"

* * * *

Mr. Horace Leaf's lantern lecture on "Materialisations" at the College of Ambulance, Vere-street, on June 24th, attracted so many people that numbers were unable to obtain admission. The lecturer gave an interesting account of the series of remarkable photographs of spirit materialisations shown on the screen. Special attention was paid to the results obtained by Sir William Crookes, and pictures of the famous medium, Florence Cook, and the materialised "Katie King" were exhibited. Mr. Leaf announced that the lecture would be repeated, the announcements being duly advertised.

* * * *

Mrs. Cannock, who was giving clairvoyant descriptions at Kingston last Sunday night, relates that a number of soldier spirits adopted a novel and convincing method of making known their identity. Led by a young lieutenant, the soldiers advanced in single file up the aisle. Each man bore on his chest what appeared to be a large placard on which was written his name and the place where he had lived. On reading these names off, with descriptions, Mrs. Cannock found them all recognised by members of the audience. A curious feature of the proceedings was that as each name was recognised the spirit faded away, leaving his fellow behind displayed to the clairvoyant. The incident is new in Mrs. Cannock's experience.

* * * *

At the present day it may be worth while to recall Sir William Crookes' warning against forming a judgment on the powers of a medium from too limited an experience. Writing in June, 1874, to Mr. Serjeant Cox, in reference to Miss Showers, he says, "I have only had four sances altogether with her, and that is quite an insufficient number. I had between thirty and forty sances with Miss Cook before I felt justified in coming to a positive opinion. I notice that with every new medium one or two sances only leave suspicion on the mind. It was so in the case of Home, Williams, Herne, Miss Fox, Miss Cook and Miss Showers."

* * * *

Sir William, in a further letter to Serjeant Cox, after stating his thorough belief in Florence Cook's truth and

honesty, says: "Knowing how misled I was in Miss Cook's case at first, with even stronger grounds for suspicion than I have with Miss Showers, I wish to reserve judgment till I have more opportunities of experimenting." The same spirit of caution is needed to-day. The issues involved are so tremendously important that the coolest judgment is necessary before we denounce an honest medium as a fraud or on the other hand endorse the performances of some cunning and heartless rogue who attempts to make capital out of the faith of people who are suffering the pangs of bereavement.

MEDIUMSHIP IN THE LABORATORY.

To the series of addresses given in the Picture Gallery at the residence of Lord and Lady Glenconner at Queen Anne's Gate, Mr. W. E. Benton, F.G.S., contributed an interesting lecture on Monday afternoon last under the title "Recurrent Ideas in the Design of Nature," in the course of which he dealt with "Crystals in Rocks and later as Flowers in Plants," "Magnetism in Rocks and later as Conscience in Humanity" and "Catalysis in Matter and later as Mediumism in Spiritualism." He showed how the idea of beauty in crystals was afterwards outworked in the vegetable world in the form of flowers; he dealt with the magnetic forces, which seemed to be carried upwards until they emerged in man as conscience. In catalysis, however, where chemical elements which will not blend are harmoniously united by the introduction of another element, which itself remains entirely unaffected, the process seemed to be carried up to a stage beyond the human world, as illustrated by the medium whose presence is necessary to bring about unity between the life forces operating here and those in the unseen world. The lecture was admirably suggestive of the possibility of establishing parallels between physical and psychical phenomena. The Rev. F. Fielding-Ould, M.A., occupied the chair, and there was some little discussion at the close. We hope to give a fuller account of the address next week.

"THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS."

(FROM LIGHT OF JULY 6TH, 1889.)

I believe that raids on mediums are not always conducted with discretion. While I have for many years past expressed and publicly acted upon a conviction that it is a duty we owe to ourselves as Spiritualists to make fraud impossible by the conditions on which we insist, I have also said and felt that we ought to be very sure that what bears on its surface an apparent resemblance to fraud is really and truly false and deceptive. I have found it very hard myself to discriminate in some cases that I have personally investigated. And, in more than one, I have revised on further experience, an unfavourable opinion that I had at first formed. We want less of the wonderful and more of the demonstrably true. If mediums would cultivate the power of producing simple, convincing phenomena that no fair mind can question, they would do us a much greater service than by startling credulous people with marvels.

—From Notes by "M.A. (Oxon)."

If there is a Captain Napier living in Darlington, will he kindly communicate with "Brigadier General" at the office of LIGHT.

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.—The Spiritualists' National Union is holding its annual conference at Nottingham on Saturday and Sunday, the 5th and 6th inst. During the past three years, owing to the exigencies of the war, the Union has been compelled to hold its conferences merely on a *pro forma* basis. This year it is resuming its normal functions, and will be the occasion for the discussion of many questions of national importance in connection with the work of organisation and propaganda. It is deeply regretted that Mr. Hanson G. Hey, the secretary, is incapacitated by his illness from taking any active part. Our cordial sympathies are with the S.N.U.

WRITING OF Miss Violet Burton's mediumship, a correspondent remarks that "Father John," her inspirer, shows a distinctive personality and has given evidence of the truth of his statement that he was in earth-life a disciple of St. Francis D'Assisi. His work is purely on spiritual lines, and he does not permit his medium to take money for her gifts. Our correspondent adds: "The wisdom and discernment shown in Father John's personal talks have aided many to solve the puzzles and perplexities of life, and helped them to a truer realization of its meaning."

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.—The Treasurer, Mr. T. H. Wright (of 10, Victoria Avenue, Sowerby Bridge) sends us the following list of subscriptions to the Parliamentary Fund (Witchcraft Act Amendment) for the quarter ending June 30th, 1919: Amount brought forward, £1,131 12s. 1½d.; Theatre Lane Lyceum, Armley (per Mr. E. W. Oaten), £2; H. B., Portsmouth, £1; Mr. Hoskins, Brighton, 10s.; Mrs. Lucy Jones, Leicester, 10s.; Chamdester-road Spiritual Mission, Bournemouth, towards expenses, Mr. Oaten social, £7 12s.; Mr. S. Foster, Camberbach, £1; Earlstown Spiritual Church, 11s.; bank interest, £10 9s. 6d. Total, £1,155 4s. 7½d.

A SPIRITUALIST "ACADEMY."

By A. T. CONNOR.

In 1635 the King of France, at the instance of Cardinal Richelieu, established the French Academy as "a sovereign organ of opinion" on all important literary matters before the public. A member of the French Academy submits his work before publication, and it lies with the Academy to decide whether the work should be published with its authority. Non-members also can apply for this authorisation; and, in addition, the Academy is empowered to examine and judge works published without its authority, and issue considered opinions. The form, method, precision, proportion and relation of parts of an intellectual work depend mainly on quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence, and an institution like the French Academy is calculated to promote clearness, correctness and propriety in writing and speaking, and besides create a force of educated opinion and serve as a centre and rallying point for it, giving it a power which it could not otherwise possess, thereby evolving an intellectual standard to which all workers would defer. A French writer knows that his work is going before competent judges, and works accordingly; whilst in England competent critics are so isolated that they form no powerful body of opinion to keep writers within bounds.

Readers of Matthew Arnold will recognise the foregoing as a summary of the chief points in one of his "Essays in Criticism." Some months ago, when reading "Of Academies," it occurred to me that a Spiritualist body of a similar nature to the French Academy was very necessary if the literature of our movement was ever to be placed on the sound footing of coherence and general reliability. That opinion has since been confirmed by the torrent of literature on things Spiritualistic, in book and pamphlet form, now pouring from the press. But although bombarded by inquirers with the undeniable fact that our generally accepted literature was self-contradictory, and the cause of endless mental confusion regarding our facts and philosophy, I could see no way out of the position, and so kept my opinion to myself.

A possible solution of the difficulty has appeared in the announcement of the projected formation of a Central Spiritualist Institute in London, one of whose functions will be the production and distribution of literature, elementary, philosophic and scientific. The Institute has here the opportunity of forming a Spiritualist Academy, by selecting for the control of its publications a committee of the most eminent workers in our movement. In Spiritualism the competent critics are indeed isolated, and without power to influence the general trend of our literature, and any writer who can afford the cost of publication is able to rush into print and spread confusion and despair amongst thinking inquirers. For we have no set standard, and to the inquirer all Spiritualist books and pamphlets are alike.

A Publications Committee, with power to set up a fair standard of agreement in essentials, and to accept, classify and authorise—or, if necessary, reject—all works submitted, and with liberty to prepare and issue commentaries on works already published, would do much to set our literature on a satisfactory footing. The periodical publication in the Spiritualist and other journals of the Committee's list of approved and authorised works would soon convince authors that the only way to success lay through conforming to the standard.

The existence of the Academy need be no deterrent to the author with unpopular or advanced opinions. The Committee would not be asked whether they agreed with the author's conclusions, but whether in their opinion the conclusions were reached as a result of clear, logical reasoning from attained or attainable knowledge. The various publications could then be classified as scientific, philosophic, elementary, "essential," or "non-essential," subsidiary, etc.—or any other form of classification found desirable or practical. The personal opinions of the members of the Committee need never be called into expression.

Matthew Arnold favours the adoption of a modified form of the French Academy idea in England, as a means of raising the standard of what he calls the journeyman work of literature. There is an immense amount of this class of work awaiting literary Spiritualists. An authoritative history of our movement and its pioneers; a description of the spirit world and the conditions prevailing there; the collection, classification and tabulation of phenomena; the definition of Spiritualistic terms and the issue of elementary and advanced text-books—all these are included in the journeyman work of our literature, and call for the controlling influence of a central critical authority.

There are many other points that might be urged, but those I have suggested will, I hope, convince earnest Spiritualists that the idea of a Spiritualist Academy is at least worthy of consideration.

God in us from our hearts veil after veil
Keeps lifting, till we see with His own sight,
And all together run in unity's delight.

—G. MACDONALD

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. — 6.30, Mr. A. Vout Peters. July 13th, Mrs. A. Harper.

The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke-place, W.2. — 11, Mrs. Worthington; 6.30, Dr. W. J. Vanstone. July 9th, 7.30, Mr. A. Vout Peters.

Walthamstow. — 342, Hoe-street. — 7, Mr. J. W. Humphries.

Kingston-on-Thames.—Bishop's Hall, Thames-street.— 6.30,

Shepherd's Bush. — 78, Becklow-road. — 7, Mrs. Golding. Thursday, 8, Mrs. Stenson, open meeting.

Peckham. — Lausanne-road. — 11.30, circle; 7, Mrs. A. Boddington. July 13th, Alderman D. J. Davis.

Lewisham. — The Priory, High-street. — 6.30, Rev. Susanna Harris, address and descriptions.

Croydon.—117b, High-street.—11, Mr. P. Scholey; 6.30, Mrs. Julie Scholey.

Reading.—Spiritual Mission, 16, Blagrove-street.— 11.30, Mr. R. Wells; 3, Lyceum; 6.45, Mrs. John Jackson.

Holloway.—Grove-dale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station). —11, Mr. T. O. Todd; 3, Lyceum; 7, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Smith.

Battersea.—45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.— 11.15, circle service; 6.30, Mr. Horace Leaf. July 10th, 8.15, clairvoyance.

Woolwich and Plumstead.—Perseverance Hall, Villas-rd., Plumstead.—7, Mrs. Alice Harper, address and clairvoyance. Wednesday, 8, Miss George, address and clairvoyance.

Camberwell.—Windsor-road, Denmark Hill, S.E.15.— 11, Mr. G. T. Brown; 6.30, Mr. Nickels (of Luton). July 13th, 6.30, Mrs. Cannock.

Brighton.—Athenæum Hall.—11.15 and 7, Miss Violet Burton, addresses; 3, Lyceum. Wednesday, 8, public meeting, Mr. Everitt.

Brighton Spiritualist Brotherhood.—Old Steine Hall.— Second anniversary, special services, 11.30 and 7. Monday, 7.45, Mr. A. Maskell. Public tea Tuesday, 5.30, meeting 7.30. Thursday, 7.30, Hove Town Hall, Sir A. Conan Doyle (Chairman, Mr. Vout Peters). Tickets, 5/- to 1/3.

Mrs. ALICE HARPER, from America, Australia and New Zealand, lecturer on Spiritualism and kindred subjects, healer and psychic, will accept engagements from societies, churches and others for single or course lectures in any part of Great Britain. Address for dates, 72, Agamemnon-road, West Hampstead, London, N.W.

Spiritualist Services are held in LONDON on Sundays as follows.

	A.M	P.M
*Battersea, 45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction ...	11-30	6-30
*Brixton, 143a, Stockwell Park Road ...		7-0
Camberwell, People's Church, Windsor Road, Denmark Hill ...	11-0	6-30
*Clapham, Reform Club, St. Luke's Road ...	11-0	7-0
Croydon, Gymnasium Hall, High Street ...	11-0	7-0
*Ealing, 5a, Uxbridge Road, Ealing Broadway ...		7-0
Forest Gate, E.L.S.A., Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove ...		7-0
*Fulham, 12, Lettice Street, Munster Road ...	11-15	7-0
Hackney, 240a, Amhurst Road ...		7-0
Harrow, Co-operative Hall, Mason's Avenue, Wealdstone ...		7-0
*Kingston, Assembly Rooms, Bishop's Hall, Thames Street ...		6-30
Lewisham, The Priory, 410, High Street ...		6-30
*Little Ilford, Third Avenue Corner, Church Road ...		6-30
London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke Place, Bayswater, W. ...	11-0	6-30
*Manor Park Spiritual Church, Shrewsbury Road ...	11-0	6-30
Marylebone, Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour Street ...		6-30
*Peckham, Lausanne Hall, Lausanne Road ...	11-30	7-0
*Plaistow, Spiritualists' Hall, Breemar Road ...		6-30
*Plumstead, Perseverance Hall, Villas Road ...		7-0
Richmond, Castle Assembly Rooms ...		7-0
*Stratford, Idmiston Road, Forest Lane... ..		7-0
*Tottenham, "The Chestnuts," 684, High Road ...		7-0
*Upper Holloway, Grove-dale Hall, Grove-dale Road ...	11-15	7-0
*Wimbledon, 4 and 5, Broadway ...		6.30
*Lyceum (Spiritualists' Sunday School) at 3 p.m.		

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