

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Again the stars of Noël rise,  
Tranquil and white in winter skies,  
A mystic script on Heaven's page  
Uncomprehended by the sage;  
But always Love can read aright  
The wondrous message limned in light.

G.

### CHRISTMAS GHOSTS.

Time was when ghost stories were a prominent feature of the Christmas annuals and magazines. Most of the stories were fictions woven by skilful pens about haunted granges, old mills, "uncanny rooms" and the like. If it were a serial story it was sometimes arranged that the Christmas instalment should have a spectral episode especially introduced. In later years the fashion seemed to die out, and when it was revived a new element crept in. There was a tendency towards "real" ghost stories, marking, as we suppose, a feeling that the public was beginning to show an interest in Spiritualism. We trace the beginning of that period to the time when Mr. W. T. Stead brought out his "Ghostly Annual," now a good many years ago. It had a tremendous sale. But the stock of real ghost stories is a limited one, while the fictitious variety is inexhaustible. Even so we have observed that the fiction writers have had to conform to the newer and truer ideas regarding the world of spirits and that the old-fashioned type of ghost with the groan, the blue light and the clanking chain is out of date. To-day no story-writer can take the liberties with the ghost that the older writers practised with impunity. That seems to show the homage which in the long run fiction has always to pay to fact, a pleasing reflection, upon which, if it were not Christmas, we might devote a little homily.

\* \* \* \*

### SCIENCE AND CHRISTMAS.

We were led into the above reflections by the observation, earlier in the year, that certain esteemed contemporaries were preparing for the Christmas season by collecting true stories from those who had encountered ghosts or who had "mysterious experiences" of one kind or another. Some of the accounts have already appeared—we are responsible for at least one. But is it the weakness of human kind or the eternal child element in it which demands a certain embellishment, a little "warmth and colour" in its ghost stories? Certainly a "case" of the psychical research kind, told in scientific language, would seem strangely out of place in a Christmas magazine. It would lack the appeal to the "great heart" of the people upon which every editor of a popular magazine justly insists. It would be, as "Pet Marjorie" said

of the multiplication table, "what nature itself can't endure." The natural man, to use his own sinful language, does not care a "hoot" for Science in a matter which touches his affections. He wants to know whether a thing is true, not whether it is scientific. Seeing what passes as scientific nowadays, especially in psychic inquiry, we are sometimes inclined to agree with him. Like the French nobleman who protested against religion being allowed to invade the sanctity of private life, we declare against any invasion by Science of the hallowed and gracious sanctities of Yule-tide.

\* \* \* \*

### YULE CUSTOMS PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN.

The mingling of Pagan rites with the observances of the Christian festival may be a matter of regret for some, but it is all very human. The carols are Christian, but the evergreens, the Yule log and some other customs are probably prehistoric. The evergreens—holly and mistletoe and green leafage—were designed as a propitiation to the Nature spirits. The Yule log is a relic of fire worship—it is the one relic left at Christmas, and it is dying out. Yule (like Midsummer) was essentially a festival in honour of light and warmth and life. It was a time of bonfires such as the Bel fires of Cornwall and the St. John's fires abroad, and these fires celebrated the sun's greatest glory at midsummer and its revival after the shortest day in the winter season. There was a spiritual impulse behind all the rites—the dim perceptions by early man of the Divinity at the heart of things. They may pass but their essences remain, carried to higher levels with the progress of Humanity. We see them to-day as symbols of a diviner fire, a greater light, a higher life. Consequently they can all be taken quite harmoniously into the Christmas festival by those who see how Universal is its meaning and message.

### THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS FUND.

We have to acknowledge with grateful thanks the following donations:—

|                                 | £  | s. | d. |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Sir Arthur Conan Doyle .....    | 10 | 10 | 0  |
| Roy Holmyard .....              | 52 | 10 | 0  |
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| Miss E. Louisa C. Strode .....  | 10 | 0  | 0  |
| Anonymous .....                 | 1  | 1  | 0  |
| Dr. E. H. Worth .....           | 10 | 6  | 0  |

Further acknowledgments will be made next week.

DAVID GOW.  
FELICIA R. SCATCHERD.  
LEIGH HUNT.

NATIONAL LABORATORY OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—We direct attention to the announcement of the new laboratory in our advertisement pages. Spiritualism has continually to draw on scientific testimony for its phenomenal evidences, and any institution which promises to add to these and to carry on and extend the work of discovery and record on scientific lines should receive every encouragement and support.

## THE CHRISTMAS ANNUAL.

## SOME YULE-TIDE FANCIES.

BY F. E. LEANING.

Among the joys of my youth there was a parody on the Psalm of Life, which began, if I recollect rightly:

Tell me not in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an idle tale;  
'Tis not so in Christmas numbers,  
There quite other views prevail!

Yes, happily they do, and we expect to find in them not only the gay pictures, the merry verses, and the adventure stories in which, as my parody went on to say, "life is foaming, life is frantic," but at least one or two dealing with ghosties and ghoulies, and things that go bump in the night, or in popular phrase, a Christmas ghost story. It has been the use of some to speak of these in rather contemptuous terms, as a sort of concession to the lower kind, to the Psychic Researcher a stumbling block, and to the Spiritualist, foolishness. At this season of the year especially, I have not the slightest sympathy with this attitude, for though I wear the cap from my cracker and consume my mince-pies with somewhat less of ecstasy than in some decades past, I have not outgrown the pleasure of undoing a Santa Claus stocking suited to my years. Among its contents I can dispense with Emerson's "bread, kingdoms, stars" and even his "diadems and faggots" more easily than (being a book-worm) the indispensable book.

All the year round I love ghost-stories; at Christmas, I hug them. When I discovered that Professor M. R. James had provided a fourth volume of his unique delicacies in this kind, I flew on the wings of desire and with the speed of modern civilisation to the largest bookshop I knew of, to ask for "A Warning to the Curious." Every copy in the lending department was already out, so I was not the only reader to be properly grateful for what we had received. Last year we were not so well off. There were only two collections of tales then, neither of them new. Bemoaning this dearth to a sympathetic attendant, he remarked thoughtfully, "Well, it takes a bit of doing, you know." I have come to the conclusion that it takes nearly as much "doing" as walking on the path "narrow as the edge of a razor" that leads to perfection, and that is why it is not done oftener. To be sure, it has been done pretty often, and there is not a more agreeable serious pastime than a consideration of the merits of all those "thrilling tales of shapeless terror" which the story-tellers of our race have bestowed upon us.

That, of course, I am not going to attempt to do here. In my scrap-books are many lists, essays, and discussions of the subject, and many a gem of purest ray serene in the way of psychic fiction, many of them collected, I do not blush to say, out of Christmas numbers. Opinions among serious people differ as to best and second-best, naturally, as tastes differ in other things; and the differences largely reflect the contrast between the past and the passing generation. The tendency is all towards refinement, and suggestion takes the place of plain statement. We will not, nowadays, applaud the literary equivalent of a phosphorescent turnip on a broomstick, which was good enough for our forbears.

But at Christmas time we should not be too critical. It is the festival of frolic. High spirits, and every kind of spirit except the Puritanical one, should be admitted. We should "bring in great logs and let them lie, to make a solid core of heat," we should picture to ourselves little houses in the country, up to their knees in pure white snow, but sticking warm ears of chimney-stacks through the thick cap of it on their tiles. Then when the red sun has sunk behind the great cloud-bank, and the kindly dusk brings out the firelight on the holly and the family pictures, the household shall gather round the hearth, and we will throw psychic research into a snowdrift, in charge of an owl and a black cat, and have an old-fashioned ghost-story. I well remember the first I ever heard, under just such circumstances as these. I was the youngest guest present, and shared the very middle of the hearth with the dog of the family. The story was hinted at, with significant looks, which asked whether the little Edith would be frightened. Not she! She laughed at ghosts as bravely as any grown-up. So the young doctor proceeded to raise his hearer's hair in dramatic fashion. It was the kind of tale that is very properly disapproved of now; one of the "explained" sort. There was a man in it who had "lantern jaws" and was very terrific indeed; in fact, I puzzled for years afterwards as to what he really must have looked like. There was sudden darkness, a cold blast of wind, and a weird crashing; and then years after the finding of a little skeleton (with a tail) and its head wedged into a small rusty saucepan.

Now the modern idea of a good ghost story has no room for tricks and illusions of this kind. The story that turns on such things as, for instance, two people masquerading as ghosts in a moonlit gallery, and mutually frightening each other, does not belong to the class at all; it is only a mystery story. And when our fathers got tired of having to satisfy

that precious thing "common sense," all the time, they took to stories of real ghosts doing real haunting. In the hands of those old giants, Lytton and Le Fanu, this reached a very high level indeed. They were not so hard on the hero as to make the ghost throw him down a flight of stairs, in order to be true to life, as some moderns are, but they got their effects in quite as forcibly. And since it is a matter of imagination in the reader as well as in the writer, and fancy must catch light from fancy, they gave it just enough material to kindle from, and not a bushel of it, to put it out. When I read "Mr. Justice Harbottle" it really made me quite nervous about walking to Smith Square to see Miss Stead. I felt glad the scene had been laid in Westminster, and not in Bloomsbury, where I usually do my own haunting! Of course, there was still an explanation, in the shape very often of a crime or a tragedy; for curiosity must be aroused and fed; it must deepen into suspense and sympathetic anxiety, and suspense must touch the edge of fear, and horror lurk round the corner. Not too much of it, but enough to make us draw a sigh of relief at the end. Stevenson sometimes, as in "Thrawn Janet," has gone too far with horror; Kipling in his "Return of Imray," has reached the limit of the enjoyment. And I note here that people who enjoy such stories most are, like myself, quite insensitive. The psychic feels, I believe, that these things come too near home to be played with, just as I imagine a murderer would not particularly enjoy a story with a murder in it. I note also that those who are keen devourers of ghost fiction are quite impatient often of the real thing; they will not tolerate Spiritistic theory. And as a lover of literature I cannot blame them when I see how strikingly unromantic and un-aesthetic the latter is by contrast. Just imagine a Christmas number, even of *LIGHT*, filled with séance records and padded to the size of an elephant with automatic writing. It is because I wallow in these things that I want my ghost story to be something quite, quite different. It makes one fastidious, of course. An ordinary ghost, even if he turns the handle of the door where a lonely man sits in an empty house at midnight; or shows himself as a mere pair of eyes gleaming from the shadows, or a strange faint whisper in the corridor—these are milk for babes, to the hardened handler of the occult. And I care not how high the hair stands up on the visitor's head or how many cold perspirations he breaks into, if the tale does not produce a little shiver in the reader himself. This takes consummate and subtle art, but some of our living authors, both famous and obscure, have touched fine limits in it. A good working curse, an invisible fear, an unintelligible influence clothing apparent coincidences with a sinister significance, these are among the keys of modern magic. Long may they last, to keep alive the cheerful ancient practice of the Christmas ghost story!

## EVE OF CHRISTMAS.

It is so quiet in the little homely lane that leads to my dwelling: so tranquil after the long busy day in town. All the shops are closed now, and preparation for Christmas festivities are almost complete. But streamers of light will shine from a million windows until late, or, very late, for there are stockings to fill, and the children are watchful with excitement.

But here, there is only the dim glimmer of stars, like Christmas candles, lighting up the night. Once a door opened as I passed, and a broad shaft of golden lamplight fell across the wintry garden: a babel of merry voices rang out in sudden music, to be hushed again in that soundless melody that belongs to the nature life, that life which runs parallel with ours, yet ever remains distinct.

The trees stretch delicate bare branches to the listening night. Is it in prayer or adoration? The last carols have been sung, and now the trees lean together secretly, swaying lightly, as if translating fragments of Christmas songs into their own language.

I am not a lonely passenger along the lane to-night. Beside my tinkling feet there are merry pattering steps; feet silver shod, and noiseless as the grey wisps of mist that rise from the meadows, and pass into nothingness. The outward ear does not hear them, nor does their laughter make any sound upon the frosty air. But the trees know them well, all nature knows them, for they have passed this way on other Christmas Eves, and once again bend their steps earthward to share the holy joys of Christmas with their own kith and kin. Because it is the Eve of Christmas, and Christmas holds so wide a message, all states of life draw near in peace and amity, all acclaim the immortality of life, all offer homage to this Festival, and unite in a universal thanksgiving of praise and brotherhood.

ETHEL KNOTT.

As we meet and touch each day  
The many travellers on our way,  
Let every such brief contact be  
A glorious, helpful ministry;  
The contact of the soil and seed,  
Each giving to the other's need,  
Each helping on the other's best,  
And blessing each as well as blest.

## THE DAY OF RECKONING.

A YULETIDE REFLECTION.

BY NELLIE TOM-GALLON.

In every profession, every trade, once in the year activity makes a dead stop—it may be for a split second only of time in actual fact—that a balance may be taken of values in profit and loss.

In the great and fascinating business of living one's life on this earth to the full, I think the vast majority of men and women, consciously or unconsciously, make this pause for adjustment at Christmas. Instinctively, as it were, at the time dedicated to the coming of Christ Jesus amongst men, we lay that calendar that is a perpetual record of his birth, face downwards; and reckon up our life for the year that is gone.

Under our eyes march the procession of the days—some with the burden of mistakes made, weak turning aside from difficulties and dangers, hoping to dodge them; a complaining and fretting against hardships; those days are bleak and ugly under our eyes in the white light of recollection. Here and there, please God, a day we may remember with thankfulness because we found success come to us—in work, in the finding of a friend when we needed one, in a new acquirement in knowledge, a new understanding of the marvel of the Universe. Days were those when we turned our faces up to the stars.

I seem to see the brooding eyes of the Christ resting on those mental account columns—seem to see grave pity for us over the bad days, sympathy with our reaction to the good ones.

But in His eyes I see triumph if there is a day recorded when we added one stone to the tower of refuge we build with our love! A word spoken, a phrase written—even a look; anything that will strengthen the forces of Love on this earth, battling against Hate!

Those are the days lit with a golden glow for His eyes. Think of it!—nineteen hundred and twenty-five years ago, a baby born of humble parents, in a stable, in a far eastern country. Grown to adult years the boy gathers about him a group of other men as poor as himself, and for a little while they move about a small space in Palestine. Look at the map and see how circumscribed that space is—the stars have looked down on a thousand cults, infinitely greater than the teachings of Christ and his followers, wiped out and forgotten, sunk into the sands of Time like microscopic drops of water.

There had been a great teacher, roughly at distances of two thousand years apart, over and over again before Christ. Confucius, Buddha, Mahommed, Moses—great and wonderful all of them, but with powers that were local.

Christianity spread, unquestionably by absolutely miraculous methods, across the world, and took its greatest hold on the coolest, most unemotional nations of the earth. And it fitted itself into the scheme of nations utterly foreign to its founder because it had the one sure point that the other religions had been weak on—it taught, first and last, as the uttermost duty and successful force for life, Love for your fellow man.

It was founded by Love, it spread by Love—then the Churches grew powerful socially, and Love was squeezed out of them. They punished and tortured and harried their followers if they did not give uttermost allegiance to the Churches—all of them, one way and another as they grew powerful, were equal culprits. And they had their way with men till the rolling years brought social reforms and the Churches were set at defiance; and men found it difficult to separate the setting that was false from the gem that was real; and turned their backs on both.

Then, not so many years ago, here and there men found love again—the Spirit that was Christ, the Spirit that shall rule the world.

They found that Love breathed life again into that Spirit, that Love looked through and beyond the cold veil of earthly death to the being that is the Inmost Soul of you and me. That love could bridge the gulf and keep communion across the barrier.

And they knew they had found God again, in the knowledge that flesh is but the envelope that shields, but hides, the precious document within it!

They called themselves Spiritualists—they pledged themselves to the certainty that Love alone is the deathless force that shall rule all lives, here and hereafter, Love great enough to pass all barriers.

For them the Christmas Day of Reckoning shall be a day of thankfulness. I don't say "peace," advisedly. We were not meant to rest sluggishly on any success, but to strive unflinchingly onward.

On Christmas Day, the Day of Reckoning, you who have found the thing you need in Spiritualism, reckon up your account, realise what the coming of Christ means to you and thousands of others.

Open your hearts wide to the love that is His gift—open it wide to take in all faith and charity to those about you.

Open it wide to those who stumble on the path you tread—who knows but your sympathy, accepted from Him to be given again to those who need it, may not save a soul alive!

On your Day of Reckoning, Christ's fête day, put to your credit your absolute trust in some goodness in the very worst of your kind. Let it fail nine times, and you be the loser by it.

On the tenth your faith—which is Love—shall do its work. You will be the son of God in that you have spread His power through the world.

We Spiritualists stand for the Spirit as the conqueror of the Flesh. On your Christmas Day of Reckoning balance your accounts and prove your truth.

## THE REALITY OF THE THE UNSEEN.

From the "Yorkshire Observer's" report of a recent lecture on this subject by Sir Oliver Lodge we take the following highly suggestive passages:—

"After referring to the universality of law, Sir Oliver said that looking at matter with the mind's eye was not very different from looking at the starry heavens. There one saw discontinuity, and the stars were specks great distances apart. The same was true inside matter. . . . It was a recent discovery that the atom was not a solid particle. There were as many atoms in a thimbleful of water as there were grass blades on the surface of the earth, but we had long been able to count the atoms. They were far beyond the limits of vision; they were inferred. The individual atom was a structure like the solar system is, a nucleus of the centre of electrons revolving round it, and the same laws that ruled in astronomy ruled inside the atom. In the infinitely big and the infinitely small was found the same laws ruling. . . . A materialist might think St. Paul's Cathedral was the result of force applied to stone, but we knew that Sir Christopher Wren conceived it in his mind first, and that he never touched a stone. He believed the same thing to be true of the universe as a whole—conceived by the Holy Ghost, executed and carried out through long ages of evolution by agents unseen and, to us, unknown forces. How it was done we did not know, but there it was and it was our privilege to try to understand—using and making the best of our poor animal senses but never shutting the door and thinking that we knew much and that there was no universe far beyond. In these human bodies we could not stand the full revelation; we should be blinded. The Beatific vision was not for us."

## THE LARGER VIEW.

The common and grossly materialistic conception of the soul is that it is limited to the confines and contours of the body. This is surely an erroneous conception if, as we believe, the soul is an immaterial entity, not simply a function of the brain. For all we know to the contrary, the human soul may spread through a vast orbit around the body and may intermingle with other incarnate or discarnate souls. Tennyson speaks of a dream condition, "When the mortal limit of the self was loosed, and past into the Nameless, as the cloud melts into Heaven." Moreover, the intimacy and immediacy of the union between the soul and God is the fundamental idea, not only of the New Testament, but of all great Christian thinkers.

Amid the turmoil and toil of daily life, we are apt to lose sight of the immanence of the unseen, of the dominance of thought and spirit. For the true significance of Nature is not in the material world, but in the mind that gives to it a meaning, and that underlies and unites, that transcends and creates, the phenomenal world through which, for a moment, we are passing.

—From "The Religion of Health," by  
SIR WILLIAM BARRETT, F.R.S.

## SPIRITUALIST COMMUNITY SERVICES.

On Sunday morning last Miss Felicia Scatcherd took for her subject "The Unity of Truth," and showed that in Spiritualism we had the basis of all religion, all science, and all philosophy.

In the evening Dr. Oesterley (Examining Chaplain of the Bishop of London) spoke on "The Script of the Chronicle of Cleophas," a chronicle which he said might be described as an elaboration of the Acts of the Apostles, and threw a great deal of light upon Biblical records. He gave some illustrations pointing to the significance which this chronicle has for Spiritualists because of its very definite enunciation of the verities of the Christian faith. The style of the document was identical throughout showing that it was written by the same hand. This Chronicle and also another Script, that of Philip the Evangelist, were Spiritualistic writings which dealt directly and in detail with the founding of the early Church, and the teachings of the Apostles. It proclaimed a message to Spiritualists that if they would be faithful to their own tenets they must accept the divine mysteries which are the fundamental truths of Christianity.

## MEDIUMSHIP AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.

By W. H. EVANS.

A great deal of argument centres round the question, Is Spiritualism a religion? Those who con tend it is not, overlook the connotations of the word *Spiritualism*, and generally confine their attention to its phenomenal aspects. Concentration upon one side to the exclusion, or partial exclusion, of other aspects is bound to result in a distorted view of the matter. What most opponents of the view that Spiritualism is a religion as well as a science overlook, is that psychic phenomena are interwoven with the fabric of all the religion: of the world. Jesus recognised this when he said: "These signs shall follow them that believe"; and again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father."

This indicates that Jesus linked together the psychical and spiritual life of man, and it is unwise to set up artificial partitions, for man must be considered as a whole. The separation of the psychical from the spiritual, while useful for purposes of reasoning, is apt to cause confusion from a false idea arising that they are essentially different. They are not; they are but different aspects of one being, Man.

To me, this opposition to Spiritualism as a religion sounds very odd, and seems to indicate fear. Our concepts of religion are as subject to evolution as life itself. If we separate religion from its psychical content, we may have a fine, if somewhat cloudy idealism, but it will lack some degree of verification.

Now it is perfectly true to say that psychic phenomena are not religion. Whoever said they were? No one with a particle of understanding of the matter has ever affirmed this. A tilting table, a rap, a clairvoyant vision, a clairaudient message, or a materialised form—all of these are very interesting from a purely scientific point of view; but undue concentration upon this aspect shuts off all others, and one of them is the emotional content of psychic phenomena: what they stand for and reveal to those who experience them. A rap, *qua* rap, may simply signify the operation of an unknown force, but when it is discovered that there is *intelligence* associated with the force, a new factor enters into our consideration. Despite the controversy as to the source of this intelligence the conviction is growing that it is the intelligence of men and women who have passed from earth to the next plane of existence. The importance of this to the average man cannot be overlooked. It is all very well for metaphysical thinkers and theoretical occultists to declaim against psychic phenomena, but this aspect is important because it brings home to the average man in a convincing manner that he is a spiritual being. This is the first essential to a religious life: the first step towards realising the true self. It shows that man is not his body, but something greater, fuller, and with richer possibilities. One veridical message from the unseen is worth tons of sermons. It has punch and grip; it touches the springs of being. You may tell a man with all the persuasive eloquence of a Demosthenes that he is a spiritual being, and leave him cold; but a message from one he loves through the despised channel of mediumship will bring the warmth and glow of a true religious fervour into his being.

I often wonder what conception some people have of the divine government of our universe: they continually fulminate against the dangers of mediumship. Thirty-two years' practical experience of mediumistic work has convinced me that most of the alleged dangers exist in the warped and heated imaginations of people who often claim to have a superior knowledge of spiritual things. They simply do not know. Mark, I do not say there are no dangers; of what thing in life can it be said there is no danger, if fools meddle with it? Those people who talk of the practice of mediumship making people nervous wrecks are obviously ignorant. When I look around upon the mediums of the Spiritualist movement, note their alertness, capability and general *good* health, I am amused at this jibe. It was Madame Blavatsky, I think, who said: "The shores of the sea of occultism are strewn with the nervous wrecks of would-be occultists." Thank goodness, *this* cannot be said with any truth of our mediums. Besides, if mediumship is so dangerous, why in the name of heaven has humanity been endowed with this power? It is written: "He hath given His angels charge concerning thee." Are they so remiss in their charge that they allow evil beings to tempt us to destruction through the channel of mediumship? Surely this involves a strange notion of spiritual guidance, one not to be commended. Who is responsible for these evil powers? It cannot be said that man is, so are we to infer that God is? That He tempts His children to destruction?

What is the truth of the matter? Simply that man has to learn by experience. The power of mediumship is neither good nor evil, it is the use men make of it that produces

good or evil results. Thus when we gain practical experience in psychical phenomena and get an understanding of their emotional content, there bursts forth the bud of a loftier religion, a result of many communicating spiritual powers become active in the mind. In a word, it leads to illumination. The practice of mediumship is one mode which leads to this.

The primary effect of psychic phenomena is to convince man that he is a spiritual being in whom are all possibilities of divine power and unfoldment. And this is the work of the Spiritualist movement—to bring home to the race-consciousness this knowledge based upon the scientific observation of psychic phenomena. Who can foretell the tremendous reactions this will ultimately have upon the life of mankind? And in what other way could the work be done? Is not the revival of psychic power in the race an evidence of a racial need? Could Christianity without the renewal of mediumistic activity do this work? It has had a fair trial; can it be said that it has come anyway near to this needed consummation? Do those students of occultism who decry mediumship, think they will bring about this conviction, that man is a spiritual being, by writing books of speculation on the nature of man and the universe? Or by learned talk about the "higher ternary and lower quaternary" of man? Will this touch the springs of feeling that in the mass of men lead to conviction? Are we to wait until there is a race of intellectual giants, to whom all this may be mightily interesting, if a little unconvincing? Nay, it is the *average* humanity who need Spiritualism, who yearn "for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," to whom learned disquisitions about the dangers of mediumship and the complex nature of man are but stones for bread. The average humanity will press on and realise the religion of Spiritualism, broad-based upon facts, leaving in the rear those who make pretensions to greater knowledge. The people in spirit-life know their work, and *will* accomplish it through the appointed channels. One of these channels is mediumship.

Let me say, in conclusion, that I do not undervalue any effort at getting a fuller understanding of our nature. My protest is against intellectual priggishness from the Podsnaps of the psychic world. I am intensely interested in all that pertains to man's being. But we must strive to avoid lop-sided developments, and try to realise that there is good in all things, to be seen if we will but look for it. If we do this, the sweep of Spiritualism will include even those critics who imagine themselves superior to the common herd. We shall arrive, in due season.

## THE HAUNTING OF WILLINGTON MILL

## THE STORY IN FACT AND FICTION.

Many good things can be bought nowadays, in spite of the taxation of luxuries, for half-a-crown; and among them "a jolly good booke whereon to looke" as the old rhyme says, is one. The reference is in particular to a book put together by Mr. Harold Armitage, and published by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall and Co., which brings under one cover Lord Lytton's famous story, "The Haunted and the Haunters" and nearly all the evidence that can be collected about the no less famous haunting of Willington Mill, in Northumberland. Why this wedding should take place will perhaps puzzle most readers, but the reason given is that the late Andrew Lang and the (happily) still living Dr. Montague James think that the one story was founded on the other. Personally, I cannot see where the resemblance comes in; and I think that though Lytton's story was founded on fact, the facts concerned quite another house and its haunting. However, readers can judge and enjoy for themselves. There are several excellent features about this little book which make one wish that Mr. Armitage's name appeared on the cover as well as that of Lord Lytton, whose story gives the title to the book as a whole. There is an interesting little account, and portrait of the famous author, and two pictures of the mill, one of them quite the best ever given of it in its haunting effect. There is, in each case, a note of the sources used, a feature often painfully lacking; and best of all, there is some actual fresh light thrown on a problem which has baffled everyone who has hitherto touched the matter of the Willington hauntings. This is an account of haunting in the hamlet in the middle of the eighteenth century, taken from Wesley's "Arminian Magazine." This was long before the mill-house was built, but the disturbances are so similar that one feels that it looks like *the same gang* which infested the place during and after the Procter and Unthank tenancy. If this is so, it is possible that we have at any rate tracked that "old book" that Joseph Procter spoke of, referring to previous haunting in Willington, which always seemed too hopelessly vague a reference to follow up. Mr. Armitage is evidently not a Spiritualist, as he refers to William Howitt as going "through a spiritualistic phase," but he handles his subject sympathetically and frankly, and has given us a book which will not be out of place at Christmas as long as there is an appetite for ghostly lore.

F. E. L.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

## THE VANISHED PAPER.

## A CUP FOR "MARGERY."

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that a few of us have subscribed for a handsome loving cup to be presented to Dr. and Mrs. Crandon, of Boston, for their splendid work. The inscription is as follows: To Dr. and Mrs. Crandon ("Margery"), in recognition of their heroic struggle for truth. From members of the British Psychic College, 1925.

The Psychic College, as the premier psychic experimental body in the world, could not give its endorsement to a mediumship unless it has been closely studied by the Institution. There are, however, several individual members who have had the opportunity of testing "Margery," and there are others who are convinced by the published evidence, and who resent the treatment of this lady both by British and American observers of a certain type. This is the reason why a distinction is drawn in the inscription between the Psychic College itself and the members who have subscribed.—Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

(President of the British Psychic College).  
Windlesham, Crowborough.  
December 11th, 1925.

## THE REALITY OF HEAVEN.

SIR,—Mrs. Victor Branford deserves the gratitude of readers of LIGHT, for reminding them of a truth which we can all recognise when it is set before us, but which it is only too easy to overlook and neglect. While Jesus taught his followers that the "Kingdom of Heaven" to which they looked forward was not something external, but a kingdom reigning in human hearts, he nowhere said that it could remain unmanifest, taking no outward shape or expression. He taught indeed exactly the contrary. What justification can any of us have for expecting to find ourselves amid heavenly surroundings hereafter—surroundings created by and reflecting our own spiritual state—if we are content here to let our brothers and sisters live in conditions so much the reverse of heavenly as to make health and decency impossible? The rising spirit of international goodwill expressed through the League of Nations may (we pray that it will) ensure that the fair world of outward nature shall never again through human folly be made a scene of ruin and desolation, but we must go much further than that. We must do our utmost at home, both by precept and example—especially the latter—to discourage the wasting of wealth in senseless extravagance and divert it instead to raising the general level of comfort and well-being in the community at large. True our own help may be indirect. We may not ourselves be architects or builders, or have any practical acquaintance with town-planning, or be able personally to devise any schemes of our own for bettering environment, but we can at least aid the real artists and workers to give their dreams objective form. And this we *must do*, quite independent of whether there is any likelihood of material gain to ourselves thereby. Else "how dwelleth the love of God in us?"—Yours, etc.,

DAWSON ROGERS.

Finchley, N.

## MR. F. W. WARRICK'S EXPERIMENTS.

SIR,—In the paper I read on the 3rd inst. before the L.S.A. I did not lay stress upon the test conditions under which I have worked for the last three years with Mrs. Deane, as I had not the time, nor did I consider it necessary before such an audience.

I can assure all readers of LIGHT interested in the scientific side of Psychic investigation that I took care that none of the things I put before the audience as fraud-proof could have been produced by fraud. I have given some particulars of conditions in my articles in the April and July issues of this year of "Psychic Science" of the B.S.P.S. No one can work as I have done systematically for three years without becoming pretty skilled in the conduct of simple experiments, especially when his life-work has been connected with the importance of trifles in manufacturing processes.

Mrs. Deane's power to produce quite unexpectedly (for one experiment suggested to me the next) the varied phenomena which I had the pleasure of putting before the members of the L.S.A. on Thursday last surely goes a long way to establish belief in her psychic photographs to those who are not already convinced.—Yours, etc.,

F. W. WARRICK.

6, Nile Street, City Road, N.1.

SIR,—I think the following curious incident may be worth recording. It sounds incredible, but stranger psychical manifestations have often occurred to me, which were quite spontaneous and unsought for.

A few mornings ago I entered the smoking room of the Pump Room at Bath, to look at the papers and write letters. Being early I had the room to myself. After glancing at some of the "dailies," I sat down to write a letter, and took a couple of sheets of notepaper from the stationery rack on the desk, noticing at the time that there was a plentiful supply. After using these two sheets, I put out my hand for another, and found to my amazement that all the paper had vanished. I could hardly believe the evidence of my senses, as I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that I had selected the two sheets from a pile of notepaper.

No one else had been in the room, and I had not moved from the writing table, and where the paper had gone to was (and is still) a mystery. I searched under the table, though that was rather futile, as there was no possibility of the paper slipping out of the rack. The stationery was never replaced, so I must presume it is somewhere in the Fourth Dimension—that mysterious unseen realm where spirits remove things to when wishing to give an exhibition of psychic power.

Articles have frequently vanished in my presence, but have generally re-appeared later on. Readers may possibly remember the instance of the vanishing cigarettes (recorded in LIGHT many years ago), when cigarettes were taken from my case in the full light by some invisible agency, before a number of witnesses whose eyes were fixed on the cigarette case. This was done several times in a brilliant light, the cigarettes vanishing from the case, and a few moments later dropping from the ceiling in another part of the room. I have seen billiard balls vanish from a table in the full light, when no one was near the table, and then re-appear later on the same floor several yards from the table. At least a dozen people witnessed that feat of psychic power.—Yours, etc.,

REGINALD B. SPAN.

44, Pulteney Street,  
Bath.

## "A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE."

From our "Lighthouse Window," reference to operations of Spiritual law in human affairs, we here pass to the illustration given by Mr. Froggatt, in his contribution to the "Yorkshire Observer." To prove that there is a providential care over the lives of Christians, and that prayers are answered in a miraculous way, he says that stories are related as wonderful as any from Spiritualistic sources.

Mr. Froggatt writes:

Preaching in Allerton Wesleyan Chapel I heard the Rev. Thomas Posnett tell the following one. After the Crimean War Sheffield suffered from a terrible depression in trade; many of the furnaces were shut down, and many foundry workers, consequently, unemployed. A member of one of the Methodist churches, a man powerful in prayer, had got to the end of his resources. His wife, who was of a somewhat irreligious disposition, jeeringly asked him if he did not think he had better pray about it.

The man said he thought this was the best thing he could do, so he retired to his bedroom. In about an hour's time he came down and his wife said: "Well, what have you made out of it?" He replied: "I have seen a man and I have to meet him at Pitsmoor at 12 o'clock." "Why, you'll never go, surely!" his wife retorted. "But I promised I would," he answered, and set off to keep his engagement.

After waiting about half-an-hour, nothing happened, and he was on the point of returning home, thinking that perhaps he had been deceived, when suddenly, as if he had sprung out of the ground, a man crossed over the road to him, asked if his name was Mr. — and handed to him 13s. 6d., the exact price of 3st. of flour, their usual weekly consumption. Then the man as suddenly disappeared as he came, and this worthy Methodist assured those to whom he told his experience that it was the same man he saw in his bedroom while at prayer. The Rev. Thomas Posnett vouched for the truth of this story.

The narrator proceeded to remark that for those who accept stories of this character the step to the wonderful phenomena of Spiritualism is not a big one; and that in a materialistic and irreligious age nothing is more necessary than to have definite proof that we are encompassed by an unseen spiritual world.

W. B. P.

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## AT YULETIDE.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS AND A QUESTION.

Many cynical things are uttered about Christmas, but we think it is always an affected cynicism. It has been said, for instance, that Christmas was invented by Dickens, but it is the glory of Dickens that he brought home to us, more than any of our great writers have done, its true significance as the festival of human brotherhood. Who can read "A Christmas Carol," "The Chimes" or "The Cricket on the Hearth" without feeling that Dickens had the key to the secret of Christmas as a time of fellowship and goodwill, of reconciliation and reunion?

In these things is embraced the true religious significance of Christmas, for nothing can be religious that is not also in the highest and best sense human. Those who have made a gulf between the divine and the human, who have separated the celestial from the terrestrial, have missed the whole meaning of religion, which is designed to unite them, as indeed the very root of the word "religion" should show. Yuletide to us is the supreme festival of reunion, the festival of the great Friend of humanity. How can it be better commemorated than by deeds and thoughts of friendship?

Not the smallest part of the mission of Spiritualism as a world-movement is to enlarge the boundaries of this great idea, to prove that the annual reunion may be a larger one than the world has ever supposed; that the gaps in the fireside circles caused by the passing hence of those we have loved and lost are more apparent than real. Spiritualism has come to show that the absent ones may be with us "in spirit" in a sense more real and satisfying than that carried by the pious phrase in its ordinary use.

If our departed return to us at the Christmas feast—as indeed they do—if they would celebrate with us the sacrament of reunion, are they to have no welcome? Are they to be shut out not because of a lack of sympathy but because of unbelief or lack of knowledge? It was not always so. In the early household of the faith of Christendom their presence was known. There was a fellowship of the seen with the unseen. But many things have happened since those days. Knowledge has increased, that is to say knowledge of the world. The earth has been mapped out and explored. There have been many inventions, and science has been at work producing with a cheerful impartiality instruments for human service and engines for human destruction—life-saving apparatus and death-dealing machines. Indeed its zeal in the production of death and destruction of late years has resulted in something like a revulsion of feeling amongst humanity. There is a growing conviction that it is time that religion should do something to

redress the balance in physical life by restraining the movement strangely known as Progress, which appears sometimes to be a march to something like Gehenna, if indeed anyone can say with certainty where it leads. It is noted that Science takes no account of love, is not at all concerned with the affections and is frequently contemptuous of emotion as of something that appears to get in the way of its laboratory experiments. It is very well indeed that Christmas should come, even if only once a year. But for that annual festival of the heart-expanding and of social joys, of family reunions, of the fairydom and romance of childhood, it may be that the world would be an even bleaker place than it is to-day.

It is Yuletide once more. Let us put science and scientific psychical research on one side for a little space; they will not suffer by it. Let those who do not believe in spirits give them for once the benefit of the doubt. Let them contemplate with gentle indulgence the possibility that we are encompassed with a great host of arisen ones, that the spirits of those near and dear to us are perhaps with us at the Christmas feast, still mindful of us, grieving for us, yet not without hope as foreseeing that we all soon shall be of their company. For each new Christmas is a milestone on a road which for some "leads but to the grave"—not by any means a "path of glory." To us the grave is a "covered way," which leads "from light to light through a brief darkness."

When at each recurring Yuletide, in Sir James Barrie's beautiful play, Peter Pan asks, "Do you believe in fairies," we always say, "Yes," dismissing for the time any philosophic doubts and scientific hesitations. Let us in the same way ask, "Do you believe in spirits?" If you can answer "Yes," it is well. But if you must say "No," perhaps it is no great matter. Perhaps it is not so important that you should believe in the spirits as that they should believe in you.

## MARY'S CHILD.

## A LEGEND OF YULE.

"Mary, Mother, bake me a cake—  
Let me free ere the world's awake;

"I must go alone, and far  
Where the silent places are,

"Save where Nature's music thrills,  
Sough of trees, and tune of rills,

"Save where sing the bees and birds—  
These all speak my Father's words;

"I would hear my Father's speech,  
I would know what I must teach,

"I would learn what I must know—  
Mary, Mother, let me go."

\* \* \* \* \*

All day long till Sun was set  
Little Jesus tarried yet,

Gathered round him where he stood,  
Birds and beasts to share his food,

Serpents, insects, unafraid,  
Shared the cake that Mary made,

Creatures fed and well content,  
Onward little Jesus went;

Learning everywhere his part,  
Storing wisdom in his heart;

And when day was nearly o'er,  
Slowly came to Mary's door;

Homing children dancing came,  
Calling, "Jesus, join the game!"

Jesus joined the game with joy,  
Little Jesus—just a boy!

Tired at last, he fain would rest,  
Snuggled close to Mary's breast;

Mary held him close, and smiled—  
Jesus now was Mary's child.

EDITH K. RENDLE.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

A "Referee" article by Michael Temple on "Foretelling and Free Will," sets forth this alternative view of Time to the simple one of the mystic's "eternal now":—

Let us assume that the power of foretelling, which seems, oddly enough, to be more or less specialised in persons of Celtic blood, is genuine. What does it involve? Well, some very curious things. Evidently if a man sees some event in what we call the future, that event has already happened. Though we can see into the one and not into the other there is neither past nor future, but an eternal present which is somehow not a dimension of time—for then there is no time—but of space. Yet the moment we try to think what the present is it eludes us, like Zeno's arrow, which never was in any point of its flight. We can divide our time as minutely as we please, yet always we find that there is no present, but only past and future, and the more minutely we divide it the more evident does this appear.

In "The Theosophical Review" for November Mr. C. Jinarajadasa glances over the world-progress during the past fifty years and finds considerable cause for satisfaction. "Fifty years ago a man of culture could not help living in compartments," he observes, and goes on to say:—

An intellectual synthesis is now possible, because there is a larger framework for the understanding. Men can truly be philosophers now, delighting in the interrelation of science and religion, art and ethics, with full play for the highest faculties of the imagination. It is the mission of Theosophy to proclaim not only the God without, but also the God within, and to reveal that man and God, animate and inanimate, the visible and the invisible, are component parts of one splendid whole, which is that mystery which ever fascinates but which ever withholds its final secret.

The contribution of the Bishop of Kensington (Dr. J. P. Maud) to the "Weekly Dispatch" series, "When I Am Dead," on Sunday last, is certainly marked by breadth of mind. He claims that those who are spiritually illumined stand in no need of "material appliances or mediumistic methods," which is true enough—for them. But there are others to whom these higher sources of consolation and inspiration are not available, since they are not sufficiently advanced in spiritual development. He does not deny that "people on earth can come into touch with those in the unseen sphere, and that those with psychic tendencies and gifts are sensitive to the movements and influences of discarnate spirits." But he holds that we should not lay ourselves open to any influences "except those which are sent from the only sure and unchanging source," and "directed by the one mediator between God and Man—Jesus Christ." The Bishop, however, is perfectly willing that scientific inquirers shall "explore the field of psychic investigation." His views regarding the life after death show great spiritual insight, and on some of the main issues the religious spiritualist will be very much at one with him.

A recent issue of the "Sunday Chronicle" has a prominent ghost article, ghosts old-fashioned and new being now in season. As a sample of it we quote the story of the ghostly violinist:—

There is the ghostly violin player in a little Welsh village. He began two years back. A charwoman and her husband heard music in the dead of night, and going downstairs found a violin case open and music coming from the instrument. They have since pulled off the strings, but sounds are still heard. Latest reports declare that, though the stringless instrument is now locked in a cupboard, the ghost still plays on it at night. Not one has had the courage to go down and look at it again, however, and the children will not go into the room in the evening.

The "Daily Graphic" has a "sidelight on Spiritualist séances, having sent a special representative to interview Frau Silbert and witness some of her séance phenomena, which are faithfully reported. As regards the medium the "Graphic" representative says:—

Frau Silbert is a pleasant, motherly little woman, with grey hair and large, sincere eyes. She is a native of Graz, and speaks only German with a provincial accent.

Writing in the "Yorkshire Observer" on The Reality of the Unseen, Mr. George H. Froggatt says:—

The materialists hold that the world is governed by fixed, unalterable laws, which pitilessly grind the just and the unjust alike. The Spiritualist holds that, though the world is governed by law, there are agents in the spirit world who, like some still in the flesh, work to see that the ends of justice are met and to right the wrong.

It is a common expression of men that if one acts unjustly to another that the injustice will, in some way, come back to him, so that it has become a proverb—"chickens come home to roost." How much more satisfactory, then, is life if one believes, and that belief gained by experience, that there are unseen helpers exercising a providential care over his life! It is difficult to believe that "chickens come home to roost" in obedience to the working of some blind soulless law.

Mr. F. Froggatt tells a remarkable story in illustration of the spiritual laws to which he alluded. It was told by the Rev. Thomas Gosnett, and is related on another page.

The Duchess of Hamilton and Miss Lind-af-Hageby have been carrying on a campaign in Scotland with great effect, both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow. At Glasgow they addressed an audience of 2,500 people, and the Edinburgh meeting was also largely attended, both receiving full attention in the Scottish newspapers. The Glasgow meeting was held at the Hippodrome, Sauchiehall Street, under the auspices of the National Spiritualist Church, and the meeting in Edinburgh at the Music Hall, Edinburgh, was convened by the Spiritualist National Union (Scottish District Council).

In an article on "The Ben Macdhui 'Ghost,'" the "Daily Mail" quotes Mr. Eustace Thomas, a prominent North of England mountaineer, who says he has climbed Ben Macdhui two or three times, and has seen nothing supernatural. He adds:—

Of course shadows can play fantastic tricks on a mountain summit. Also, that is a stag-hunting district, and in the winter, when their feeding places are snow-covered, the stags often wander up the mountain side. Even a stag's footsteps would sound unnaturally loud in such a vast empty space.

The summit is a plateau, but the cairn is on the edge of a steep slope, and is more than 15 miles from the nearest hut or habitation of any kind. It is a terribly desolate spot.

The "Daily Express" (8th inst.) has an account of a "Haunted Picture Frame," which mysteriously fell four times from its position. This frame held the portrait of a beautiful girl, a student at the Heatherley Art School, painted by the principal of the school. She died in her studio, alone, after a few days' illness. The "Express," quoting Mrs. Massey, wife of the principal, says:—

The frame itself has a deep slot to hold the canvas stretcher, and unless it is pulled about four inches away from the wall the picture cannot be taken out. It is fixed in a niche and is flush with the wall. The framed picture had only been hung a short time when we noticed the picture lying on the floor. . . .

Thinking that we had been careless in putting the picture into the frame we re-framed it, taking special care that it was firmly fixed. A few mornings afterwards when the studio door was unlocked we again found the portrait on the floor—and the frame on the wall. . . .

For the third time we fixed the picture firmly and hung the frame as closely and securely to the wall as we could.

For some days the portrait remained in the frame. Then one morning when I came to the studio with my housekeeper, she turned to me with rather a scared expression and said, "That picture is on the floor again. She always did say she hated those memorial frames." . . .

Then I remembered that I, too, had heard the student say: "Do not ever put my picture into one of those memorial frames. I do not like them." Since then the memorial frame has been empty.

## ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

A POETESS OF THE SPIRIT.

BY REV. WM. BICKLE HAYNES.

Since there are those who faintly praise her, be it ours with more heartiness to keep her memory green. We have not, perhaps, so great a surplus of literary names gracing our cause, that we can see one of them flouted and take no heed. In the rotation of celebrities, Adelaide Anne Procter comes just now at her centenary under critical review. The daughter of a poet, Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall"), and honoured for her poetic gift by Dickens, as well as by a considerable public (the critics wonder why), she claims notice here as one who sang effectively of things that we believe. Poetry without emotion is certainly dead. The two worlds do mingle, in spite of the imagined masculinities of mundane minds. A considerable proportion of humanity would go hungry if we had only a super-order of poets. Adelaide Procter has melodious notes. There are, of course, the lark and the nightingale, but the robin and the hedge-sparrow "also serve." But here let us begin to quote:—

And who can tell what secret links of Thought  
Bind heart to heart? Unspoken things are heard!  
As if within our deepest selves was brought  
The Soul, perhaps, of some unuttered word.

This is surely an intuitive perception of telepathy. Take next a picture of the repulsed Guardian Angel—repulsed by that too frequent figure in society, the wayward son:—

He sayeth no prayer, and his mother—  
He thinks not of her to-day;  
And he will not look up to heaven;  
And his angel is turning away.

In the poem, "The Dark Side," an old lesson is sung to the beating of the spirit wings. The censor, prompt with "the bitter truth," is told:—

Thy task is not divine;  
The evil angels look  
On earth with eyes like thine.

The black stream reflects heaven. Tangled thorns may hide beauty. Keen eyes should seek for hidden flowerets:—

Then will I thy great gift,  
A crown and blessing call;  
Angels look thus on men,  
And God sees good in all!

The helpful belief in the gracious attendance of an Unseen Guide shows again in a verse of which the last line whispers tender consolation into the ear of bereaved motherhood:—

Our God in heaven from that holy place,  
To each of us an angel guide has given;  
But mothers of dead children have more grace,  
For they give angels to their God and Heaven.

There is a strange beauty in the poetess' picture of a halcyon interval granted to souls in Purgatory:—

On each feast of Mary  
Their sorrows find release,  
For the great archangel Michael  
Comes down and bids it cease.  
And the name of these brief respites  
Is called, "Our Lady's Peace."

The narrator proceeds to tell of one spirit, a woman, who gets no respite, and St. Michael inquires the reason. It appears that she was a bride who died on the bridal evening. Her lover has suffered a whole year since, and her one consuming longing is that she may return and comfort him. St. Michael grants her prayer—at a price. She will be permitted *one minute* with her beloved. But the boon will have to be paid for with a thousand purgatorial years. So great is her love, that she accepts the offer. The sundered ones meet "Under the lime trees," where they pass to and fro close-clinging. Comes swiftly then an agonised parting. The bride returns to work out the awful debt, and seeks her former sphere. As she treads the painful way, lo! a lyric voice:—

Pass on, pass on, poor spirit,  
For heaven is yours at last!  
In that one minute's anguish  
Your thousand years have passed.

Let not the religious drapery of this poem offend any. It is a carillon of love-bells. Love like this keeps the universe together.

Only another quotation now. It is Christmastide in a city, and bells are ringing: "Yet one house was dim and darkened, for a child lay dying there."

It is an abode of wealth. The mother kneels at the bedside, and watching her boy, his

Blue and wondering eyes,  
Fixed on some mysterious vision,  
With a startled sweet surprise.

An angel bears the youth upward, held to his heart.  
The radiant one then

With loving care,  
Placed a branch of crimson roses  
Tenderly beside him there.

The explanation of the roses is like one of Vale Owen's delightful "Afterward" stories. The angel was on earth a starved orphan, and had crept to the iron gate of this great house, and looked longingly through at the grass and flowers, till servants repulsed him. But the child within the gates was pitiful, and passed out to the wif a branch of the reddest roses. Claspings these, the little fellow returned to his garret, and they were on the bed next day when he was found dead. The two lads have now met again, in the sumptuous death-chamber. Their positions are reversed. The once gutter-child brings red roses in grateful remembrance, illumining thereby the truth that roses always come back. He makes himself known as they ascend:—

Ere your child-like, loving spirit,  
Sin and the hard world defiled,  
God has given me leave to seek you;  
I was once that little child."

This short article makes no pretence at exhaustiveness. I have but gleaned among the sheaves, leaving many fields unvisited. But the reader will agree that truth such as these of the unseen companion helpers, of sleep-hour recuperation, and of love's splendour and victory by self-sacrifice, are worthy of wide audience.

## INCONSEQUENCES.

A CHAT ON THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND.

BY IDA WILD.

If the horse is a noble animal, as the cliché mongers have it, I presume biddableness is the test for nobility. It would rub the gilt off, perhaps, to speak of such coercive means as "mouthing-bits," starvation diet, and so on, which have brought a good many horses to their copybook condition. By that test, the pig, which "mid be led, but 'on't be drove," comes low in rating; and the cat comes nowhere. Yet the wise men of the East, where Wisdom was born and has grown to perfection, they were tender to cats living, and respectful of them dead. So we are free to suppose that the Egyptians admired independence in others more than we do.

The subliminal spirit is, by this scale of values, above the cat, but below the horse. I should rank my own with the pig, for it may be led at times, but will never be driven. If I want to wake at some unearthly hour, I have only to tell some spiritual chambermaid within myself as I wait for sleep, and the order is faithfully carried out. But when does that inner monitor go off duty? What hours does the subliminal keep? For if, by mischance, I wake at five, and turn over with the suggestion, "Half-past six," it is sure to be eight before I wake again.

The suggestive power is quite common in such a use. A near relation of mine can say to her subconscious attendant, "Wake at a tinkle," and though thunders shake the house and chimneys fall, she sleeps on, until the small tinkle of a goat's bell sounds. And I believe if the trivial note of the bell were to sound in rivalry with the fiercest clap of heaven's thunder, her waking would be due to the lesser noise.

I class the subliminal—mine, at all events—with the pig for sheer obstinacy. It should be put with the cat for another quality, that of not minding its own business. You may give the cat forty different delightful things to play with, but it will disdain them all and put itself to unheeded of trouble to scabble up the *one* newspaper you wanted to keep, or to unravel the *one* card of wool you couldn't afford to lose, or to hide away the only bit of sealing-wax in the house.

In like manner, the subliminal—speaking for myself again—will learn up and, at inconvenient times, reproduce anything that is not its business, for it cannot surely be thought responsible enough to have a business of its own? *Its* business is *my* business, or should be. We are located for the time of my life here at the same stand. But generally the co-tenant of my clay tenement concerns itself with useless trifles. As when, in a hypnagogic "live-wire" vision, some nights past, I read the number 7606 and some further figures. My cheques are in among the 760,600's, though I never knew I knew it till afterwards, and I do not care, either. How often does one note the number of a cheque? Once in a blue moon; and the moons here are all "green cheese."

I well see this is begging that startling question: "Why are Cockroaches permitted?" to which many soulful people

have found an answer, and many quite commonplace people, students of housewifery and domestic entomology, have found the right answer.

Might it not be alleged, I wonder, that my subliminal is apt to be as discursive and all-over-the-shop as my supra-liminal or eight-till-four self? If those near and dear to me are behaving at a distance like Nelson and Grace Darling, I go blandly on in ignorance till the post comes. If their activities are restricted to travelling first-class with a third-class ticket, or cutting apples for a pie, my subliminal works overtime at extensive broadcasting. "And all for love, and nothing for reward."

What few revelations come to me have these points in common: (1) They come in flash visions in the half-conscious state which precedes sleep, or are induced by a flow of blood to the head, or a discomfort in the eyes. (2) They are never accurate, but have an indirect connection with the event they announce. I will quote two, which have happened within a year.

In a bed-time hypnagogic flash vision, I had a "close up" view of my charwoman, her face discoloured, the lower part swollen and out of shape, with a general appearance of choking. She had been with me the day before, and was due the next morning. Long before her usual hour, her husband came in, and as I went to meet him, I told myself my vision was true, she had been strangled! The man came to say that their child had developed lockjaw, and that the district nurse and the mother had gone to hospital overnight with him, and stayed there. At that time, his fate was uncertain, and for a day or more I secretly loathed my prophetic powers. But, fortunately, I was wrong again; the case was taken in time, and the youngster never had any painful symptoms.

The second case is that of animal telepathy, or seems so. I was walking smartly up hill alone one winter's night, having left all my animals in good condition some hours before. As I passed under an overhanging part of the road, which even in leafless seasons is black at night, the sudden change of light gave me a flash view of old Kirsty, a goat of mine. I knew it was not a real goat, and hurried on home, passing directly into the goats' house, where I found all in order, and annoyed the animals by making them stand up to be seen. Next morning, I found that one of the male-goats, which are lodged separately and apart, was in bad case, one eye injured. He must have done it himself in his loose-box, for at bedding-down time he was quite fit. To my mind, the interest of this incident is in the appearance of another goat to me. If it was his message, why did he choose that goat? She was not related to him. Also, after I had made sure she was well, I had no more uneasiness.

### THE MUDDLE ABOUT "MARGERY."

At this juncture of affairs the inexperienced in psychic mysteries must be a little perplexed over the problems connected with "Margery's" mediumship. As she is to submit her case directly to London investigators very soon, no attempt need now be made by us to deal with it. As contributory to the subject, however, we quote from a letter addressed to the Editor of the "Boston Herald" by Dr. Mark W. Richardson, and printed in "The Banner of Life." Dr. Richardson holds two degrees from Harvard:—

Now as to my own experience with the Margery mediumship. I have sat with Margery over three hundred times. I have a good reputation for scientific observation. My unqualified opinion is that the phenomena are genuine; that the good faith of Margery and her husband is perfect.

In support of my contention, I will give, in a few words, the result of an important recent investigation. In all the discussions of this mediumship the keystone of the arch has been the personality of "Walter." Is he a split-off personality from the medium or is he what he claims to be, the returned spirit of the medium's deceased brother? To settle this question, partially at least, I have devised apparatus which proves that the voice which claims to be Walter's voice is independent of all normal, human vocal organs. This apparatus has been tried out over thirty times under the strictest of test conditions, and so operates that, when in action, it prevents any human mouth in the room from being open. In spite of this fact, Walter continues to whisper and whistle with his ordinary facility. Many skeptical observers have been given abundant opportunity to prove the machine defective, but so far without effect. Can an one deny that this observation is sufficiently important to shake up all our ideas of human personality, especially in relation to death and survival after death?

Full details concerning this so-called "voice-cut-out" apparatus will be published in a scientific journal. A distinguished European investigator once said: "If you will prove to me the independence of Walter's voice, I shall be compelled to consider seriously the spiritistic hypothesis." I agree completely with this sentiment. Here is certainly a problem touching human life in its most fundamental aspects, and worthy of the closest attention of anatomist, physiologist, psychologist and—theologian.

## RAY'S AND REFLECTIONS.

Just why Yule-tide should be the season for ghost stories it would not be easy to say. Possibly it comes of the belief, to which Shakespeare has alluded, that at Christmas no spirit dare stir abroad, the time being then "so hallowed and so gracious." Consequently the feeling would prevail that the ghosts might then be safely discussed in their absence! The spirits thus temporarily banished, would naturally be the earth-wandering type, the dwellers on the border-land still tied to the mortal world by their sins and their griefs.

Equally one could not easily explain why the ghost has always been a thing of terror. But all through the ages the fear has persisted, although I cannot recall any instance of a ghost doing any mischief to a mortal beyond giving him a fright, and even that was nearly always unintentional. The ghost did not mean to offend—he only wanted to beg a favour or give a warning.

The position rather reminded me of an old comic picture of the time of our grandfathers. It represented a wooden-legged mendicant begging from an old gentleman whose face shows an expression of acute anguish. The beggar, alarmed by this manifestation of feeling, explains that the step he has taken is one to which he is driven by harsh necessity. He is unaware that in taking the "step" he has planted his wooden leg squarely on the old gentleman's gouty foot! It was so with the ghost, which must often have been as much puzzled as the beggar by the kind of response he received from those to whose charity he was appealing. Indeed it is a question on some occasions whether of the two, the ghost and the ghost seer, the ghost was not sometimes the more frightened!

The white vapour or mist which makes its appearance in connection with so many of the ghosts of folk-lore and tradition naturally suggests the ectoplasmic matter with which some of us are familiar in connection with spirit materialisation. So also the white garment in which the traditional ghost is usually clothed. Indeed there are several features about apparitions, as described in old ghost stories, which coincide closely with the discoveries of psychic science. These ancient legends, then, evidently contain a great deal of truth.

Not all of them, of course. I have listened to many stories of uncanny things in which it was impossible to find anything but the weaving of fantastic imagination. This was especially the case with the Scottish variety. One Highland seer claimed to have seen a kelpie come out of a loch—it was a kind of demon horse, a most fearsome beast. His sister—herself a seer—told me the story. I could only wonder what it was he did see—if he really saw anything at all. But then the water-kelpie is a traditional ghost. It belongs to an order of sprites, the existence of which was firmly lodged in the minds of generations of Highland folk. It may be that their minds occasionally "body forth" these spectral things by a process of visual projection. These fantasies are so mixed with authentic visions that it is a difficult matter to sift the genuine from the spurious.

The Highland ghosts, by the way, are not always of the white variety. There are quite a number of green ghosts, of which many stories are told. More than one village has its green lady, a female apparition clothed in garments of that colour. I can only account for the colour by the explanation that green is the fairy hue, and indeed some of the ghosts are of the fairy kind, and are credited with many elfish tricks.

In short, the traditional fairy and the legendary ghost seem to be strangely mixed up in the folk-lore of both Scotland and Ireland. In one old Highland family of my acquaintance a female ancestor occasionally makes her appearance, usually at some domestic crisis, in the form of a diminutive woman. She is shrunken to what we regard as the dimensions of the fairy. On the other hand, there are Irish fairies who are described in old stories as being of human proportions. One is reminded of the last Act in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," in which Dr. Caius and Evans and the merry wives themselves played the part of fairies. Falstaff as a fairy, of course, was unthinkable, and he was cast for the part of Herne, the Hunter. But what a fairy the fat knight would have made!

As to the question of green as the fairy colour, although it is laid down by Sir Walter Scott that green was on that account held to be unlucky for mortals to wear, it cannot have been a very wide-spread superstition seeing that a number of Highland tartans contain the colour. And as to Ireland, it could hardly have prevailed there at all. But the Green Isle has been very unlucky, which may be held to prove that there is something in the superstition!

D. G.

## "NON SEQUITUR": THINGS WHICH DO NOT FOLLOW.

"The chimney-sweep has not called to-day; therefore my husband does not love me." Such, according to a brilliant satiric essayist, is the mode of reasoning of the average woman. It means that certain minds (male as well as female) are incapable of drawing a logical conclusion from a given set of facts. My own experience is that this defect is by no means confined to the gentler sex; it is widespread to a lamentable degree. I frequently meet with people of both sexes who are capable of saying: "Mrs. X., the medium, lives apart from her husband; therefore mediumship is wrong," or else, "Mr. Z's clairvoyant prediction of an earthquake has turned out entirely incorrect; that shows you what humbug Spiritualism is." Or it may be, as I saw it stated quite lately in a provincial newspaper, that mediums do certainly get into communication with the spiritual world—which proves how dangerous a practice it is!

In earlier days this class of mind caused a slight feeling of impatience, but I try to be calm and to point out that Mrs. X's matrimonial affairs have about as much connection with Spiritualism as, let us say, the Gulf of Mexico or the transit of Venus. I have suggested, quite courteously, that because Mr. Z. has failed accurately to predict an earthquake by means of his psychic powers, it by no means followed that there could be no such thing as clairvoyance. Not that my gentle remonstrances did very much good. The objector usually remained quite satisfied with his own deductions on the matter, and would not infrequently clinch the point by referring to a Spiritualist friend who had gone bankrupt, or been summoned for non-payment of rates—a crushing indictment against Spiritualism that generally left me silent and sad.

Those days are past. We no longer bother our heads much about these people, except to poke a little good-humoured fun in their direction, and when these well-meaning enthusiasts approach us with some devastating piece of intelligence—as, for example, the horrid case of a young man who had been arrested for stealing milk-cans within twenty-four hours after attending a Spiritualistic séance—we can content ourselves with expressing polite regret, without venturing to suggest that there may be no real connection between the two happenings.

Our subject is not alone in being a target for fatuous criticism. Every movement has to support its own quota of foolish critics. The Church has its own share, so have Science, Music, Literature, the Law, the Army—in fact every branch of human activity. Many martyrs have died in agony, wars have been waged, pestilence and famine have destroyed their thousands, and untold misery has been caused by this one factor—the inability to draw a logical conclusion from a given fact. I am not suggesting that this human weakness is at the bottom of all the evils I have mentioned. Martyrs have perished through the malice and jealousy of their persecutors; wars have arisen through envy and tyranny. But, setting all these aside, it can hardly be denied that an enormous amount of the unhappiness which poor humanity has had to undergo has arisen from what I may term the "non-sequitur" mind—the type of mind that draws from some given fact a set of conclusions which are warped, distorted and fantastic, and which like the "flowers that bloom in the spring," have nothing to do with the case.

D. N. G.

MR. HANNEN SWAFFER gave an address before the Kentish Town Spiritualist Society on Saturday, December 12th, taking for his subject "Staggering Evidence this Year." Mr. Leslie Curnow presided.

## A GIPSY PREDICTION.

BY ARTHUR M. HEATHCOTE.

In the year 1826 a poor young widow named Ruth Savage was standing at her cottage door in Winchester, when a gipsy woman stopped and asked her for a bit of rag to tie up a cut finger. While Mrs. Savage was attending to the finger, the gipsy looked at her and asked why she had been crying. She replied that she had reasoned enough to be sad, as she had just lost her husband, had a young child, was expecting another, and did not know how she should keep them and herself. "Cheer up," said the gipsy, "in a few weeks' time you will go to live in a large house where there are many servants, and where you will be kindly treated, and will stay for the rest of your life."

Mrs. Savage, who was an eminently sensible and cheerful body, laughed and said she was afraid that was not very likely. The gipsy, who was going, turned back and (perhaps nettled at the laugh), added, "And what's more, before the year is out you will be in the presence of Royalty."

Mrs. Savage laughed again and thought no more of it. A few weeks later her second son was born, and shortly afterwards Lady Rivers, who was a friend of my father, Sir William Heathcote, and knew about Mrs. Savage (I do not know how), came to see her, and asked if she would go to my father's house (Hursley Park), as wet-nurse to my eldest brother, then a few weeks old. At first she refused on account of her own baby, but when a sister of hers undertook the care of it she consented. She was engaged in the first instance for three weeks, and stayed for over sixty years.

My eldest brother was considered, I am told, a remarkably beautiful baby, and it happened that the Duchess of Gloucester heard of his beauty and said she would like to see him, and thus it came about that Nurse, who took him to the Palace, did appear before Royalty—but whether within the year I do not know.

She was nurse, and a dearly-loved friend to all of us (never was a surname more inappropriate), but I never heard the story from her own lips. She was reticent about herself, and I am sure would have thought she had no business to relate such a matter to "the young ladies and gentlemen"; but in later years one of my sisters, who had heard a rumour of it, asked her if it was true, and she then gave the narrative as above, which my sister wrote down at the time.

Within the last few weeks some old family papers have come into my hands, and among them I found one, evidently from the writing and spelling, written by a servant, giving the same account. This is unsigned, but I feel sure it was written by another old and valued servant—formerly nursemaid under Nurse Savage, and living on with my mother as housekeeper for many years.

This account does not say the predictor was a gipsy—though Nurse seems to have told my sister that she was one—and adds the details that "a great lady" would come and send her to the big house, also that Nurse remembered the prophecy when she entered the presence of the Duchess of Gloucester though she had not thought of it before.

## THE HUMOUR OF TWO WORLDS.

### A CHRISTMAS LYRIC.

You should try and see the comic side of things,  
It's astonishing the help at times it brings.  
Life is serious, that I know, but it isn't always so.  
Do try to see the comic side of things!

At this merry Christmas-tide, there are others by our side  
Unseen, except by few, but with us all the same.  
It's a great and solemn truth, but beshrew me, and  
forsooth!  
They still may love a frolic or a game.

Don't you think that love and laughter is sure to follow  
after,  
When they find themselves regarded (as they often  
are!)  
As "sub-conscious emanations," or "the medium's  
machinations,"  
Or "concepts of the mind," or "relics from the  
astral" wand'ring far!

Be sure, they see the comic side of things,  
Even humour as it flows from psychic things!  
So pray let us, who haven't earned our wings,  
Find all the fun we can, and help our fellow man  
To also see the comic side of things!

L. H.

## A MODERN WONDER-WORKER.

A SITTING WITH FRAU SILBERT AT THE BRITISH COLLEGE.

BY LESLIE CURNOW.

Plucking a silver cigarette case and a necklace from the air, flashing scintillating lights, ringing a bell (untouched by human hands) to keep time to music, giving forth a cascade of quick raps, each rap a letter of the alphabet, and thus composing an intelligent sentence, causing a cigarette case to rise from the floor and project itself through an aperture made in the table—all this in light sufficient to read by—these were some of the marvels witnessed by a company of twelve men and women at a sitting held at the British College, Holland Park, on Thursday, December 10th.

It was in the presence of Frau Silbert, the wonderful Austrian medium. She is a homely little lady, but before you are through with her you are profoundly impressed.

If I say she has some of the qualities of a great actress, I am likely to be misunderstood. What I mean is that at times, under control, when she lifts the veil, as it were, between matter and spirit, her gestures, her gaze, her whole personality become transfigured. There is dignity, power, with a sibylline sense behind everything she does. One is held spell-bound watching this plain little woman passing through a veritable transformation from ordinary humanity to a weaver of spells, to one who is able to transcend the laws of matter as we know them.

I have rarely been more fascinated or impressed. At the close I asked Miss Eisner to convey in her best German to the medium (who does not speak English) my tribute to her as a truly wonderful woman. That was how I felt. Frau Silbert brightened with pleasure at the compliment, but at once said it was not she, but her guide and control, Professor Nell, who did it all. True enough, in a way, but he could not work without this fine instrument.

And yet with this ideal combination, how dependent we are on that third important factor—the human element—the sitters in the circle!

We started the sitting at 5 p.m., and went on with moderately successful phenomena for some time. Then there was a blank period, and it almost appeared that the séance had fizzled out. Some sitters had to leave, and we asked for the signal (by raps) for permission to close. It was not forthcoming. Desultory results and blanks succeeded. Again we sought permission to close and were met with stony silence. Mrs. McKenzie, speaking from experience, said Professor Nell was evidently preparing something more. A further couple of sitters left. It seemed that we were in for a lame finish.

Then suddenly came a change. The medium becoming controlled, with rapt gaze and looking like one inspired and charged with a fateful message (as indeed she was), rose and stretched forth her arms. Her hands, moving with exquisite grace, seemed to be fashioning something out of the air. Then, while all were watching with tension and almost with awe, her hand darted forward and lo! in its grasp was my silver cigarette case, which, a few seconds before, I had seen reposing on the carpet under the table at my feet, for at the opening of the séance a few light objects had been placed there to be operated on. This spiritual legerdemain was performed right under the electric globe of red light, strong enough to read by with ease.

This was wonder working indeed. I do not pause to insist on the impossibility of this act being done by the medium herself. Those who were present know it was not done thus.

Witty and erudite, Professor De Morgan supplies the best answer, where he says, in his famous Preface to his wife's book, "From Matter to Spirit" (1863):—

"I have no acquaintance either with P. or Q., but I feel sure that the decided conviction of all who can see both sides of the shield must be that it is more likely that P. has seen a ghost than that Q. knows he cannot have seen one."

I have seen and felt and talked with "ghosts," and received from one information unknown to me which was subsequently verified, but I had never till now witnessed the lightning disintegration and reformation of matter. And the fact that it was done in bright light made the feat still more dramatic.

It was this same cigarette case, which earlier in the sitting had made a brave effort to float on to the table from the floor below. The hole in the table, about 10 x 8 inches, is prepared for such acts, and is covered by a loose piece of black velvet. My cigarette case pushed up a corner of the velvet some three or four inches, and was plainly visible to all, surrounded, some said, by a luminous haze. It could not, however, get over on to the table, and fell back through the hole. During this time the medium's hands were on the table, and her feet were controlled by the sitters on each side of her. The feet control, in this incident, mattered nothing, for to suggest that if uncontrolled her feet could have accomplished the levitation of the cigarette case as we saw it, is simply not what may be called "practical politics."

Immediately after Frau Silbert had extracted my cigarette case from the atmosphere, she turned to the cur-

tained recess behind her (used as a "cabinet" or reservoir of force), and again making those mystic movements of her beautiful hands, "materialised" a bead necklace, which had been seen by all under the table a little before. Holding this necklace stretched out wide, she began swinging it horizontally, and from its centre came blazing little lights.

After this extraordinary display we said farewell to the gifted chemist or physicist on the Other Side, and thanked him for all that he had done for us.

Granted that all took place as I have described it (and other items in the séance have had to be overlooked), what does it amount to? Merely an exhibition of supernatural activities, due possibly to certain heightened powers in a gifted sensitive?

By no means. A new world of forces was opened up, such that if recognised would overthrow the philosophy of orthodox science.

But to the Spiritualist there was much more in it than this. There was throughout evidence of a directing mind. I have said nothing of this aspect, but it was overwhelming. That, coupled with the proof of forces acting on matter, in a new way, made this séance the gateway to a larger life of matter and spirit.

## RESULTS OF CORRECT INVESTIGATION.

The Rev. William Annesley, M.A., in a recent issue of "The Christian Spiritualist," tells how he began to investigate Spiritualistic phenomena, and with what results. It was the conclusions of the Committee of Bishops appointed by the Lambeth Conference of 1920 that started Mr. Annesley on his successful research. The Committee said: "The Christian Scriptures undoubtedly declare the existence of unseen beings who influence men for good or evil. We cannot, therefore, dismiss the possibility of communications from such beings of either nature. Prior to this report he knew very little of Spiritualism. Soon thereafter certain experiences of window-tappings during the recital of Mass constrained him to begin a personal investigation, in which he was fortunate. Mr. Annesley writes:—

I think I must have been clairaudient since boyhood. Until I began to investigate Spiritualism I could not have given this faculty a name. Nor did I ever connect it with Spiritualism. I thought it odd that from time to time I should feel a voice speaking to me. I say feel, not hear, for I did not hear it with my outward ear. When I was about twelve years old this voice warned me of danger and told me what to do when it arose. There was no sign of danger at the time. Yet it was not far off. I did what I had been told and all was well. Some years after I was warned in a dream. Thus fore-armed, I came through triumphant. About twenty years ago, I felt certain that it was someone on the Other Side who spoke to me. Later on the old familiar voice intimated to me that I should shortly be offered a living. I had never heard the name either of the patron or the parish. I took no steps to obtain the living, yet within a week or ten days I received a letter from the patron. I have from time to time been directed in the same way to call upon this or that person in the parish by whom my ministrations were needed. These have always been non-Church goers, too shy to send for me, who, nevertheless, welcomed me when I called and told me their trouble. On one occasion I was given a message for a man I scarcely knew. I did not deliver it as a message, but as my own words of counsel to him. This, I think, was what was intended. But neither the thought nor the words were really mine. They were given to me, as in a flash, possibly by the man's own guide.

Later, Mr. Annesley thought it might be meant that he should write under control, and accordingly he made many attempts, although one after another proved fruitless. At length came a sudden and urgent call, since which time he has received many interesting and beautiful communications.

MANCHESTER PROPAGANDA MEETINGS.—The third of this series of meetings was held at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, on Sunday, 6th inst., there being about 1,500 people present to hear the Rev. C. Dravton Thomas speak on "Spiritualism: What is it, and What Difference does it make to us?" The Chairman, Mr. Geo. Mack, introducing the lecturer remarked that there is no philosophic, scientific, or religious question which is outside the scope of Spiritualism. Mr. Thomas, in opening his address, said it was quite an ordinary experience of his to talk with friends whose bodies he had seen buried many years ago. He also referred to the "newspaper tests" received by him, and duly published. Details of other types of communications were set forth as illustrating the nearness of our invisible friends. "We know more about you now than when we were living with you," they say. In conclusion, Mr. Thomas assured his audience that when each one has passed through the gateway of death and become accustomed to the new surroundings, the most staggering experience will be the discovery "that all through the years, with all your sin and folly, how greatly you have been loved."

## A TRENCHANT TESTIMONY.

MR. DENNIS BRADLEY'S NEW BOOK.

A recent critic of Mr. Dennis Bradley's testimony to the evidence gained in his own family circle finds himself confronted with a dilemma. He has either to accept or to reject the good faith of Mr. Bradley, Mrs. Bradley and their son; but the critic reflects that during the last hundred years "precisely similar manifestations" have been obtained by fraud. This is a statement that challenges contradiction in at least one respect. As to the frauds, these may be admitted without any reservation, but in thousands of cases there has been no imposture whatever unless we are to suppose that large numbers of honest citizens have entered into conspiracies to defraud themselves.

I wonder what some hard-shell sceptic, some root-and-branch materialist, would do if he had to choose between imputing fraud to his wife or his mother, or accepting the reality of psychic phenomena. I rather imagine he would ignore the dilemma; indeed, I have seen such cases. The unbeliever has cursed inwardly and taken up Mr. Podsnap's position: "I decline to pursue this painful discussion." It is always an odious business for the hard materialist when phenomena breaks out in his own family and he cannot find any trace of fraud. There is nothing to be done in that case—short of surrender—except to take up a position of masterly inactivity and refuse to say anything one way or the other. So we may reverse the jibe that a Spiritualist is a person who sees something which is not there, by suggesting that a sceptic (of this kind) is a person who refuses to see something that is there.

Dennis Bradley was a sceptic—"a slightly bored sceptic"—at the beginning of things. But he was neither a coward nor a fool, and all the world knows now how he gained his first evidence at a direct voice séance at the house of Mr. Joseph de Wyckoff in New Jersey, when he held a conversation with his departed sister Annie. That was fully narrated in his book, "Towards the Stars," and in his latest book, "The Wisdom of the Gods," he gives the story in brief summary and then travels over a wide field in recording his subsequent experiences. One of the most arresting things in the book is the account of how he himself developed mediumship for the direct voice and other physical phenomena, and so made assurance doubly sure.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle lately described this and other recent books as "hammer blows." This book is especially worthy of such a description. Mr. Bradley wields his hammer like a new Thor and deals some lusty blows not only at the critics, but at a certain type of psychic researcher who persistently refuses to see what is under his very nose.

The book is marked throughout by a vigour, vividness and variety. Doubtless some of us will not be able to agree with all Mr. Bradley's conclusions, but on all the vital issues he is sound. He has a penetrative mind as well as a ready wit. It took him but a few months to arrive at a point which some of the so-called scientific researchers have not reached after many years of research. He saw at once that the psychological as well as the psychic side of the matter has to be studied. He saw that sympathy and harmonious conditions were the prime requisites for all psychic evidence, and so he rapidly arrived at the position of all intelligent Spiritualists. As someone said lately, "Spiritualism begins where Psychic Research leaves off." There is no need here to enter into any detailed description of the contents of the book. It has been and will continue to be widely reviewed and extensively read and discussed.

It is no very cynical asperity, as old Sam Johnson would have said, to remark that Mr. Bradley has still much to learn. So, indeed, for that matter, have all of us. He and Mr. Hannen Swaffer and their compeers have come on the scene at a time when, except for the efforts of men like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the accumulated knowledge gathered by thousands of Spiritualists, many of them humble and inarticulate folk, would have still continued unknown. The new contingent have brought with them a great driving force and powerful reinforcements from circles which are especially fitted to provide a wide circulation of the knowledge we and they have gathered.

It may be said that Mr. Bradley brings a strong personal note into his championship of Spiritualism, but that at the present stage is valuable and necessary. Impersonal philosophies are of very little use to the mass of men; they are for the few. The doctrine that is above the heads of the people is also above their hearts. The book is highly provocative, it will stir up not only discussion but dissension; that also is to the good. One is always glad to see some strong meat added to a fare which has consisted too much of milk-posset.

D. G.

"THE BLUE BIRD."—We understand that Maeterlinck's famous play with its inspiring message, "There is No Death," will be revived this week at the Garrick Theatre, under the managership of Mr. Neil Gow, an occasional contributor to LIGHT.

## BRITISH COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

Frau Silbert, the famous Austrian physical medium, is at present at the College, and many old and new investigators are taking the opportunity of witnessing the exercise of her remarkable psychic gift. Sometimes even in white light, but oftener in good red light, striking telekinetic phenomena are given. Articles placed at various distances gravitate to her hands and sometimes a materialised hand is seen putting them into her grasp.

Mr. Evan Powell, the physical and voice medium, gave excellent results to many on his recent visit.

Major Colley continued his vivid psychic experiences on Wednesday, 25th ulto, at the monthly Members' Meeting, by his account of curious happenings in India while on service, and how these were foretold in the closest detail before he left England through the mediumship of Mrs. Fairclough-Smith.

Mrs. Kelway Bamber's series of talks on "The Laws of Mediumship," were closely followed and appreciated by many students. From a long practical study of the subject of trance mediumship in particular, Mrs. Bamber is able to guide new enquirers, and her advice and help is always at the service of the serious investigator.

Mrs. de Crespigny and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie concluded the course on "Personal Psychic Experiences," and succeeded in convincing their audiences that psychic facts are capable of personal proof by all who will give the matter serious attention.

## OBSESSION AND THEOSOPHY.

Dr. Carl A. Wickland's important book, "Thirty Years Among the Dead," not only throws much needed light on many strange cases of so-called insanity—by demonstrating that the patient may be the victim of obsession by one or more earthbound spirits—but deals, adventitiously, a serious blow to the doctrine of reincarnation. If the several communications purporting to come from earthbound and other spirits can be credited, and there seems no reason why they should not, the fanciful doctrine of reincarnation is not only false, but is responsible for much suffering in some weakly children in this life, and in some followers of Kardec and Blavatsky in the next.

Dr. Wickland has recorded several communications from the latter entities (while temporarily in control of his entranced wife) in which they stated that they were Theosophists and followers of Mme. Blavatsky, and that on passing over they had unwittingly obsessed young and weakly children, mistakenly imagining that they were thus reincarnating themselves and working out their Karma, which they believed to be a religious duty. That their experience, moreover, was a long-drawn-out nightmare, for the obsessed subject, being naturally weak and ailing both in mind and body, gave them a very poor time, and continuously disputed their control. That they had actually obsessed the children, Dr. Wickland ascertained to be true, by the fact that their control of Mrs. Wickland and enlightenment coincided with an immediate return to sanity of the poor little patients.

While controlling Mrs. Wickland one of the obsessing entities made the interesting statement that Mme. Blavatsky was present, and that she, with other Theosophical leaders, now repudiated the doctrine of reincarnation, which they denounced as false, and that they were making every effort to undo the harm they had done, by instructing those spirits who were accessible and were likely to come to harm through continued belief in the supposed necessity for reincarnation.

Mme. Blavatsky also purported to communicate, and in a long statement expressed regret that she had taught the doctrine of reincarnation which she now knew to be false; that she had been led astray by the fascination of leadership, and ought to have used, to the greater advantage of humanity, her personal gift of mediumship.

A. CAMPBELL HOLMS.

## NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

"The Riddle and Some Keys." By Edward W. P. Carter. Published by the author, "Dumbar," Ditchling, Hassocks. (6d.)

(Music).—"My Mary Sweet and Brown" (song). Music by Helen Keller. Words by J. M. Stuart Young. Enoch and Sons, Ltd., 58, Great Marlborough Street, W.1. (2s. net.)

"LOVE AND DEATH." A Narrative of Fact (with a Foreword by Sir Oliver Lodge). (Hodder & Stoughton, 3/6.)

"SENILAC AND OTHER POEMS." By the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould. (A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 3/6.)

"THE ETHERIC DOUBLE." By Arthur E. Powell. (The Theosophical Publishing House, Ltd., 7/6.)