

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research

"Light! More Light!"—Goethe.

"Whatsoever doth make Manifest is Light!"—Paul.

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CONCERNING THE LIFE TO COME.

Looking back through earlier issues of LIGHT we find the question of the nature of the next life continually debated with arguments that to-day seem curiously out of date, so much have we advanced in knowledge of the question. This has come about in part from the scientists' discovery that matter has no positive existence, so that the terrestrial world as we know it is no safe standard by which to judge the nature of any super-terrestrial region. As to the objective reality of the future life, as we have before said, it is real and concrete enough to those who dwell in it. Death represents rather a change in consciousness than a change in locality. There will still be for us when we "pass on" an inner and an outer world, still a subjective and an objective condition. States of mind will colour our surroundings, of course, but that happens in this world also, though not to the same degree. Many people find it interesting to wonder and speculate and theorise about the nature of the life to come, and there is no harm in doing so in a moderate way. It is good exercise for the mind. But for the practical Spiritualist it is sufficient to know that the next world is as real and natural as this one, its conditions no less substantial, its facts no less positive.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

LEGAL OPINION.

On several occasions we have been told by visitors who applied for guidance in their investigations into Spiritualism that they had been moved to do so not so much by the arguments in its support as by the arguments against it. One of these visitors—a famous lawyer—remarked that he had been reading the case against the subject and it was so poor and thin that he thought it was time to look into the other side of the matter. And this reminds us that the lawyer's view is at least as valuable as that of the scientist, for the lawyer is trained to weigh evidence and never to allow his mind to be swayed by appearances, by gossip or by plausible statements. His judgment is rarely clouded by personal prejudices—his mind is concentrated on facts and not on points of view. We have met some brilliant lawyers who have decided in favour of Spiritualism not merely from personal experience of its evidences, but from an impartial study of the case as presented by its supporters and its opponents. In short, it is not too much to say that if we were ourselves inquiring into the matter for the first time we should attach greater importance to the opinion of a trained lawyer than to that of the scientist, the physician or the clergyman.

THE SEARCH FOR REALITY.

There is much pother concerning the difference between Spirit and Matter. The Transcendentalist and the Realist waste many words and much ink in exalting one or flouting the other. "This non-existent Matter!" exclaims the apostle of the transcendental, encouraged by the recent findings of Science. "This nondescript, elusive Spirit!" retorts the man who holds by the visible and tangible world. The two views are about equally true—and false. It may, indeed, be said that nothing is a complete truth that has not two apparently antagonistic sides. It is certainly so here. Matter and Spirit appear to contradict and deny one another. In point of fact the twain are one, capable of being viewed from two sides—the interior and the exterior—Spirit and Substance, Force and Form—the double aspect runs through all; we can never have one without the other. We can never seize Spirit nor ever escape from it. We can seize Matter only to find that it always escapes us. In the end, then, we come face to face with the conclusion that Life in all its forms is a manifestation of an Infinite and Eternal Reality, our exploration of which is limited only by the limitations of our thought. The Universe has room for millions of worlds more subtle and refined than our own, for countless myriads of intelligent and organised beings besides ourselves—and neither worlds nor peoples, although invisible to us, need be any less real and substantial.

MAHATMA GANDHI ON RESISTANCE.

I believe in non-violence and think that it can be carried out between man and man, and between nation and nation, but it does not mean "renunciation of the fight against evil." On the contrary, non-violence, as I understand it, is a more active and more real fight against evil than retribution, for the essential feature of the latter is to produce new evil. What I have in mind is a spiritual and therefore moral resistance against the immoral. I am trying by all means to dull the edge of the tyrant's sword, but not by lifting a still sharper weapon against it, but by disappointing his expectation of my physical resistance. The soul force with which I resist instead, must paralyse him. It will, at first, bewilder him and finally force him into appreciation—into an appreciation which will not humble him, but uplift him.—From "Brotherhood."

THE LAND OF OTHERWHERE.

In the land of Otherwhere
There are gardens rich and fair,
Free from all that may pollute
Flower or fruit.

There, when ends life's little day,
And the flesh is cast away,
We, set free of all its throes,
Shall repose.

And, when rest and calm restore
All our pristine strength—and more—
We shall eagerly pursue
Life anew.

Sweet the message that they bear
From that land of Otherwhere—
Those who dwell in it and know
It is so.

'Tis that as we burst from this
Grey and earthy chrysalis
We emerge from nether night
Into light.

—LUCIUS.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS FUND.—We acknowledge with many thanks £2 from Mrs. Hugh Fitton.

WHO IS BEHIND THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT?

By W. H. EVANS.

It is a claim of the Spiritualist that our movement is spirit-initiated and guided. The claim is a reasonable one and certainly accounts for the progress our movement has made, seeing that unlike others, it has been without any leader in the flesh. We have had, and still have, great mediums and thinkers associated with our movement, but not one of them has been looked up to as a final authority; there has been no person to whom any appeal could be made. The demand always has been, and still is, for the Spiritualist to shape his own philosophy, and unfold his own religion. Despite this emphasis upon personal responsibility there has been marvellous unanimity of results. Our societies and unions are more dependent upon the guidance of the unseen than upon any observance of form and ceremony, or on codes of rules, and so long as that dependence continues, success is assured.

THE MOTHER OF MANY MOVEMENTS.

Spiritualism has been the prolific mother of many other movements. It has been the seed-ground of many ideas which have grown into quite respectable schools of thought. Very few, if any, of these schools acknowledge their debt; some speak disparagingly of our movement, and unsparingly denounce the usual methods of approach to the unseen. What is overlooked is that this approach is not one sought by the people of this side, but one initiated by the people of the spirit-world, and this aspect should be pondered very carefully; it will let some light in upon minds who believe they have a superior light.

I confess I am sometimes puzzled by the attitude toward Spiritualism taken up by some of our theosophical friends upon this question. We are told by them of certain people called "Masters," that they have a certain work to do, but according to reports they seem divided upon this particular question of the Spiritualist movement. In Alice A. Bailey's book, "Initiation, Human and Solar," p. 59, is the following:—

"On the fifth ray of concrete knowledge or science, we find the Master Hilarion, who, in an earlier incarnation was Paul of Tarsus. He is occupying a Cretan body, but spends a large part of his time in Egypt. He it was who gave out to the world that occult treatise, 'Light on the Path,' and His work is particularly interesting to the general public at this crisis, for He works with those who are developing the intuition, and controls and transmutes the great movements that tend to strip the veil from the unseen. His is the energy which, through His disciples is stimulating the Psychic Research groups everywhere, and He it was Who initiated, through various pupils of His, the Spiritualistic movement. He has under observation all those who are psychics of the higher order, and assists in developing their powers for the good of the group, and, in connection with certain devas of the astral plane, He works to open up to the seekers after truth, that subjective world which lies behind the grossly material."

CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS.

Here we have a definite and decided claim, yet I am puzzled. If the Master Hilarion is the being behind the Spiritualist movement, why did he condemn mediumship in his occult treatise, "Light on the Path"? According to that work, mediumship drives people insane and makes them nervous wrecks. This kind of leadership perplexes me. I could understand a word of warning against abusing the sacred power of mediumship, but unsparing denunciation from the very Master responsible for its revival strikes me as queer generalship. It is not only Hilarion, but other Masters who join in this denunciation, as "The Mahatma Letters" show.

Is there any clear evidence that these Masters are behind our movement? I leave upon one side evidence of their existence. There are those who claim to know them, and for the present I accept their testimony. But the claim that the Master Hilarion is behind the Spiritualist movement is one that I do not think is clearly established. Let us turn back and examine the beginnings of our movement. We are all acquainted with the story of the Rochester knockings, and according to the messages given out through the early mediums, Spiritualism resulted from the efforts of a band of spirit people with Benjamin Franklin at their head. There was no talk of these particular Masters among the speakers, none through that great seer Andrew Jackson Davis, and it is not until the Theosophical Society is well established that this claim is put forward. And it is so contradictory that the plain man is perplexed. I suspect an error somewhere, a misinterpretation of facts, a drawing of wrong inferences, very natural mistakes to make. It is certainly a pity that this should have been done. The Spiritualist movement has borne the brunt of the battle with materialism.

THE MEDIUMS' PART.

Theosophy has done good work, but I think it has done a great disservice to the cause of human progress by condemning the methods of mediumship. We cannot forget that it has been, and still is, the despised medium who stood, and still stands, between us and materialism, who will, in fact, prevent it from conquering the world. Theosophy has given us splendid ideas. I always regard it as mental fertilisation. It has outlined a truly wonderful scheme of the universe, but I do wish its devotees were more humble. It should be possible for the two movements to work together. Spiritualistic teaching is in front of some of the teachings given out by theosophical leaders. Mr. A. P. Sinnett's pamphlet, "Expanded Theosophical Knowledge," gives out as new ideas teachings which can be found in Spiritualist books written more than sixty years ago.

MASTERS OR GUIDES?

The objects of both movements are the same. Should I be wrong in suggesting that the beings the Theosophist speaks of as Masters, the Spiritualist calls guides? I use the term guide in an expanded sense, meaning the guides of our movement. Is there no meeting, no point, no personal contact between the two ideas? I think there is. Just as it is impossible at present for the Theosophist to demonstrate to the man in the street the existence of the Masters, so it is impossible for the Spiritualist to demonstrate the existence of the great guides of his movement. But the Spiritualist can demonstrate the existence of supernormal powers whereby contact with the Spirit-world can be effected. And as it is the average man who needs this, we may rest assured that the usual methods of mediumistic approach will go on until the race consciousness is saturated with the knowledge of human survival of bodily death. I sincerely hope the two movements will arise to the great endeavour and find a means of working together for the common good.

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA: SOME ARRESTING EPISODES.

By LEIGH HUNT.

Speaking from personal experience I have found many phenomena that might at first appear to be of the poltergeist order, and, as such, of no account as evidence of other world intervention, have proved to be the work of spirit people who had good reasons for producing such manifestations.

A merry party of us were playing cards at Mrs. Everitt's Hendon home one day, when one of the players suddenly missed a card; a hunt was made, and the missing card was found buried beneath the cushions of a large ottoman couch at the other end of the room. At a direct voice séance, held the same evening, we were told that this had been done with the object of arresting the attention of the gentleman who rather scoffed at psychic phenomena. The object was achieved, for he knew that in the circumstances normal agency could not account for that apparently trivial occurrence, and it set him thinking.

After attending a number of séances, a medical friend still found it hard to give in to the spirit hypothesis. This gentleman seemed to realise the presence of spirit people when sitting in séance, but afterwards he would "wonder and wonder" if his senses had deceived him. One evening, at the conclusion of a very successful séance, the doctor's hat was brought by the unseen operators from a chair on which he had left it, and rammed on his head until it nearly reached his eyes; the remark accompanying this performance being, "Now light up, and get his hat off for him." To this day I cannot think of the dénouement without laughing. The doctor, red in the face, getting irritable and frantically helping my father to get the hat off—but the scene can best be left to the reader to imagine! The doctor did not express any doubts about the reality of that event!

During a time when I had to keep several notebooks relating to a profession which I had hopes of entering, it was very necessary for me to be up-to-date in my entries. At the conclusion of a sitting one evening, I found that these notebooks, which were in the room, had been much disarranged. They had been shuffled in such a way as to leave at the top a book in which, when I opened it, I noticed an important omission in my entries. At a subsequent séance this was referred to with these words, "We know you had omitted that item."

I could narrate many similar occurrences which proved to be the work of discarnate spirits, but will leave them to some later occasion.

THE warrior spirit is void of hatred, and the further you get from the fighting line, the nearer you get to hatred's lair. Hatred is essentially a vice of cowards and underlings.—From "Love Letters of an Anarchist," by Richard Hope.

COMPLEXITIES OF PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP.

MR. STANLEY DE BRATH DISCUSSES SOME PROBLEMS.

Before a crowded audience of members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance on the 19th inst., Mr. Stanley De Brath, M.I.C.E., gave an admirable address upon "The Complexities of Physical Mediumship." The conditions necessary for the manifestation of physical phenomena, said the lecturer, must be understood and complied with if satisfactory results are to be looked for. "Ignorance of the facts," he added, "accounts for many failures, and also for much mixed and unreliable communication." The subject was one of great importance, and it was desirable that the student should be equipped with clear ideas on the nature of cause and effect, terms which were often loosely applied. In the course of his address, Mr. De Brath said:—

All material changes whatsoever are due to energy in action. We speak of "the properties of Matter," but strictly speaking, Matter has no properties apart from energy. Recent developments in Physics seem to show that in the ultimate analysis, Matter is a kind of fixed energy. . . . To produce ordered results Energy must be directed by Mind—either by the Cosmic Mind, which acts by Laws of Nature, or by individual human minds, incarnate or discarnate.

Mr. De Brath (who emphasised the fact that he was dealing with physical as distinct from mental mediumship) discussed the Hydesville Disturbances, analysing this important case with his customary powers of lucid deduction. Here was the manifestation of a new form of energy, directed by a mind quite independent of the Fox family, or any of their household. What was the form of energy made use of? Strictly speaking, we do not know, at least not in the scientific sense.

Arising out of this case was an interesting and significant point. It would be remembered that the manifesting intelligence purporting to be the murdered pedlar, gave an inexact location of his dead body. The dead man's bones had been subsequently removed from that position to another. Had the information been *subjective*, it might reasonably be assumed that the unconscious medium would have cognised the actual position. "On the animist-metagnomic theory the position and existence of the corpse should have been the first fact discovered if the disturbances proceeded from 'cryptesthesia.'"

On the spirit hypothesis, however, one would expect that the burial in the cellar would correspond with the dead man's last earthly impressions; assuming that his spirit survived, there seemed to be no special reason why he should know that his bones had subsequently been removed to the other burial place against the wall, to which spot he could direct the excavators.

The incorrectness of Rosna's idea of the position of his remains was a logical argument in favour of the spirit theory.

The lecturer then made a brief survey of the feud between Church and Science during the second half of the nineteenth century, arising out of the Darwinian theory, both opposing parties failing to recognise the true purpose of evolution—the development of Character. Physical mediumship was historically the point of departure from these warring factions; it was also the principal means of demonstrating survival.

The essence of physical mediumship, as had been verified under most rigid scientific conditions by Dr. Geley, amongst others, is the emission of the mysterious substance called ectoplasm, a kind of prolongation of the medium's body, which can be moulded by the direct action of Mind. As regards the laws underlying the production and manipulation of ectoplasm, we know as yet very little. We do not know exactly how a medium is able to exercise his strange powers. Geley puts forward the theory that "a medium is one whose constituent elements—mental-dynamic and material—are capable of being momentarily decentralised"—that is to say, liberated from the control of his own will. The mediumistic faculty, like all other faculties, develops along the line in which it is exercised. In many cases a medium has been told by external agencies that the mediumistic powers would be withdrawn, and this warning has almost always been fulfilled. Mediums, by reason of their sensitiveness, are frequently suggestible, moody, capricious, and easily provoked to anger. This is more so with physical mediums than with mental mediums, although there are many exceptions to the rule in both classes of psychic faculty. If they were not peculiarly sensitive, they could not be mediums at all. This fact is frequently ignored by so-called investigators, who subject this highly sensitive being to treatment that even a normal thick-skinned person would resent. Experimenters might well take example by the medical profession, whose members are trained to methods of sympathy and forbearance.

Hostility towards the medium, and general ignorance of the conditions are causes of many failures to procure satisfactory phenomena. New students frequently ignore entirely the work done by trained researchers before them; they desire to start *de novo* without troubling to lay down

a foundation of ascertained fact. Hence the failure of most investigating committees. The essence of the matter, however, lay in the fact that there must be a certain *rapport*, either community of ideas, identity of interest or of a mutual affection between the medium, the sitters and the communicating entity. These three parties to the experiment should be in harmonious relation; the link between them, however, may be, in some cases, a physical one, such as a glove or a letter. Speaking for himself, the lecturer said that he had witnessed a considerable amount of physical phenomena, and had little desire for any more; it was, though important in itself, on a lower level than mental phenomena. "It is better," he said, "to base conviction of the genuineness of physical phenomena upon recorded laboratory experiments by first-class men, and to go on to the intellectual and spiritual aspects of the supernormal facts which have so much bearing upon our lives."

Mr. H. Ernest Hunt, who presided, paid a cordial tribute to the valuable work of Mr. Stanley De Brath, whom he described as a great man in his own age.

A BURLESQUE.

"Tit-Bits" of the 15th inst. publishes an amusing skit on a recent investigation into psychic phenomena. The title headings of the article are sufficiently sensational; they run: "There is no South Pole! Celebrated Committee Knocks the Bottom out of the World! Final Report of the 'Sunday Critic' Investigators." With this preliminary flourish the article proceeds to narrate the appointment by the Editor of the "Sunday Critic" of a number of well-known people to investigate the existence of the South Pole, each member being chosen on account of his or her ignorance of geographical research and Antarctic exploration with consequent impartiality. Amongst the committee, of which a list is given, are Sir Will O. Thewisp, the eminent cigarette-card collector; Professor I. S. High, the well-known barbed-wire eater; Dr. S. A. W. Bones, the famous saxophonist; Miss Pearl Ciro, the favourite cinema star, and Miss Di Gester, the charming secretary of the Mustard Club. It is noted that originally Sir Alfred Donan Coyle, the President of the Royal Exploration Society, consented to act as adviser, but it being discovered that he showed a distinct geographical bias, it was decided to dispense with his services.

The account proceeds to explain that after an exhaustive, painstaking and impartial inquiry, the Committee reports that it is utterly unable to find any evidence of the existence of the South Pole, and amongst the reasons given are that none of the Committee has ever been to or seen the South Pole, and in spite of offering a reward of £100,000, no explorer had, under the test conditions laid down by the Committee, been able to produce a piece of it. Further, one of the witnesses who gave his name as Ammundsen, claimed to have been at the South Pole. When he appeared to give evidence he was reluctant to submit to being blindfolded, gagged, handcuffed, and tied in a sack. Further, the witness was unable to prove that he was Ammundsen, and the Committee was unable to find any evidence that he was not merely impersonating that individual. Again it seems that Professor I. S. High cleverly enunciated the words "snow" and "ice." The witness at once stated that there was snow and ice at the South Pole. Professor High then said, "I am feeling very cold," whereupon the witness remarked that it was much colder on the Antarctic Continent. But Professor High states that he has never been at the South Pole and that he invented the words "snow" and "ice" on the spur of the moment.

The alleged diaries of Captain Scott were produced as proof of the existence of the South Pole, but the Committee was unable to find conclusive evidence that they were not forgeries.

Furthermore Sir Alfred Donan Coyle produced a photograph which he stated was taken at the South Pole, but the Committee thinks it obvious that the credulity of Sir Alfred is such as to be easily imposed upon by an unscrupulous photographer.

It is a delightful bit of satire, appearing first in our contemporary, "The Two Worlds."

OBITUARY: MADAME DE STEIGER.—We have only just heard of the decease of Madame Isabelle de Steiger. We are informed she passed away in Liverpool on the 1st inst. within a few weeks of her 91st birthday. Madame De Steiger's name would be best known amongst the older generation of Spiritualists and occultists. She was a copious writer, and contributed many articles to LIGHT and to other periodicals dealing with psychical, occult and mystical subjects. Madame De Steiger's literary activities continued to the last. She had not only completed a book of Memorabilia to be published by Messrs. Rider and Son, but a large picture painted by her last year was exhibited in the autumn in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. She was also a very active worker in connection with the Anthroposophical Society. It was doubtless due to the variety of her interests and the activity of her mind that her intellect remained clear to the end. Madame De Steiger has a sister a year older than herself still living.

HOUDINI AS MAGICIAN.

HIS EVIDENCE AS A WITNESS.

Let us take a hypothetical case. Suppose that a stranger walks into my office and proceeds to carry out some operation which I know to be physically impossible; for instance, that he succeeds in threading a brass ring on to an endless cord. At once my curiosity is aroused. I minutely and rigorously examine the ring and the endless cord; I fail to find anything against their perfect integrity.

I know that according to all purely physical laws a ring cannot possibly be threaded on to an endless cord; yet I have seen it done!

Let us assume that the mysterious stranger says: "This operation was carried out by psychic laws, quite outside the material domain!"

I think there would be strong evidence here in favour of the psychic theory.

Let us assume, however, that the mysterious visitor says: "This is merely a clever trick, perfectly, in fact childishly, simple when you know the secret." It would be rather absurd, in face of such a statement, if I persisted that it was not a trick, that it was the result of occult forces.

Assume, however, that I obstinately persist in asseverating that my visitor is a powerful medium, crediting him with strange and awful powers of juggling with the fourth dimension. How can my repeated assertions stand up in face of his definite disclaimer—particularly if he shows me how the trick is done?

His categorical denial *must* be taken as a piece of evidence. To upset this denial, some very definite contrary evidence would have to be brought forward. A mere opinion could hardly upset it. Against that denial my unsupported reiterations in favour of the occult explanation must—regarded evidentially—fall to the ground.

(I might mention in passing that the highly amusing trick of passing a ring on to an "endless cord" can be performed by anybody who cares to visit a certain emporium in Regent-street and pay half-a-crown for the materials.)

Now, I am not out to fight the tedious battle, *pro* or *con* as to whether Houdini possessed occult powers or not. He may possibly have been a physical medium, and have used his psychic gifts in connection with his dramatic entertainments; but so far, I have found little evidence in support of that theory. And by "evidence," I mean testimony that is judicially valid.

It is not valid testimony when some dear old lady asserts, "I know Houdini was a medium, because when I saw him escape from the milk can I distinctly felt 'power' being drawn from me." The old lady may be quite sincere, and absolutely correct. But this assertion, unsupported, is—like the remark of the soldier—"not evidence."

It is generally known that Houdini disclaimed psychic powers, and claimed that his tricks were performed by ordinary methods of theatrical magic. I give below some extracts from his evidence given before the Sub-Committee on Fortune Telling at the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., on February 26th, May 18th, 20th, and 21st, 1926. From this it will be seen that Mr. Houdini is quite emphatic that he does not possess supernormal powers, that his performances are merely tricks, and that those who claim occult powers are, in his opinion, either charlatans or degenerates.

MR. HOUDINI: . . . I am not attacking a religion . . . I respect every genuine believer in Spiritualism or any other religion, as long as it does not conflict with the laws of the country or the laws of humanity.

But this thing they call "Spiritualism" wherein a medium intercommunicates with the dead, is a fraud from start to finish. There are only two kinds of mediums, those who are mental degenerates and who ought to be under observation, and those who are deliberate cheats and frauds. . . ."

There is nothing indefinite about that statement. Nor about the following:—

MR. McLEOD: It is possible to have a genuine clairvoyant, is it not?

MR. HOUDINI: It is impossible, I claim. I will give \$10,000 to any clairvoyant in the world that will do one test.

A little later we find this:—

MR. HOUDINI: I have had more mediums arrested in two years than have been arrested in seventy, because I know their tricks; I know how to catch them.

MR. HOUSTON: You have never tried to catch them on a test, have you?

MR. HOUDINI: On a test? [Turning to the audience.] Tell me the name my mother called me when I was born? [No response.] Tell me the pet name my father used to call me? [No response.]

Houdini's disclaimer, as regards the possession of supernormal faculties, is given in the following interrogatory:—

MR. HAMMER: You don't claim to be able to do anything by divine power?

MR. HOUDINI: No, sir; I am human. But mediums are trying to say I am psychic. That is not true.

MR. BLOOM: Everything you do is just as a magician? MR. HOUDINI: Yes, sir; I call it "mystification." But I do tricks nobody can explain.

MR. HAMMER: You do not claim divine power?

MR. HOUDINI: No, sir.

MR. HAMMER: But these mediums do?

MR. McLEOD (interposing): You claim you have psychic power.

MR. HOUDINI: They say I have. No one has; we are all born alike.

One hardly need go any further. The Master Magician has made his attitude—real or assumed—abundantly clear. Nevertheless I will quote a little more. The following extract needs no comment, except perhaps as regards the witness's first statement. How a medium can be "either psychosis or criminal" is a point that completely eludes me. Of course one knows what Houdini intended. He was not an Englishman, so that his occasional faulty use of the language—a noticeable feature in the recorded statements of many speakers at the hearing—may be due to a foreigner's ignorance, inaccurate reporting, or possibly to a protracted use of the modern American tongue, which appears to differ somewhat from our own.

MR. HOUDINI: . . . Give me the medium, and I will prove that they are either psychosis or criminal.

MR. McLEOD: I do not want to interfere with your statement, but you have made quite an extensive investigation, as has this gentleman. Why would it not be possible, if that is such an outrageous fake and fraud, that it would be discovered by such men as Conan Doyle, who is an outstanding authority?

MR. HOUDINI: Conan Doyle is not an outstanding authority.

MR. McLEOD: He is accepted as one of the best.

MR. HOUDINI: No; he is not accepted as one of the best. He is one of the greatest dupes, outside of Sir Oliver Lodge. Conan Doyle stated that I possess mediumistic powers, which I deny.

MR. McLEOD: How can you prove it?

MR. HOUDINI: I admit that I do not possess mediumistic powers. They claim in a London psychic college I dematerialise my body, and that I ooze through and come out again and put myself together. That is Hewitt McKenzie.

MR. McLEOD: How do you do it?

MR. HOUDINI: I do it like anybody else would do it. There is nothing secret about it. We are all humans. Nobody is supernormal. We are all born alike.

I will, for the present, leave the matter there. Mr. Houdini may have been a powerful medium; he may, in spite of his disclaimers, have carried out his "escapes" by occult means. His violent denunciations of psychics, his emphatic denials that he used any power other than that of the professional mystery-monger may have been deliberate misstatements of the truth, designed to mislead the public. But—is there any concrete evidence of this?

DANEGO.

SOME MEMORIES OF LESLIE CURNOW.

Mr. James Coates writes:—

It was my privilege to know Mr. Curnow very well, and I soon recognised his ability, personal character and deep interest in Spiritualism. I had tea with him twice in his room in the Hampden Club, and was astonished at his library. He spent hours searching second-hand shops and bookstalls—hours that another man would take for rest and recreation after his strenuous day's work. He had the Colonial manner—a little free but never ungentlemanly—and he was given to strong likes and dislikes.

I had much pleasure in introducing Mr. Curnow—a stranger—to several interesting people, and to one séance—with Mrs. Susanna Harris. In this case one experience was enough. He felt the séance was evidential, but it lacked in spirituality. He never went back again. It was too coarse for him.

In absence on holiday of the Editor of LIGHT he was in the chair. I was in Aberdeen about 1922 to 1923. The city was in a great state of excitement about a haunted house. The police officials believed in the haunting. On the receipt of a wire from Mr. Curnow desiring me to inquire, I got permission from the Chief Constable to investigate. In company with a well-known Spiritualist I visited the house, interviewed the people, and drew certain conclusions. The head of the house was a person of doubtful standing, making a good bit out of the visitors. As to the "haunting," it was clearly due to natural causes—rickety flooring, and crumbling of the walls below. I sent a wire to Mr. Curnow to this effect: "There is nothing in the hauntings. All due to natural causes." The local Press got the full particulars, and the hauntings ceased.

A short time before Sir Arthur Conan Doyle sailed for Australia, Mr. Curnow, rendered him some service. From that time till before Mr. Curnow's demise, I have reason to think that Sir Arthur appreciated his ability and service, and paid his grateful tribute to the memory of Curnow at the graveside.

Let me place a stone of memory on his cairn.

JANUARY

LETT

(The Editor

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SIR,—Y Mrs. Baylis my testimo

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(The Editor does not necessarily identify himself with the opinions expressed by Correspondents.)

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. BAYLIS.

SIR,—You recently published a report of a sitting with Mrs. Baylis recorded by Miss Boyd-Sime. May I also add my testimony?

I had the opportunity of joining five others, two ladies and three gentlemen, at 26, St. George's Square, Westminster. I was an absolute novice and I regarded it as a tremendous ordeal—the possibility of conversing with the dead! But having studied the subject deeply for four years (starting with the small pamphlets on sale at the Æolian Hall) I felt, or at least hoped, I was nerve-proof.

Activities soon started and the friendly hand of a guide (or control) was placed in a reassuring manner on each sitter's hand in turn, followed by the trumpet making a "tinny" noise as it travelled over and touched the head and shoulders of each sitter. Lights darted here and there and a voice, in a very intense whisper like a woman anxious to do the best possible in a short time, twice repeated, "We are not dead." Names were given quite audibly. I gave a thought-test in Arabic—which was immediately responded to audibly, and the illuminated slates, making apparently the correct position in front of me, at last succeeded and I saw my brother's profile form against the light background. As I said, "My brother is here," the slates moved in an agitated manner as if joyfully confirming, and a voice uttered his name and passing to the right very jauntily wished me "Bon soir." (This brother was found dying in the hotel at Sao Paulo—he was quite well two hours previously—en route from Buenos Aires to arrange affairs after our father's recent death.)

During the sitting I felt myself touched dozens of times. How I would have loved to return their greetings in full recognition! There were many names and many voices; in fact the air was literally vibrant.

September 29th, 1926, the day of the sitting, was the most wonderful day of my life. I have to thank Mrs. Baylis. Did I not through her receive personal proof of that which I have read and now know? "Life is ever Lord of Death" and "Love can never lose its own."—Yours, etc.,

(MISS) ROBERTA HAMILTON.

80, Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park, W.2.

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

SIR,—It would be interesting to learn why the Evangelical Section of the Established Church and likewise all the Dissenters regard "prayers for the dead" as unlawful. The Bible certainly sanctions them; St. Paul prayed for dead Onesimus, and bade us pray for one another. It is also noteworthy that Queen Victoria set the example by ordering the singing of the Contakion from the Eastern Orthodox Office for the Dead at the funeral of her grandson, the Duke of Clarence, thus dealing a death blow at the prejudice which in 1894 deprived many Christians from the privilege of praying for their dead. Let us follow the instinctive feeling that prompts us to pray for our beloved dead that rest and peace may be theirs in the world behind the Veil to which we are all travelling. I may add, by the way, that I recently came across the following prayer for a dead child, "Oh, Saviour, keep her close to Thee, lest she should wake and call for me." Even if heterodox, it is quaint and pleasing.—Yours, etc.,

E. P. PRENTICE.

MISLEADING MESSAGES—AN EXPLANATION.

SIR,—A short time ago I wrote you on the question of untrue spirit messages. An explanation I had received from the other side was that the guide could not always stay long enough, and had to have someone in his place which did not always turn out satisfactory, but led to confusion and error.

From this and other facts I gathered the idea that the effective communication by the guide depended upon the mobility of the currents in the ether, and his functioning through them.

In "The Survival of the Soul," by Cornillier (p. 359) I find this affirmed positively. Vettellini, the High Spirit Communicator, thus explains the failure of a projected sitting:—

... last Friday's séance was impossible, because of the interposition of certain fluidic currents between the spirits and the incarnate. At given epochs the earth throws off special radiations that come into violent collision with the currents of the interplanetary spaces; and when this happens, spirits of Vettellini's composition are, so to speak, pushed back. In order to descend to

our plane, and stay there any length of time, they would be forced to draw upon a very considerable quantity of our fluid, and in this case it would have involved a useless fatigue for us, which he consequently had avoided.

A recognition of this fact helps to explain the difficulty of which I have had provoking experience; apparently it sometimes happens during a séance, with unfortunate results.—Yours, etc.,

J. W. MACDONALD.

"CLAIRVOYANCE AND MATERIALISATION."

There will shortly appear a translation of Dr. Geley's "Ectoplasmie et Clairvoyance" under the above title which ought to set at rest all controversy as to the genuineness of these two leading classes of phenomena. It is likely to take a place as a classical work of reference, as being the record of a large number of laboratory experiments all conducted by scientific men of high standing, and as such it is quite unique in the annals of psychical research. Dr. Geley has very wisely confined himself to facts and has given the experiments *in extenso* with names, dates and all particulars on the model of laboratory notes, without any technical or philosophical considerations. There is neither attack nor defence of any theories at all.

It was his intention, as he mentions in this work, to use it as a foundation for philosophical deductions which he hoped to make in the two volumes which he had under preparation when he met his death in the aeroplane crash which deprived metapsychic science of one of its best exponents. It is not too much to say of this work, which is written in a singularly clear and readable style without repetition or technical phraseology, that it must inevitably take a decisive place in the new science, which deals with the supernormal facts which are so often rejected because they are supposed to lie outside the domain of scientific laws. It should render obsolete all disputation on the reality of the two great typical classes of those facts, and should reduce many futile disputations to their true proportions.

The activity of the phenomena as occurrences in Nature being incontrovertibly proved, the virulent attacks on mediumship, such as those on Dr. and Mrs. Crandon, for instance, are seen to turn on the merely personal question of "Margery's" mediumship. Her detractors are obviously moved by scepticism on the general question of the possibility of such phenomena.

As to clairvoyance: the experiments on the contents of sealed letters, on revelations of character and descriptions of distant persons and events, given under critic-proof conditions are decisive. The materialisation experiments conducted in the laboratory by committees of scientists are the best since Crookes' work and far transcend the imperfect and fragmentary phenomena which give rise to so much acrid correspondence and bitter accusations of fraud. The book, which is published by Messrs. Ernest Benn, Ltd., will be welcomed by all sincere students as containing really decisive data on many vexed questions.

S. DE B.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION.

"Take the supernormal out of the Bible, and not much remains but the cover," said the Rev. J. Lamond, D.D., on Sunday last, in the course of an interesting address in which he traced the growth of psychic development from early Christian days. It was not until after the union of Church and State, in the reign of Constantine, that psychic power was driven into the back ground; to-day Spiritualism was offering a mighty challenge to the attention of mankind.

V. L. K.

COMMUNITY SERVICES.—We hope to deal with Miss Lindaf-Hageby's address in our next issue.

TOWARDS UNITY.—Most of us struggle to bear ourselves upon a tide that would carry us lightly and without friction if we but trusted ourselves to its care. Our activities should be the natural play of the life within us, our thoughts the quiet breathings of inspiration, orderly, effortless. We see obstacles where there are no obstacles and surround ourselves with a legion of illusions and chimeras that have no place anywhere in life. We separate one thing from another and consider them apart and are forthwith immersed in futile speculations and endless perplexities. We divorce ourselves in imagination from the world and find it by the same fact unintelligible; we separate ourselves in thought from our fellows and find a conflict of interests. We see wonders in the phenomenal manifestations of another life, and behold no wonder in that common life which is the source of them all. We struggle, shrink, are terrified because we are still under the dominion of the senses—and have not yet entered into full possession of our soul. But as one by one we enter into that great inheritance the shadows will flee away, the darkness be burnt up in a great sunrise, all the scattered things be blended into a Divine Unity.—G.

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A SERMON AND SOME REFLECTIONS.

We have received a short report of a sermon delivered by the Rev. Basil Bouchier (of St. Jude's, Hampstead) at St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town. The account is taken from the "Cape Times" and is headed: "The Mystery of Death: Unsolved by Spiritualism."

In the course of his remarks the preacher is reported as saying that "with all the fervour of a crusade, the gospel of the Hereafter, as conceived by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is being preached throughout England to-day." Further, Mr. Bouchier is described as saying "we are witnessing a recrudescence of Spiritualism without parallel. . . Personally, I believe that this new cult represents the swinging of the pendulum in the revolt against a purely materialistic view of life. 'Things temporal' fail to satisfy." And we read how, as a result of the war, "millions of hearts were broken, and in their agony men and women, forsaking the Church of their fathers, besieged the citadels of the 'Spiritists.'"

We go on to read that:—

Not one single great or ennobling word has so far emerged from the Beyond. The revelations up to date have been trivial in the extreme, lacking grandeur, dealing with petty things, in short, mere prolonged egoism.

The accusation sounds like the favourite charge brought against Spiritualism by one of the leading Rationalists. We should certainly deplore the state of things depicted by the preacher if it were true, but we can only characterise it as a reckless and superficial statement which could be easily refuted from the great literature of Spiritualism. We are more in agreement with the statement which appears later in the sermon, namely:—

Spiritualism, like every other new cult, *e.g.*, Christian Science, points to some failure in the Church's witness, and has come as the Nemesis and penalty of our neglect.

This statement we can easily accept. It has been said many times before, and we have no fault to find with it.

But we learn from the sermon that "in Spiritualism mighty Christian verities are involved, *e.g.*, the continuity of life beyond the grave, not excluding the possibility—I do not say probability—of communication." It is a little surprising to hear that the con-

tinuity of life beyond the grave is a "Christian verity." It is almost like claiming that the law of gravitation is a Christian law. To the thoughtful Spiritualist it has become an axiom that human survival after death is in accordance with Universal law—a fact in Nature having no relation to any particular religion. There are several other great religions which assert the continuity of life but we have never heard one of them taking up the rather arrogant position that this particular truth belonged exclusively to their own faith.

At one point the preacher becomes a little declamatory, as, for instance, "Spiritualism offers me a medium: Christianity a Mediator." The implication of that statement is that Spiritualism offers the world a medium in place of a Mediator. This will be a strange hearing for the large number of devout members of the Christian Church who have gained proof of the reality of the future life through Spiritualism, but who have not found it necessary to leave their Church or be in any way impelled to substitute "the séance for the Sacrament."

Let us dismiss this part of the preacher's argument as mere rhetoric which does not usually have any particular regard for facts; and pass on.

The preacher thinks that the genuineness of these professed communications from the departed is a matter "exclusively for the scientists." That again is a point on which we must differ from the reverend gentleman, and it is curious that what is claimed as a Christian verity is so lightly to be abandoned to the judgment of the scientists. It was not always thus; but Theology, in its battle with Science, has had to learn some bitter lessons. Nevertheless there is much more in Spiritualism than material for the scientists, especially as many scientists, even to-day, are still weighted by a materialistic bias. Surely religion should have something to say, not only in the person of ministers but of their congregations. There are many highly intelligent people in the Church who are neither priests nor professors. Is their judgment to be ignored?

Let us frankly admit that Mr. Bouchier's attack is not without justification. There are in Spiritualism defects and failures and possibilities of abuse, but if he had taken a larger and more liberal view of the matter he might have realised that Spiritualism is still in a rather raw and primitive state. It is still at its beginnings. It has some crudities to outgrow before it can be shaped and perfected to take its place in the general mind as a factor in religious life and knowledge. It is a very human thing, nothing supernatural or transcendental. It is quite easy to stand apart and point out its faults. It is not so easy to study it, try and grasp its purpose and endeavour to shape and direct its course so that it can be made an agent in the progress of the world at large. To the carrying out of that work we look rather to Religion than Science, although so far as Spiritualism represents new modes of communications, new discoveries in the nature of life as an everyday matter, the aid of science is indispensable. Many of the clergy are reaching this conclusion. They see in Spiritualism a new power. They recognise that it is still young but they see in it, as all thoughtful Spiritualists do, the promise and potency of great new discoveries concerning life and mind that will be quite as valuable to the Church as to Science. They have not forgotten the words of Gamaliel, the Pharisee and doctor of the law, when he spoke in defence of the Apostles: "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this counsel and this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it." That is a test by which we are willing to abide. It is a test which we have imposed on the subject from the beginning of our acquaintance with it, *i.e.*, if it is false it must fail and perish, if it be true it will survive and fulfil its destined work. So far it has undergone an ordeal such as has fallen to the lot of very few great movements. If it had been what it is often described as being by its opponents, it would have perished long ago.

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FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

In the current "Quest," Raoul de Fleurière gives an abbreviated description of "How he experiences Clairvoyance," the full account having been delivered at the Institut Métapsychique International, and printed in "La Revue Métapsychique." Of all the "revealing fluids of a personality the most astonishing," he remarks, is "perhaps the magnetic," so termed by analogy with the action of the electro-magnet:—

In my own case, as soon as psychical vision begins, I am clearly conscious that my mental state has nothing in common with my usual physical condition. I at once pass into a kind of secondary state, in which I am no longer the same man; I no longer see or feel in the same way as before. There takes place in me, as it were, a splitting in two of personality; or rather it is as though a person hidden in the inmost depths of my being, over and beyond my normal self, had suddenly emerged.

* * * *

Endeavouring to elucidate the relation of the clairvoyant faculties to the brain this clairvoyant writes: "Set, so to say, on the periphery of the soul, like the facets of a diamond on its sparkling surface, these faculties seem to me to be in direct relation with the brain. . . . There are psychical brain-centres which seem brilliant as suns." To students of the subject who are aware of the practical value of phrenology, it will be interesting to read:—

But often the intellectual faculties, the gifts, aptitudes, the particular stimulus given to the scope of the intelligence—all this is delineated with amazing precision. And in this respect I should like to mention a strange fact: many faculties appear to me to be localised in definite, absolutely invariable, parts of the brain. Thus memory seems to me to be seated (or to be active) behind the eyes; imagination and poetic activity behind the temporal curve; will behind the top of the forehead; religious aspiration below the apex of the skull; the love-faculty, both physical and moral, at the base of the cerebellum, etc.

The "People's Journal" prints a long report of varied psycho-physical phenomena, headed: "Spook Disturbs Peace of Lonely Scottish Croft: Men pulled out of bed and punched—Articles Hurtle Through Air." One feature of the story may be noticed here. The narrators told the reporter that a local man who was interested in psychic matters supplied a code by which mysterious tappings might be interpreted, and continued:—

The way we proceeded was this. After the first tappings we repeated the alphabet, and at a certain letter there would come a tap in reply. We continued in this way until whole sentences were thus spelled out. "Get up!" was one of the first messages we received, and this was followed by a request, twice repeated, to say the Lord's Prayer. This we did.

We were told, by means of the decoded tappings, that no harm would be done us, and that the mysterious happenings in the bedroom were just for the purpose of attracting our attention.

Doubtless many of the seemingly trivial and even unintelligible phenomena of a psychical nature are permitted "just for the purpose of attracting attention" to the invisible world—the best that can be done by unseen operators in the circumstances.

* * * *

Writing to the "Medical Press and Circular," our contributor, Dr. E. H. Worth, effectively deals with Professor McDougall and the question of ectoplasm. Quoting from Dr. Geley's address to the Metapsychic Congress at Copenhagen in 1921, he says:—

The ectoplasm phenomena are the same in all countries, whoever the medium and the observers may be.

Sir William Crookes, Dr. Gibier, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Richet, Ochorowicz, Professor Morselli, Mme. Bisson, Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, Dr. Crawford, Lebudzinski, and others have given rigorously concordant descriptions."

* * * *

Under the heading "Science and Spiritualism," the "Leicester Mail" notices a lecture on "How Mind Comes to Know Matter," by Professor H. A. S. Worsley, of Nottingham University, to the Nottingham Practical Psychology Club. The Professor avers that there are waves and sounds in the ether which some day we may be able to hear:—

Objects, he said, have many qualities which reveal themselves to a mind, also many which do not direct themselves to a mind. An example of this was wireless 20 or 30 years ago.

PHILOSOPHY IN A NUTSHELL.

BEAUTY is God's wayside sacrament.

A MAN must stand erect, not be kept erect by others.

THE intuitive have the whole universe for their library.

ECHO is the soft and beautiful moonlight of sound.

NEVER judge another man till you have stood in his shoes.—HILLEL.

MUSIC may be the language of Spirit awaiting interpretation.—E. P. PRENTICE.

HOPE is the mark of all the souls whom God has made His friends.

SUCCESS too early and too easy settles the soul into self-sufficiency.—"The Next Beyond."

THE power of any life lies in its expectancy.—GRAHAM TRAVERS.

No man nor any body of men is good enough or wise enough to dispense with the tonic of criticism.—HUXLEY.

By great sorrows the human heart is protected against small ones—by the waterfall against the rain.

HE who understands love in its truest and inward sense, conquers every evil.—E. K. G.

THE only way to get rid of your past is to get a future out of it.—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

FORTUNE is painted blind that she may not blush to behold the fools who belong to her.

To speak truth is the privilege of a freeman; to do it roundly and plainly is his glory.

ONLY a life following beauty and creating it approaches to any degree of joyousness.—G. B. BURGIN.

FAITH without work is like a well without water; whoso cometh to draw, goeth empty away.

TALENT struggles with the bottle of conventionalism, that genius so easily and successfully bursts!—E. P. P.

"SEARCH not who spoke this or that, but mark what is spoken."—THOMAS A KEMPIS.

It is better to be damned, in the world's opinion, trying to do the will of God, than saved—doing nothing.—JOHN OLIVER HOBBS.

A LITTLE philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds to true religion.—BACON.

THE surest way to complete the higher education of a people is to encourage each single section to take part in the affairs of the whole community.—STEIN.

It cannot be too often repeated that all real democracy is an attempt (like that of a jolly hostess) to bring shy people out.—G. K. CHESTERTON.

THERE is nothing that so awakens the divinity within us as lofty music. In the labyrinths of the ear, as in those of Egypt, gods lie buried.

DISEASE, insanity and crime may spring from confinement and unnatural restrictions imposed upon the self-conscious centres of affection, intellect and volition.—From "THE TEMPLE."

OMISSION to take *positive rest*, in order to preserve health and be fitted for useful labour on the morrow, is as criminal and fertile in evil as any other transgression of divine law.—From "THE TEMPLE."

THE greatest drawback of the school is the ignorance which prevails about the psychic development of the child.—FELIX ADLER, in "The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology."

WE are part of that we love. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth"; but the spirit of man goeth forth to bathe in paradisaal dew; he is a son of the morning.—E. P. P.

ALMOST every ill which Society suffers from can be traced to untruth, but if you try to cure it with the whole Truth, the chances are that you will make it worse.—From "Love Letters of an Anarchist," by RICHARD HOPE.

LET all who will, learn that they themselves are the repositories of all force, and that wisdom may convert that force into power, the first use of which is to render themselves self-governing and symmetrical.—B. G. E.

THE difficulties of life are not industrial or economic only: they are domestic, ethical, social, and broadly human in infinite variety. To enable a man to live his life capably, nobly, and effectively in the midst of all these, is the final aim of education.—FRED HENDERSON.

TRUE friends, though diversely inclined,
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

WORDSWORTH.

THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN THING.

Human nature seems instinctively to shrink from the unknown, to be content with its little bit of the known. The boy, aged five, is perfectly content with his half a dozen marbles, his puppy, his penny a week for sweets and his back-yard. The philosopher, aged sixty-five, has nearly always been content with his cosmogony, his "schemata" or his creed, and the intrusion of a critic or a sceptic was inevitably distasteful. Tens of thousands of these worthy men have said—at all events to themselves:—

I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know and know full well,
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.

But the reason is obvious. Dr. Fell begged to differ, or laughed at one of his cherished conclusions, or told him something he did not know.

It has something to do with egotism, a great deal to do with the law of self-preservation, and a little to do with the useful instinct which leads the philosophical beaver to build breakwaters against the sudden rush of swollen streams. It is not every philosopher who is as sharp or who can see so far forward as the little maid who was the heroine of the following charming story:—

A little Irish girl, about six years old, living in Massachusetts, was lately telling some of her school-mates—children of Protestant parents—what great things the priest could do. "Why," she said, "if he wished he could turn a man to stone!" The other children laughed, and said, "We don't believe it." "Well," was her reply—beautiful in its simplicity—"if I was you I wouldn't believe, but I've got to."

In the political world this offence of telling people things they did not know has been the one unpardonable sin, and it has had more to do with axes and gallows than all other offences put together. As a rule, the "rebel" or "traitor" has simply been a sort of schoolmaster who took in hand the men in possession—great statesmen, ruling aristocrats or mighty kings, all of whom thought they knew all they needed to know, and who resented nothing so much as the advocate for reform.

Even in matters of business, the attitude of the majority is usually the attitude of resentment against the man who tells it something it did not know. People not only disbelieve; they mock, they show temper, they resent. It was an Earl of Derby who offered to eat the first boiler that carried a steamer across the Atlantic, and it was no less a person than a Postmaster-General (the Earl of Lichfield) who said, "Of all the wild and visionary schemes I ever heard of, this, of a penny post, is the most extraordinary." The proposer and inventor of tramways was thought to be a lunatic, and the majority did its best to make him one. It is quite true that, on the whole, the scoffers or pelters with stones are ready enough to make use of the good things they at first derided, and to put up stones in memory of the men they stoned; but there the fact stands—that they did not want to go again to the man who told them things they did not know.

How true it is in the realm of religion! It is the one fact which lights up all the History of the Church. The "heretic," like the "rebel," is usually the man who tells some Pope or another something he did not know, with the usual result of offending egotism and rousing the instinct of self-defence. But there are multitudes of people who are only simply timidly ignorant. They have no real convictions; they have only weak emotions: you do not incense them by telling them things they do not know; you only flutter them. As a shrewd observer once said of one of them, "She was a pat of butter that carried the impression of her manufacturer." She was simply stamped with the butter brand, and she was content.

That pat of butter is known to nearly every Spirit-

ualist; and every Spiritualist knows only too well the people who do not like being told things they do not know. That child of five is typical of thousands in relation to our subject. Knowledge is positively resented, and the proposal to impart it is regarded as an offence. Of course, there are exceptions, but our experience leads to the conclusion that this is the rule.

We are quite ready to consider the suggestion that this shrinking may be a natural and a useful one. The person who turns away from our school, with the remark that we are telling him things he does not know, may possibly be right in turning away and declining to admit our knowledge. These things are strangely intricate, and possibly desire may indicate capacity for assimilation, while shrinking may induce the desirability of abstinence. We are by no means sure of that: but it may be so; and it may be that the world is about as far on the way to familiarity with spiritual knowledge as it ought to be. Still, we have our doubts, especially in relation to the teachers, both theological and scientific, whose unwillingness to learn is almost criminal and entirely cowardly.

In any case, we have every reason for keeping open our school. What we have to offer is a sacred trust, and concerning it we can only believe that sooner or later it will be good for the whole world. There may be preliminary stages that are necessary, and preliminary experiences that must first be passed through, but ultimately it will be good for all to know that we are living, at this moment, in two worlds, and that the world unseen is the greater and more real of the two.

J. P. H.

LOVE AND LIFE: A MEDITATION.

The greatest proof of love is its unselfishness: its desire to pour out itself as an oblation: to give to its uttermost, desiring nothing further than to give. Love is the foundation of the world, and love is God. Human love is the holy but pale reflection of that vast love that is the source of life. But in our mortal scheme of things the self but rarely sees love and life as a whole, save from the standpoint of its own separated existence. Thus there are dreadful times of a bleak and barren loneliness that finds utterance in acute complaint, in longing for the warm responsive touch of loving hand, the living beat of mortal heart to heart in that quick sympathy that is the essence of understanding—that holds within it all the healing of compassion. Natural and pure desire, yet only part of the desire that only God Himself can satisfy. There are high altitudes, where consciousness unfolds and swallows up the circumscribed desire of human ties in a completeness that embraces every phase of mortal need: lessening nothing, but rather ennobling the meanest bond, touching it with fire celestial. So human love must always be the reflection of that love from which life itself was born, and love alone can guide us back to God again.—ETHEL KNOTT.

INTERFUSION.

This hour is all for thee!
The world is lost in silver grey,
Moonrise, or stealing dawn 'twere all the same—
So softly husht, and far away,
All noise of life. The spirit-sense that came
Upon the air from thy dear dwelling-land,
Became a message to my soul to say,
If thou canst hear and understand,
Then come, thyself, to me!

I am, myself, with thee
And here is nothing strange at all!
Save for a blessedness that fills the air,
The sound of thine own light footfall,
The room, the window, and the winding stair,
The sweet familiar things about the place,
By very presence, swift recall,
That they, while here, wore but the outer trace
Of these they were to be!

Thou art, thyself, with me!
And yet thou art, and art not here!
Though winter's dark—this aching sense of loss
Has changed to home's own atmosphere.
And though I breathe the flowers, and feel the moss
Of some sweet field beneath my feet,
It is thy spirit-presence dear,
That makes our differing spheres complete,
For each to hear and see!

—FRANCES TYRRELL.

1001
L7
v. 47, 1927,
no. 2399-2451

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

ITS REBUKE TO DISMAL SOULS.

A great deal of gloom and austerity arises from inexperience of life. The sadness and cynicism of youth are proverbial. Lachrymose poetry is produced for the most part by the young poet. "Where'er I wander sorrow still is there," is the burden of his song. When he has gained breadth of outlook his music changes, and instead of "whining in elegiacs" he is brought to confess, with Andrew Lang, that "Life's more amusing than we thought."

Nevertheless, we have always with us a class of persons who persistently refuse to ripen and who remain like sour green apples on the tree of life. They insist that the pilgrimages of earth shall be performed in a suit of penitentials and with a rueful countenance. They never "make fun" of Spiritualism (it is not conceivable that they could make fun of anything) but denounce it with looks of holy horror. They have heard, they tell you, of spirits who crack jokes—sufficient evidence of where those spirits come from! Why this untimely levity in a realm from which sepulchral voices alone should issue? The assumption of this class of critics that only the Evil One has any right to be merry is a tacit admission that the Evil One has somehow got the best of it, a conclusion which is enough to make anyone sad. But we know better, and preach the gospel of cheerfulness with the best justification in the world. The discovery that the spirit—the real man—is beyond all touch and taint of disease and disaster is warrant enough for going through life cheerful and unafraid.

Generally speaking, we are more tolerant of those who laugh at our doctrine than those who only scowl at it. These can at least laugh, although we confidently predict that they will not have the last of the laughing. When we think on these merry scoffers we feel like the schoolboy on holiday who, visiting the menagerie, stood, cake in hand, before the cage of the laughing jackass, and listened to its outbursts of alleged merriment. He noted its narrow prison, its scanty supply of food, and mentally contrasted its position with his own. "You can laugh all right," he remarked, "but I don't notice that you've got anything particular to laugh about!" Then there are the dull folk. Dull without being sour, they lack the wit which in the case of the more positive type of "kill-joy" expresses itself in malicious invective. They listen to humorous remarks with a wooden expression. They don't see the joke, and the points of an argument have to be carefully explained to them. When they approach our particular subject they test our optimism to the utmost. Never were such flat and stale objections put forward with such an air of seriousness. It is only a trifle less painful when, being at last converted to a belief in psychic phenomena, they relate an account of some trivial phenomenon in a solemn and exaggerated fashion. Frequently the narrative is prefaced with a Shakesperean tag which we have heard so often that we are tired to death of it: "There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio," etc.

But it has its place and purpose, this fellowship of Solemnity and Dulness. It throws the abounding humour of life into a higher relief. We return with renewed zest to the appreciation of the light and laughing side of existence which, quenched now and again by cloud and shadow, emerges eternally with the message of undying life, the assurance that:—

Death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil.

Our optimism is no shallow thing. It has its roots in Nature and Reason. Despair mops and gibbers at us in vain. Behind him always stands the radiant Spirit of Life for ever smiling and serene.

EUGENIUS.

THE growth of the human soul, like the growth of the human body, must be a slow, laborious process involving great tracts of time.—SIR OLIVER LODGE ("Evolution and Creation").

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

When a man sets out to inquire into the subject of psychic manifestations, and I know the man, I can usually hazard a guess as to what he will get. As a rule it may be said that the rogue gets imposture and the fool foolery. Only the true man gets truth.

Here is a Chinese proverb which should prove consoling for those who are doing their duty in conditions of pain and difficulty: "It is better to be a crystal and be broken than to remain perfect like a tile on the house-top."

The sensitiveness of some mediums gives occasion for the remark that the failure of manifestations in an unsympathetic circle may be due to the medium's *snub-conscious* mind.

Some ancient philosophers placed the seat of the soul in the stomach. They must have noticed the religious emotions which are awakened by a good dinner.

The attitude of the pessimist to life reminds me of the fly who, walking on the ceiling, complained that the world was upside down.

"Woman was made to temper man," said an old philosopher. And if I am asked what Man was made for, I could only reply in the words of Robert Burns—"Man was made to mourn."

A contributor sends me an American epitaph on a conscientious worker, the unconscious drollery of which must excuse its profanity: "He worked his d—dest, angels could do no more." D. G.

THE WONDERS OF LIGHT AND COLOUR.

THEIR RELATION TO PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

Man is almost blind and deaf, and is only able to see and hear a small fraction of what goes on around him. This was one of the striking statements made by Mr. A. E. Mundy, M.A.M.E.E., in the course of a lecture at the National Laboratory of Psychological Research on the 18th inst. Nearly all the manifestations of Nature which can affect our minds take place in the ether, pointed out the lecturer. And yet, owing to the limitations of our physical sense faculties, only a minute portion of these manifestations actually reach us. The significance of this would be realised by all who are interested in exploring psychic phenomena.

Mr. Mundy made some interesting observations upon the ether, that "wonderful substance a hundred times more rigid than steel, yet apparently having no weight," which permeates all physical matter, including our bodies. "I believe," he said, "that psychic manifestations are vibrations of different wave-lengths in the ether."

The lecturer then demonstrated by a number of dramatic experiments some of the wonders of light and colour vibrations—invisible to the unaided eye, but startlingly apparent when presented through the medium of the scientific instruments furnished by the National Laboratory. The experiments were in themselves highly entertaining; an electric bell was caused to ring by the striking of a match some six inches away; a riot of colour glories appeared on the screen when a soap bubble was blown in front of a beam of light projected from a powerful lantern; a sheet of gold leaf seen through white light turned from gold to green; X-ray and ultra-violet ray experiments of an uncanny nature were performed by Mr. Mundy, who added, that by painting the walls of a séance room (at a cost of one shilling) with a certain chemical, which he displayed in a test tube, the room could be illuminated during psychic manifestations if an ultra-violet light apparatus were used. The walls would become highly fluorescent, and the resulting light would enable the manifestations to be observed, without hindering the phenomena, as would happen with ordinary light. In conclusion, Mr. Mundy paid a warm tribute to Sir William Barrett, and also to Sir Oliver Lodge, to whom, he added, the world is indebted for the practical everyday use of wireless telegraphy.

Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, who presided, in a few well-chosen words spoke of the great value to psychic research of the lecturer's work along the lines of light and colour vibration. R. A.

MR. HARRY PRICE, Hon. Director of the National Laboratory of Psychological Research, is lecturing at the Institut Métapsychique, Paris, at the invitation of Dr. Osty to-day and to-morrow (Saturday and Sunday, the 29th and 30th inst.) upon the phenomena of Eleanore Zugun and the brothers Schneider. Mr. Price's lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides.

WHIMSICAL "WALTER."

DR. TILLYARD'S PUBLISHED NOTES ON THE CRANDON PHENOMENA.

A report of Dr. R. J. Tillyard's experiences with "Margery" has already appeared in LIGHT, but I am returning to the subject by reason of an article which appears in the current "British Journal of Psychological Research," in which a full record of two séances with this medium is given. Many points of detail are disclosed which were not available for our previous report, and the statement of Dr. Tillyard now given to the public forms a striking and evidential piece of testimony in favour of the genuineness of Mrs. Crandon's mediumship.

The first séance, on Thursday, April 29th, 1926, was held at 10, Lime Street, Boston, Mass., and there were present Dr. and Mrs. Crandon, Dr. and Mrs. R. J. Tillyard, Mr. Dudley, Mr. and Mrs. Litzelman, and Dr. Hardwick. At 9 p.m. the party assembled in the séance room on the fourth floor. Mrs. Tillyard then took "Margery" into a bedroom opposite and submitted her to a thorough search, the medium being nude except for a pair of stockings. Mrs. Tillyard remained with "Margery" (who was clothed in a wrapper, with thin stockings and shoes, the latter being tied to the feet) until the medium was completely secured in the cabinet; this had plate glass sides, back and door.

Lights were turned out, after which "Margery" fell into a trance condition, a fact which was verified at intervals throughout the séance by red light.

COGNITION OF LETTERS.

Almost immediately the voice manifested, first as a hoarse whisper with occasional whistles, later talking freely and wittily, generally from high up in the cabinet. A number of wooden letters, three to four inches long, were picked out in the dark by Dr. Tillyard (who took care to handle them in such a way as not to recognise them) and placed in a basket. "Walter" took out several of these, at the same time correctly naming the letters and accompanying the proceedings with light-hearted remarks.

"WALTER'S" GRIM JOKES.

When asked by Dr. Tillyard whether he could speak outside of the cabinet, "Walter," with startling suddenness, delivered in a sepulchral whisper in his questioner's left ear the words: "Look out, or I'll get you!" followed by ironic chuckles. Dr. Tillyard "nearly jumped out of his seat," a very understandable impulse.

"Walter" showed marked hostility to a certain Professor X., a former sitter who was stated to have abused the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Crandon in an unpardonable way. Two messages to Professor X. were sent by "Walter," one being: "Tell him a live ghost is better than a live rat"—a reference to X.'s experiments with white rats which Mrs. Tillyard had witnessed the previous day. The other message was: "Tell him I'll meet him again SOON—OVER HERE!" Needless to say neither of these messages was delivered.

A SEANCE WITH TWO MEDIUMS.

At the second séance at the same address on Saturday, May 1st, 1926, both "Margery" and Dr. Hardwick were entranced. On one occasion when the red light was turned on to check the conditions, it was seen that Dr. Hardwick's head had slipped on to the unconscious "Margery's" shoulder. "Most improper!" said "Walter," who then remarked that the male medium was not in a sufficiently deep trance. He then proceeded to "bully" the sleeping medium, saying, "Go to sleep, go to sleep!" until apparently a satisfactory condition of trance was obtained.

"Walter" then announced that he was drawing teleplasm from both mediums and that "he would draw out some teleplasm from the white matter of Dr. Hardwick's brain through his left ear and show it to them." After an interval he called for lights.

A DESCRIPTION OF TELEPLASM.

All present saw H. (Hardwick) lying in trance with his head on M.'s ("Margery's") shoulder and with a large mass of peculiar white substance just like cooked brains, covering his left ear and a large part of his head; it was quite eight inches across. The teleplasm felt like warm rubber or wax and was definitely turgid; in appearance it rather suggested a mass of marshmallow. Nothing adhered to R.'s (Dr. Tillyard's) hand and there was certainly no appearance anywhere of animal tissues other than brain, and no sign of any cut surfaces, trachea or lung of animals, etc.

After the séance Dr. Hardwick complained of a pain in his ears; strangely enough Dr. Tillyard found his own left ear sore and inflamed.

M. Q. R. U.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

"The Dark Fire." By Elinor Mordaunt. Hutchinson and Co. (7/6.)

"Et la lumière fut." By Marguerite Triaire. Henri Durville, 23, Rue Saint Merri, Paris. (12 francs.)

THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

By "M.A. (OXON.)."

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Friday, Feb. 4th, at 8 p.m. ... MISS COLLYNS.
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Sunday, Jan. 30th, 11 and 6.30, Mrs. Ruth Darby; Feb. 3rd, Mrs. Fillmore.

SUNDAY'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

Lewisham.—Limes Hall, Limes Grove.—January 30th, 11.15, open circle; 2.45, Lyceum; 6.30, Mrs. Carrie Young. February 2nd, 7, Mrs. M. Maunder

Camberwell.—The Central Hall, High-street.—January 30th, 11, Service; 6.30, Mr. W. H. Mooring. Wednesday, 7.30, at 55, Station-road, public circle.

Shepherd's Bush.—73, Becklow-road.—January 30th, 11, public circle; 6.30, Mr. and Mrs. Kirby. February 3rd, 8, clairvoyance.

Peckham.—Lausanne-road.—January 30th, 7, Mrs. Lucy Smith (South Africa). Thursday, 8.15, public meeting.

Bowes Park.—Shaftesbury Hall, adjoining Bowes Park Station (down side).—January 30th, 11, Mr. A. Punter; 7, Mr. A. Punter. February 2nd, 8, Mrs. Carrie Young.

Richmond Free Church, Ormond-road.—January 30th, 7.30, Mrs. H. Gregg, address and clairvoyance. (Doors close 7.40.) February 2nd, 7.30, Mr. Peters, address and clairvoyance.

L.D.C.—Debating Section.—144, High Holborn, W.C.1. —January 31st, 7.30, Mr. A. J. Prentice, "Spiritualism and War."

Bournemouth Spiritualist Mission, Charminster-road (opposite Richmond Wood-road), Bournemouth.—Sundays, at 11 and 6.30, address and clairvoyance. Local clairvoyant, Mrs. W. G. Hayter.

Croydon Spiritualist Church, New Gallery, Katharine-street.—January 30th, 6.30, Mrs. E. A. Cannock.

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LECTURE. Wednesday, Feb. 2nd, H.H. PRINCE NICHOLAS GALITZINE, on "Materialisation."
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