

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research

"Light! More Light!"—Goethe.

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

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To all its readers, in every part of the globe, "Light" tenders its cordial good wishes for the Christmas Festival.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE MAGIC OF NOEL.

There is magic in the air. A new light shines in the eyes of our fellow men. Hard hearts grow tender; voices take on a kindlier note; hands which were formerly clenched in anger are now extended in friendship. A change has come over the minds of men and the spirit of brotherhood is abroad; for the festival of Christmas is upon us, bringing a message of peace, goodwill, and charity. To the Spiritualists, with their larger vision, Christmas has an even deeper message. In countless homes across the length and breadth of the world, this season will bring memories of other, and happier Yule-tide gatherings at which were assembled friends and loved-ones who have since passed the border; and with these memories will come a thought of sadness and regret for the days that have departed. But to the Spiritualist will come no sad recollections; the shadow of death will not mar the brightness of the scene; for he knows that on this day of peace, when hearts unite, and the fires of love and affection rekindle to a brighter flame, that unseen guests will assemble round the family circle, making it indeed a Day of Reunion—between the living and the so-called dead.

* * * *

GOOD KING WENCESLAS.

When good King Wenceslas looked out on the feast of Stephen, we know what happened. He saw a poor old peasant gathering sticks, and went with his page to carry him Christmas cheer, for the King, as we learn, was also a saint. It is well for the world that love and kindness are not the monopoly of sainthood. Some very great sinners are very generous souls, full of loving kindness to those of their fellows who are in poverty or distress. Christmas is the period when these qualities of soul shine at their brightest. It is the season of the giver, the feast of benison and benefaction. At such a time it seems more than ever true that, as one of the leaders of the Spiritualist

movement once remarked, the only evils in life are selfishness and cruelty. To-day we are beginning to understand that the truest, the most real things are not material things; that kindly thoughts, emotions and sympathies carry with them a power of blessing more lasting and more effectual. We can all give those when we have nothing else to bestow, and the soul that is poor in these things is poor indeed. Some of the very rich are very poor in this respect. The king Wenceslas of the legend, it is to be observed, carried not only gifts—he gave his presence and his blessing as well. He did not send his good cheer to the poor man by his page—he bestowed himself as well. The learned in these matters say that the story has no foundation in fact. Which shows how relatively unimportant a fact is where the things of the Spirit are concerned!

* * * *

THE CHRISTMAS OF THE FUTURE.

There are those who lament that the old-fashioned homely Christmas has passed away—the Yule log, the wassail, the mummers, the simple revels as they were described by Dickens and Washington Irving. The Yule-tide that was once kept at home, with the members of the family gathered from near and far, is now celebrated at hotels and restaurants. People who used to be home or go home for Christmas now "go away"—it may be abroad, or to some native seaside resort. We have grown less simple, more sophisticated. Old days have passed, old manners gone. We might join in the lament, but for remembering that this complaint has gone on all through the ages—the complaint against the dying of olden customs and the birth of new ones. Sometimes, it is true, the new fashions are not so good as the old, and primitive, natural things tend to be overlaid with the tinsel and glitter of an artificial style of living. But the inner spirit of every good custom persists, never to be extinguished; and, although it may be darkened for a time "the lights of heaven always are re-lit." Let us look forward, rather than back. It may be that the full glory of Christmas and its meaning has never yet been revealed; that we are travelling towards it with each circling year, that it is before us and not behind.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

At this high festival, this time of Peace
 Let us make room for Love and Welcome Him
 With hands outstretched, and, tho' our eyes be dim
 With age-long weeping, let us now release
 The beauty of the God in us and cease
 From selfishness of Self. Here, on the brim
 Of a new world, let us not dwell in grim
 Remembrance of the Past, and thus increase
 Earth's sorrow, but look up. The majesty
 Of heaven is in the smallest speck of life.
 O Jesu, Prince of Peace, we trust in Thee
 To free us from the tyranny of strife,
 Uplift our hearts, uphold our faltering will,
 That love, Thy love and ours, the whole world fill.
 —ELEANOR GRAY.

CHRISTMAS 1927.

SOME REFLECTIONS BY "AMICUS."

About nineteen hundred years ago a babe was born in Bethlehem. We are told his coming was heralded by angels; that he would preach *peace* to the nations. He was born in lowly surroundings and cradled in a manger. Little is known of his early life, but the record tells us that, as he grew in stature, he grew "in favour with God and man." Little is known of his early manhood, but we are told that at the age of thirty he began his public ministry, and that "never man spake like this man." His teaching was in direct opposition to the temper and the religion of his day. He proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He laid down a code of ethics, which, if universally practised, would make earth a vestibule of Heaven.

He gathered around him a handful of devoted followers before he was done to death by the religious hierarchy of his day. He returned through the gates of death to counsel and comfort this little band, who thought he had passed for ever beyond their ken. He assured them that he would still be with them, though out of sight. He manifested himself to them and others on many occasions, and these erstwhile simple-minded and fearful followers, under the inspiration of his unseen and helpful companionship, became transformed into courageous, wise, and saintly men.

Here you have, briefly limned out, the origin of what is now the Christian Church.

To-day, in this twentieth century, there exist three colossal religious organisations which have sprung from the seed sown by the original disciples of Jesus—the Greek, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches, and each of these claims to be the sole depository of the truth about, and the teaching of, Jesus who is called the Christ.

It is profoundly significant and highly instructive to compare the position of Christianity and the teachings of its exponents to-day, with the life of its Founder and the principles laid down by Him for the guidance of his followers. Wealth, social position, privilege and power seem, in these days, to be the reward of professional discipleship of Him who had "nowhere to lay His head," and who was "despised and rejected of men."

Furthermore, the ecclesiastical mind appears to be more concerned in the discussion of abstruse theological dogma and in the devising of complicated and ornate ritual than in establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth. The clergy pray—or utter the words—with superfluous iteration, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven," but do exceeding little to bring it about.

May God forgive me if I am unjust in these strictures. I know there are many saintly men in the Churches who genuinely endeavour to conform their lives to the principles laid down by Jesus, but, sad to say, they are few and far between. My criticism is directed to that great impersonal organisation known as the Christian Church and its hierarchy.

The crux of my criticism is that their conception of the character of their Church and its place in the world seems considerably removed from the principles laid down by the Master. The Church to-day is fettered by tradition, and the practices and teachings of its ecclesiastical forbears.

If I interpret the teachings of Jesus aright, and if I understand something of that Divine Life, His mission was to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. His creed, though small, was all-embracing; just the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the essential spirituality of all mankind. He knew little

of, and had little use for, elaborate ritual in public worship. He declared that "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

Jesus taught His disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come," but, instead of working for the coming of His kingdom, the energies of the Churches are frittered away in futile wranglings as to particular forms of Service and Sacrament.

Thy Kingdom come: They repeat these words in all their many services; but if they are in dead earnest for the coming of God's Kingdom upon earth, they should work for it—work and pray. The thousands of Churches with their many services, are no evidence that the Kingdom of God is in being; the evidence is to be looked for outside the Churches.

Very shortly Christendom will be celebrating the anniversary of the birth of the babe Jesus, and the bells will ring out over the land. Ring out, O bells, the advent of the Prince of Peace! Ring into the hearts and minds of His professed followers a determination to re-consecrate themselves to His service. Ring out insincerity! Ring in devotion! Ring with untiring persistence into the minds of statesmen and rulers the will to peace! Ring into the heart of the simple citizen that Jesus loves him and would save him from himself. Ring out strife; ring in love! "Ring in the thousand years of peace!" "Ring in the Christ that is to be!"

SPIRIT PRESENCE AT CHRISTMASTIDE.

A seance held one Christmas Day will always remain in my memory. It seemed to us who were present, that the spirit-world was very near—nearer than we had ever known before. As we sat in seance—seven of us—the whole atmosphere seemed to pulsate with vibrant activity, that sure precursor of a successful sitting when harmony prevails.

No trumpet was used: spirit people spoke in the "direct" voice; some of the voices were the same that we had known on earth, others partook of the tone and inflexion of the voice of the medium (an old friend of the circle, a lady, now professional). Loud raps emphasised the "points" made by the spirit people while speaking. The messages given, the sentiments uttered, the greetings conveyed, deeply impressed us all, but to transfer them from my record to the pages of LIGHT would be of little account, for they were mostly of a personal nature. I will, however, quote the concluding words of the last speaker:—

We, too, have met together this day—we who are on the spirit side of life—in loving communion. We have all been conscious of a Living Presence other than that of our own, and we felt it to be of Him whose entrance into the activities of Earth you commemorate at this time. God grant that an ever-increasing number of people may catch something of His divine joy, and His compassion for all.

And now, after the many years which have elapsed since that memorable seance, may not we re-echo those last words, for, surely His joy, and His compassion need, more than ever, to be realised in the world to-day?

L. H.

THE SCATCHERD MEMORIAL FUND.

We have to acknowledge with thanks a donation of £1 1s. from Mrs. Ella Fry, making the total amount received to date—£174 3s. 6d.

SOME CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS.

By the late DR. ELLIS POWELL.

Are these holiday intervals a law of life, both in this world and in that which is to come? The Divine institution of a compulsory rest on every seventh day would suggest it. The theory is supported by the ever-stronger recognition of the beneficence of the periodical relaxations as evidences in the ancient institution of the *dies refectiois*, and in the modern practice of early closing, the Saturday half-holiday (fast tending to become whole instead of half), and the annual vacation. Certainly a man or a woman will do more and better work in a year in forty-four weeks' labour plus a total eight weeks' holiday, than in fifty-two weeks of unbroken toil. When we reach that world where (as the Spirit says) our congenial activities will follow us, is it not likely that the same law will hold good? We shall do better with 300 years of holidays out of every 1,000 years of eternity, than if the whole of each ten centuries were spent in tasks howsoever congenial to the enfranchised spirit.

And that is exactly what Christ has said. He knew the entire holiday philosophy. "In my Father's house," He declared, "are many resting-places." The word "mansions," with its suggestion of an elaborate and luxurious residence, is entirely foreign to the sense of the original; but then "mansions" itself, in its basic significance, only means a place where you stay, as the Scottish parson lives in his "manse." The "many resting-places" are the pauses for quiet and refreshment on the upward pathway that shall lead us all at last to the Beatific Vision. We can only dimly conjecture what they will be like. But of this we may be certain, that the best our hearts can desire in restfulness, in beauty, and in congenial companionship will fall infinitely short of the tender and gracious reality.

Not the least of the joys of an earthly holiday (but not always of a Christmas holiday) is the opportunity which it gives of quiet self-communion, away from the inexorable hurly-burly in which so many of us are immersed. We can look in upon ourselves, and see what manner of men and women we are. Let us, in these earthly interludes of retreat, think for a moment upon the many heavenly resting-places. Perhaps we may cogitate with greater vividness and profounder interest if we reflect that while the present Christmas finds us with the peremptory certainty of a return to the laborious arena of everyday life, it will be very different with us in 2020. Around us, then, will be the circle of eternal beauty, its thrill enhanced by the gladsome retrospect of the River passed, its hope irradiated by the prospect of unending joy in spiritual progress and congenial labour. There will be no return to the toil and whirl, the tumults, jealousies, anxieties, and disappointments that surround us here. Reader, will 2020 find you and me among the workers of the summer land, or shall we just then be guests in one of the promised resting-places, enjoying a celestial holiday with many a happy retrospect at our old terrestrial rambles by sea and river? I wonder. Let us agree to meet in 2020 and compare notes. With all eternity before us, we should not need to hurry over the comparison.

To adapt the words of Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra":—

And we shall thereupon
Take rest, ere we be gone
Once more on some adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed
When we go onward next
What pathway to select, what armour to indue.

CHRISTMAS LEAVE.

By M. MARRIAN.

It was a raw December night in 1917. In the darkened sky the first faint streaks of dawn appeared in the east. The Boy clambered feverishly over the sand-bags that lined the parapet and dropped lightly to the bottom of the trench. His heart was beating heavily and great drops of sweat stood on the tanned skin of his forehead. With a deep sigh of relief he realised that the raid was over, and at once his mind turned towards his comrades. Had they all returned safely? Were any left wounded and helpless in the darkness, out in "no man's land?"

Hastily he made his way round the traverse, where a group of dark figures were assembled. A few rapid whispers passed from lip to lip; then the report, "All back—two men slightly wounded." He busied himself with the two casualties. "Get well down—don't bunch!" muttered the Boy. "They'll be putting down a retaliation 'strafe' on us in a few—yes, here it comes!" The scream of a high-velocity shell tore the air over his head.

Nervously he leaned back against the parados, waiting for the spasm of "hate" to die down; there was nothing else to be done. Soon, he reflected, the "strafe" would stop; then—with luck!—he would take his party rearwards; a short halt at company headquarters, the customary words of congratulation from the commander, a brief pencilled report (he decided he would recommend Sergeant Taylor for a D.C.M.—a good fellow, Taylor!), then, after a tot of rum—sleep; he ought, he reflected, to get at least three hours uninterrupted sleep, possibly four. He might be able to "wangle" fourteen days' leave, too, on the strength of the raid. That meant—home for Christmas. Home. Wonderful word! After the squalor of trench life, home would be a radiant paradise. He forced his mind away from the immediate danger of the moment and tried to picture his arrival—tired, muddied, but gloriously happy—at the London terminus. His father would be overjoyed. If only his mother had lived to give him a welcome—

A red flash and a hot breath of flame, then—darkness.

"Phew! Near squeak that!" he said to himself. "Precious near sq—" Dazedly he looked around. Then he shut his eyes tightly. "Suppose I must be delirious," he thought. The trench had gone. Dimly he realised that he was—somewhere; a quiet countryside, it seemed to be; somehow, blurred and uncertain, but quite definitely *not* a trench. Then his mind became calm. The blurred vision became clearer, stiller, more intensely vivid. And then he turned and saw beside him a woman.

"Mother!" he said wonderingly. "Then I'm dead!" He clung to her yearningly and half-afraid.

"No, son. You are alive," she said.

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"VIBRATIONS."

BY CAPTAIN Q. C. A. CRAUFURD, R.N.

If the experimenter will sit down with a pencil and a sheet of paper, he can get a very useful record of personal vibrations. He is to draw a wavy line on a sheet of paper and look at it. It appears to be nothing very much at first sight, but let us consider what these marks are. They are clear evidence that his hand has been in motion, and that the record of the motion is totally different to the motion itself. The record is a *memory* of a to and fro motion, and tells us that we can reproduce a similar motion by going over that record again. The record is a result of vibration, but not vibration itself. We must distinguish between records seen in an instant and actions taking time. Similarly the result of any human action is the result and not the action reproduced in time; there is a difference. The action may be a good one, but mistaken, and the record may be either good or evil. "All's well that ends well." The two things are in different dimensions. The one is spontaneous action, and the other measured by time. A man scrapes a fiddle; any child can do the same. They both produce vibrations, but while the one produces music, the other merely produces noise. A tune is memorised vibrations. Now go back to your paper and pencil. Very deliberately draw a series of even waves all of the same form; draw a group of three, and then another group, somewhat different; follow this by a third group still different; you will have produced some sort of design, and you may continue to ornament the paper with this kind of design.

This is the charm of music: it is a record of design. Mere noise is a meaningless scribble.

All that we hear is caused by vibrations of the air leaving a record in the form of memory on the brain.

All that we see may be reduced to the same terms. In the one case it is the vibration of air, in the other vibration of ether, and in both cases a picture is formed which is recorded on the mind.

There are some people who realise the harmony of colours; others see perspective and colour in music.

The two things seem to coalesce in some way, through that organ of the mind which we call the mind's eye.

Similarly a certain scent vibration can recall the scene in which it was last produced.

What does all this mean?

Surely it means that the marks we are pencilling on the paper are symbolical of memory vibrations engraved upon the mind. Once these engraved tablets have been submerged beneath later records, much of the matter is hidden away in the depths of the subconscious mind.

This is something like the pages of a book; the record is there, but it is on another page.

Now we are well aware that some stimulation of remembered vibrations is possible by scent or some other sense perception.

A page in the subconscious memory is suddenly turned up, because it is "in tune" with a conscious thought. One may, therefore, speculate as to the possibility of a communicating spirit causing vibrations of some kind to ripple through the mind and stir some subconscious page.

Nothing but the "Subliminal self," say some enthusiasts; but I say that unless there was some recorded page in the past to respond to that vibration, it would ripple unheeded through the pages of the subconscious mind.

If, in our present state of knowledge, some man comes and whispers words in an unknown tongue, our education is not equal to any response, yet once he

speaks in words that are recorded as meaning something in the pages of our education our own minds can respond.

It is, therefore, necessary that everything which makes an appeal to the mind must be interpreted in the corresponding scribbles that have been made on the subconscious mind.

We have already seen that these scribbles are not themselves vibrations, they are the record of what once were vibrations, possibly childish and uncertain vibrations, and only partially in tune with a more perfect set of these communicated.

Thus all comprehension must be tinged with past experience, education and preconceived opinion.

All comprehension, that is to say, which is tuned to those far back pages at the beginning which correspond to the mind of a little child, and which can easily be forced into tune.

And now let the experimenter try a few of these complicated motions which go to record our thoughts.

Let him *write*.

Let him copy some few lines out of a printed book.

There, staring him in the face, is the fruit of his attempt, his own handwriting, different from that of anyone else, and bearing upon it the stamp of that divergence from the common crowd which distinguishes himself.

There are records of vibrations conveying thoughts, but their record shows that, unconsciously, little turns and twists have crept in which were not in the original copy book script.

Character has crept in.

So, if any of us are mediums for the inflow of vibrating thoughts from the outside, is it not obvious that superimposed upon the pure tune of those incoming vibrations there must be the sharps and flats that are entwined in the prejudices of the subconscious mind?

Yet, because these writhings of the self within will intrude themselves and distort the power ripples that flow in from without, need we label the whole thing nothing else but a dramatising of our own selves from a forgotten past?

That is what we are so often called upon to believe.

True, if we had no past to make a background, we could receive nothing from without.

If we had no English at the back of our minds, we would make nothing of English words spoken into the air.

These English words are real thought vibrations which can be caught and recorded as such in the gramophone.

Whether we can understand them depends upon two things.

The first is whether our minds can respond to those particular vibrations which constitute the English tongue.

The second is whether, having been able to correctly interpret the meaning of the sounds, we are able to associate the subject dealt upon with anything that has been recorded in our minds during our previous education.

In short, it depends upon whether we are the slightest bit in tune or can bring ourselves into a state in which our minds can work in tune.

ONE of the reasons why the orthodox heaven is so depressing a place is that there seems to be no room in it for laughter; it is all harmony and meekness, sanctified by nothing but the gravest of smiles. What wonder that humanity is dejected, at the thought of an existence from which all possibility of innocent absurdity and kindly mirth is subtracted—the only things which have persistently lightened and beguiled the earthly pilgrimage! That is why the death of a humorous person has so deep an added tinge of melancholy about it, because it is apt to seem indecorous to think of what was his most congenial and charming trait still finding scope for its exercise.—A. C. BENSON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

THE BAYLIS CASE.

Sir,—The statements contained in Mr. Batten Baylis' letter, published in the issue of LIGHT, for December 10th, are incorrect.

The suggestion that I apologised for introducing sitters of the experience and standing of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Bradley is entirely without foundation, and the statement that I said I was touched on a particular ring—three distinct times on two occasions—by a *small* cold hand is equally untrue. While the only ring I wore was touched, the hand that stroked mine was far too large to have been that of the spirit-child I had thought might manifest.

At a previous sitting with Mrs. Baylis, I received what I regarded as good evidence of the genuineness of her mental mediumship, but *not* on this occasion, and I wish furthermore to add that Mr. Dennis Bradley's report was accurate and fair in every detail.

Yours, etc.,
MARGARET E. D. GAVIN.

20, Albion Street,
Hyde Park, W
December 14th, 1927.

In the course of a long letter, Mme. J. WALTER DE HERRENSCHWAND, of Chalet Friedheim, Adelboden, writes:—

I am perfectly convinced that the seance with Mrs. Baylis was fraudulent, but I am just as convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena which I experienced. . . .

I asked, under my breath (the other sitters spoke too much to enable the medium to hear what I said, the more so as part of the time I spoke in French). "Touch what is belonging to you," and immediately a hand took my husband's ring, separating it from the other rings. "Touch the second thing belonging to you," and without a moment's hesitation the hand touched a bracelet which is made of my husband's watch-chain.

At the second seance I put the bracelet on my other wrist, and asked the same question, and the hand went to my wrist without hesitation. Then I saw two materialised faces and a hand which certainly was not Mrs. Baylis'. The faces were girl faces slightly smaller than the human face, but quite alive.

Sir,—As a Spiritualist of thirty years' standing, I cannot allow Mr. Bradley's letter in LIGHT to go unchallenged. I have had two absolutely convincing seances with Mr. and Mrs. Baylis, an old patient of mine not only building up with life-like clarity, but giving his full name as well.

My wife, who is an experienced medium herself, has had four highly evidential sittings, and her little Indian guide has manifested at each seance. She talks very much like "Feda," and was at once greeted by Mr. Baylis with, "Hello Feda!" but she immediately said out loud for all to hear, "I am not Feda, I am Delia," and built up for all to see; my wife immediately recognised her. . . . In fairness to Mr. and Mrs. Baylis I wish to state that I am absolutely convinced that they are incapable of fraud.

Yours, etc.,
GEORGE E. RICE (L.D.S., R.C.S.).

79, Harley Street, W.1.

[Lack of space prevents the publication of several other letters relating to the mediumship of Mrs. Baylis.]

FAIRIES AND WHIRLIGIGS.

Sir,—Capt. Craufurd, R.N., in a recent article (LIGHT, November 12th), tells how certain fairies, at his suggestion, reluctantly came to London and moved a little paper detector he had prepared, and balanced upon a needle, inserted in a cork.

The movements presumably thus obtained greatly impressed Capt. Craufurd, and he proposes by the help of suitable apparatus to reproduce them in his laboratory, and to make further experiments.

It may be of interest to recall that movements of this character were carefully studied years ago, and it was found that most persons have the power, to a greater or less extent, to influence a delicately suspended indicator. The investigations were conducted on strictly scientific lines, and, so far as I am aware, there is no recorded instance of fairies having quitted their haunts to rotate paper whirligigs.

Dr. Baraduc, the well-known French experimenter in his inquiries, made use of bifilar suspension, the pointer being suspended in an hermetically closed glass cylinder, and, I remember seeing at the old offices of LIGHT, in St. Martin's Lane, an instrument in which a lightly balanced straw moved over a graduated circle, under a domed-shaped glass, and it was remarkable how the rotation varied when the hands of different persons were brought near, but not in contact with the glass cover.

In some homely experiments of my own I employed insulated pith-balls with striking results. The various investigations established conclusively that the movements were not due to differences of temperature, air currents or electricity. They seemed to be the manifestations of an obscure force akin to that exhibited by mediums in the production of physical phenomena.

A little chloride of calcium placed in the case containing the suspended pointer will often lead to improved results as it absorbs readily any moisture that may be present in the air.

An illustrated article on the influence of the hand upon little paper vanes suitably poised, appeared in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for either May or June 1898, I forget which month.

Yours, etc.,
ARTHUR BUTCHER.

Deal, Kent.

ANIMAL SURVIVAL.

Sir,—Mr. Byerley Thomson asks in LIGHT for testimony as to the survival of animals. I can give two instances from my own experience.

The first relates to a cat. Last year a materialising seance with Mrs. Baylis was held in the house of a lady whose pet cat had recently died. The animal had for some years suffered from asthma, and had violent attacks of sneezing and coughing. During the sitting a curious sneezing noise was heard in the neighbourhood of the cat's owner. At first we wondered what it could be, and then the owner exclaimed: "Why, it is Sandy!" Whereupon there was a joyous *miaow*.

The other instance relates to a dog of my own that died nine years ago. Ever since, he has accompanied a spirit friend who takes care of him, and who constantly gives valuable advice by automatic writing. The dog never fails to notify his presence by pushing the board to and fro with a kind of tail-wagging motion. Lately he has succeeded in answering *yes* or *no* to questions by scribbling vertically for *yes*, and horizontally for *no*. He has often manifested at Mrs. Baylis' seances, scratching my skirt with great vigour, and occasionally making frantic efforts to get into my lap. Being a big retriever, he slips off again, but I have felt a cold nose and the waving of a silky tail. When I tried to catch hold of the tail, it passed through my fingers, and seemed to melt away. He has also been known to bark and whine, but, possibly because he is black, I have never actually seen him.

Yours, etc.,
MARGARET C. VIVIAN.

Marley, Southbourne-on-Sea.

A CONJURER'S TESTIMONY TO MEDIUMSHIP.

Sir,—Seeing in LIGHT some time ago Mr. J. A. Stevenson's tribute to the work of that pioneer medium, Mr. J. J. Vango, I feel impelled to add my own. As a young professional conjurer, I spent many Sunday evenings, some 25 years ago, in visiting the mediums who then gave dark seances, at which physical phenomena were supposed to take place. I detected many frauds, and was becoming disgusted with my experiences, when I chanced one night to select Mr. Vango for my "victim." I was one of the "fools, who came to scoff," but "remained to pray." There was no darkness, no preliminary enquiries (I gave an assumed name on entering), but I received at my first visit, sufficient evidence to give me furiously to think. Later on I had described to me a large dining-room with a two-manual church organ in it, and an accurate description of my father sitting on a sofa smoking a long clay pipe.

This, it must be admitted is a very unusual combination of circumstances, but when we moved from a very large house in the country my father would not part with the organ. He had it re-built in his London dining-room, and, being one of the real old-world "John Bull" type, loved, when alone with his family, to get out an old-fashioned "church-warden" clay and smoke it while my sister played to him.

My profession makes me very sceptical of physical phenomena generally, but the evidence I have in the last quarter of a century received from Mr. Vango has absolutely convinced me of the truth that there is no death. Nottingham's gain is London's loss.

Yours, etc.,
JOHN WARREN.

23, Mark Mansions,
London, W.12.

LIGHT.

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SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.7.

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THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

Once more the Yuletide feast is upon us. It will bring for some a rather wistful memory of Christmas as it was—the tender grace of a day that is fled. For these there will be a lament over the “flying years”—and the holly, the mistletoe, the Yule fire, and the merry-making will seem a little hollow. They will have some reason for their sadness. After what civilisation has passed through since the summer of 1914, the world cannot be quite the same. It has grown sadder—perhaps it has grown wiser also. But that remains to be seen. It is certainly the part of wisdom not to be dejected. Indeed, the highest wisdom seems to have a quality of gaiety.

Let us consider. Christmas is essentially the children's festival and might be held in reverent observance if only on that account. It is not only “hallowed and gracious” through its great traditions centred round a Divine Child; it has for the little folks a quality of enchantment. We children of older growth can think of what Christmas meant to us when we were in the stage of prattling childhood, and try to see it through the eyes of the children about us—Christmas with its toys, its trees bearing strange fruit of gifts and coloured lights, its games, its “cates and dainties,” its dances and delights.

Let those who are inclined to be rueful over the miseries of the world to-day aspire to think of the Yule season in that way and watch the effect on themselves. It is bound to be restorative. Trying to be cheerful has a peculiar psychological effect—it results in producing a state of mind that is positively and actually cheerful. So the mental experts say, and we believe it to be true. Christmas is an appropriate time for such an experiment.

But there is another aspect of Christmas that is never to be forgotten. It celebrates not only one of the world's great birthdays, but it is also a time of reunion, such as might well mark a “birthday party.” People all over the country are “going home for Christmas”—that is to say, where the old home-loving spirit has not evaporated.

To the Spiritualist this is a part of the festival that has a deeper and richer meaning than is ordinarily the case. He knows that those who have passed from earth still cherish the old loves and do not forget the friends and kindred they have left behind. They, too, are given to “go back home” at the time of Noël and to join the family group at the festal board or round the fireside. In the vast majority of cases their coming is unheard, unfelt, unsuspected. But none the less, in myriads of homes

to-day they are welcomed, giving tokens, however slight, of their presence. There are many men and women who, with little or no knowledge of Spiritualism, can “sense” in some dim fashion the presence of the unseen guests, and who become aware of some little change in their minds—a sense of vision or exaltation. They have a feeling that there are others with them besides those whose presence is physically apparent.

That sense of unseen presences is growing year by year. The deeper and clearer it becomes, the more firmly will the great message of Spiritualism be established, and with the dawning consciousness of worlds more real than this, with the lifting of the shadow of death, with the sense of kinship and companionship with friends on both sides of the veil the grey Christmas will be transformed into a feast of light and happiness—a feast that will last the whole year through. With such a hope we utter once more the time-honoured wish: to all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

THE TIME OF YULE.

It was an observation of Mr. G. K. Chesterton that the modern craze for speed would end in everything coming to a standstill. He had observed a symptom of this in the traffic blocks in our streets which hold so many thousands of fleet motor vehicles in a stationary condition. Another instance of speeding-up might be noted in the case of the Christmas numbers of many periodicals which are sometimes to be seen on the bookstalls in November, so that Christmas arrives to find itself left far behind in the race. Not that this really affects the matter in any serious way, for it is probable that Christmas is a state of the soul rather than a mere date in the calendar. The soul—or to be exact the spirit—doubtless lives outside of time, it lives “in feelings, not in figures on a dial,” or on an almanack. But as we who are in the flesh are in a condition of Space and Time, it is well in the interests of practical philosophy to pay some regard to the fact. Christmas is a communal feast, celebrated by general consent at a particular period of the year. Antiquaries dispute the belief that Jesus was born at that period. The shepherds, they say, would never have been watching their flocks by night in the Palestine winter. Does it matter? Not in the least. Christmas, we repeat, is a state of the soul. That it is regulated for mundane purposes by the calendar has no essential bearing on the question.

NOËL NIGHT.

The wintry moon has a chilly splendour,
But the lights of Yule they are warm and tender:
The glow of the holly in country lanes,
The softened lustre of cottage-panes,
From taper and lamp, and the hearth-fire bright,
That flaming altar of Noël night.

Songs and garlands, and gladsome greetings;
Feuds forgotten in mirthful meetings;
With a fire in the heart and a jocund rhyme
The soul makes summer in winter-time;
Goblin and phantom are put to flight
By the shining spirits of Noël night.

For spirits they come, as in Jacob's vision,
Envoys of heaven, on holy mission—
Peace on earth and an end to fears,
The golden goal of the flying years,
When all of the days shall be filled with light—
The rose-red lustre of Noël night.

G.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

Much has been said of late months concerning alleged changes in ocean depths in connection with the idea that great physical transformations are going on preparatory to a new-world order. It has even been stated that the Lost Atlantis will rise again from the ocean depths. Some correspondence on the subject of these changes is given in the *Occult Review* for December. One of the correspondents, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, deals with a statement concerning some soundings taken in 1923 by the Western Telegraph Company in searching for a lost telegraph cable which had been laid twenty-five years before. It was said that the soundings showed that the surface of the Atlantic ocean bed had risen during that time by nearly two and a quarter miles! Sir Arthur states that he took steps to verify the report, and was assured by the Cable Company that there was no truth in it. Sir Arthur adds: "Personally, I cannot understand how there could ever be an appreciable rise in the bed of the ocean without a corresponding change in the high-water mark—unless, indeed, the rise was accompanied by sinkings elsewhere."

From an article on "Animal Metapsychics," by René Sudre, in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, we take the author's conclusions after his investigation of intelligence as manifested by "thinking animals":—

Here we have a multitude of concordant indications which are met in human psychology, and which by analogy impose themselves in animal psychology. The inevitable conclusion is that there is no point of essential difference between our minds and those of the animals; there is only a difference of development. This result should not surprise those who are profoundly convinced of universal evolution and of the continuity of all living forms in Nature.

In *The Outline* Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell (who is secretary to the Zoological Society of London) answers the two articles in that magazine by Sir Oliver Lodge, on the subject of psychical research. It is interesting to see what the distinguished zoologist's conclusions are. He writes:—

To sum up. In my judgment the past history and present position of "psychic science" are different in kind from what Sir Oliver Lodge calls "orthodox science." The former shows no progress in its results or methods; the latter has shown an almost continuous progress in knowledge and a continued advance in the delicacy and precision of its methods. The former insists on a waywardness of result independent of the methods and the will of the experimenter. The latter assumes the uniformity of nature, and has hitherto been justified of its belief that waywardness of result is due to faulty method.

It would be easy to show, did space here allow, that "orthodox science" has evinced a progression far from continuous, having suffered many revolutions in its progress—just as in the case of theology, and as must be in the course of psychic science.

Unconsciously Dr. Chalmers Mitchell looks from the point of view covered by the mechanical theory, which excludes the spiritual and its essential attribute of freedom—mistakenly conceived in old theology as "absolute," correctly stated by modern science as relative.

In the *Sunday Graphic* the Rev. D. Morse-Boycott writes on "Ghosts," in which he believes. As regards their origin, he says:—

I have two theories to explain the existence of ghosts. The first is this: Each act and thought saturates the surroundings. In certain cases the impress of mind upon matter is so powerful that it reproduces "echoes" of the occurrence. A murderer, for instance. His foul, dark deed is done. He flees away. The surroundings are impressed. Three centuries later you may see the murderer fleeing from the room. Some cause may reproduce the "echo" in the same way as a needle brings out the sound from a record.

The excerpt following is from *The People*:—

Telling *The People* of his strange experiences, one of the Abbey officials solemnly declared that he had seen spirit appearances on more than one occasion.

"I have seen the ghostly figure of a soldier walking close to the tomb of the Unknown," he confided. "He is bareheaded, and his uniform is stained with mud. His eyes are full of a strange pleading.

"Always he walks with one hand outstretched, as though supplicating someone, or something. A woman visitor who had lost three sons in the war told me that she, too, had seen the ghost of the Unknown Soldier."

Speaking on Spiritualism at a meeting of St. Luke's People's Hour, Canon A. S. Hichens, Chaplain at Bromley College (says the *Bromley Mercury*) remarked:—

What struck one in sermons of the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, was not what he said, but what he left unsaid. Preaching recently, he had spoken beautifully of his own sure hope of life beyond the grave, attributing it to God's love of men, but he had not said a word about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

CHINESE ART-WORK.—At the W. T. Stead Borderland Library last week was held an Exhibition and Sale of Chinese Lacquer, produced under the inspiration of a Chinese guide, by Mrs. Erato Vlasto. The exhibits, which were in great demand, included brushes, mirrors, caskets, vases, cigarette and match-boxes, lamp-stands, etc., etc. All were exquisitely done, and with such fidelity that it was said that experts in lacquer were greatly impressed by their faithful reproduction of Chinese art. A remarkable story is told of the circumstances in which Mrs. Vlasto was led to embark on this Chinese Lacquer work, and it is hoped that later an account of the case will be given by Mrs. Vlasto in *LIGHT*.

Mr. J. S. JENSEN is expected to arrive in London about February 19th. He is President of the Copenhagen Society for the Promotion of Psychic Knowledge, and is regarded as the most prominent personality in Psychic Science in Scandinavia. He will be accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Adolf Jensen. It is hoped that he will give a lecture on his personal recollections of that famous medium, Mme. d'Espérance, whose many valuable papers are in his possession.

OBITUARY.—MR. WILLIAM TANNENBAUM.—We learn with regret of the passing at the age of 70 years of Mr. Tannenbaum, an outstanding figure in English Jewry, one of the founders of the Jewish Spiritualist Society in London, and the author of a treatise on Spiritualism. Mr. Horace Leaf writes: "I saw him a few hours before his death (from pneumonia), and he told me that the end was near. He had no fear; and wanted to go as his work here was done. He assured me that 'there is no death'—his own words; not original, but impressive when uttered by such a man at such a time."

AN ELECTRIC LIGHTING PHENOMENON.

A REMARKABLE STORY.

Miss A. St. John Partridge, the artist, of Cheyne Row, Chelsea, writes:—

Last summer (August 31st was, I believe, the date) Mrs. Gibbons Grinling asked me to a sitting, and some friends who were also going to the sitting offered to motor me to Hampstead, calling for me about four o'clock.

After an early lunch I lay down to rest. About a quarter to three the electric light in the middle of my studio lit up. I jumped up and went to the switch, but could not turn it off. Knowing that the electrician was working for a neighbour, I at once got into touch with him. On returning here after 'phoning I noticed a strong smell of burning.

In about half an hour two workmen came, and, after a considerable time, they located the fuse, which was in a cupboard in the gallery, all surrounded by woodwork and stacked with frames.

The electrician said that he could not understand it, that he had never known a light switch on when there was a fuse. They were employed for several hours in putting the matter right.

When the car came I left the men here. I had never before been to Mrs. Gibbons Grinling's house in Hampstead.

When the sitting began the control said, "X is here." ("X" stands for the name of a woman friend of mine in spirit life.)

Then came a word which sounded like "Honolulu." Mrs. Osborne Leonard, who was sitting next to the medium, said, "Honolulu? What do you mean?"

It suddenly flashed on me what the word was as given by my friend, and I said, "Hullabaloo, is that what you mean?"

"Yes, *hullabaloo* in the studio."

I said, "Did you do anything?" I did not make a note of the exact answer, we all heard it. It was to the effect that the light had been switched on to warn me.

The following morning the electrician again said he didn't understand how the central light switched on, but that had I left the studio without knowing anything was wrong I should have returned to find the place in a blaze.

Towards the end of November I returned to town, and on the 28th I had a sitting with Mr. W. Foster. Before he went into trance I told him the above happenings.

When his control, "White Wing," came through, he said he had heard what I was telling his medium. Then, turning his head on one side as if listening, he said: "X says, 'I did it! I did it!' No indecision about her. Write this down. There was a piece of normal mechanical weakness in the circuit. No evil power—simply wear and tear. Knowing that there was something rising out of that, that threatened this 'holy place,' there was immediate attention, and in an instant X knew what to do—she didn't have to wonder. She could tell there was a break in the contact—so she directed a stream of force so that the current of electricity was flashed into the bulb, *independent of the switch*. . . . Your guardian telegraphed that something needed attention. They did their work to call your attention, and that is how they did it, by lighting the bulb—and then, of course, you began to do the mechanical sort of thing on this side to stop the burning."

After reading the above one can hardly see how it can be argued that no practical good can be obtained through Spiritualism.

SIR OLIVER LODGE ON MATERIALISATION.

By kind permission of the Editor of *The Outline* we are able to reproduce the following passages from Sir Oliver Lodge's article, "The Case for Psychical Research," which was recently published in *The Outline*, and which formed the staple of Sir Oliver Lodge's recent address to the Society for Psychical Research:—

Is it surprising that science turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to these weird phenomena, so troublesome and sometimes painful to produce, so difficult to investigate? It is not at all surprising; but the evidence is strong; and those who are by training competent to investigate these things incur responsibility if they turn them down. . . . There seems no place for these things in the recognised body of science; and for myself at present I make no assertion about them, for my first-hand acquaintance with them has been comparatively small. But I have seen enough to know that telekinesis at any rate, the motion of objects without apparent contact, does occur; and I have an open mind—justified by some experience—for the assertions of those physiologists and anatomists who have testified to the phenomena of materialisation.

The extrusion of ectoplasmic material from the body seems at first a repellent object of inquiry; though it must be remembered that our own internal organs are not superficially attractive. . . . Ectoplasm is only the name given to a kind of organised cellular material, which it is asserted does emanate from certain individuals for a time; it appears to have unexplained and extraordinary properties, being able to mould itself or to form simulacra of hands and faces, as if guided by some subconscious intelligence to do outside the body the same sort of processes as are usually performed inside. For undoubtedly the material supplied as food is formed by the normal activity of the body into the various organs appropriate to the locality whither it is carried by the blood. It is not the food itself, but the formative principle which determines whether it shall form a nail or a hair, or contribute to a muscle or an eye or any other part of the body. Indeed, by aid of a placenta, a fertilised ovum is able to form a complete separate new organism—in itself, one would think, a sufficiently extraordinary fact.

That this same formative principle can ever act outside the body, as it normally acts inside, is hardly credible, and by orthodox science is not yet believed. The question of whether it is a fact or not is a straightforward one, to be answered, not by theory or prejudice, but by observation and experiment.

ADMIRAL RICHARDS.

Rear-Admiral George Edward Richards, R.N., whose transition was announced in our issue of last week, was eldest son of the late Admiral Sir George H. Richards, K.C.B., F.R.S. Educated at Stubbington House, Fairham, he became a Navy cadet in 1866, subsequently being drafted to the Survey branch in which capacity he was employed in Australia, North America, Japan, and the English coast. He retired from service in 1902. His widow, Mrs. E. R. Richards, whose clairvoyant and healing gifts have been placed so freely at the disposal of many sufferers, is well-known in the Spiritualist movement.

The funeral service was impressive, the coffin being draped with the White Ensign, on which rested the Admiral's sword and cocked hat. Friends from all parts of the country attended to pay the last earthly tribute to their old friend.

Admiral Richards took a keen interest in our subject, and some illuminating articles from his pen have appeared in our pages; he was an enthusiastic fisherman and another favourite hobby of his was ornithology, on which subject he was a considerable authority. We, of LIGHT, desire to extend our sympathy to Mrs. Richards on the loss of her husband's earthly presence, and also our goodwill towards the Admiral in taking up new duties on another quarter-deck. We feel sure that he found a host of old comrades waiting to "pipe him a-board."

A FABLE.

BY THE LESSER ABSOP.

On a high hill surrounded by an almost impenetrable forest dwelt a colony of people of whom the inhabitants of the hamlets that lay outside the forest had but little knowledge. Their lack of information, however, was made up by a great amount of speculation and theory.

On one occasion a native of one of these villages, while exploring the forest, was set upon by a band of ruffians and robbed and beaten. So it was given out that the inhabitants of the mysterious colony were diabolical beings, to be feared and shunned.

But later, another adventurer in the forest, who became lost and was at the point of death from hunger and fatigue, was found by some strangers, who gave him every assistance, and by their kind attentions enabled him to return home in safety.

The result was that a rumour went abroad that the strange colonists were rather angelic in character; although the more critical observers remarked that the two accounts given of them could not possibly both be true.

But, in course of time, an intrepid explorer penetrated to the mysterious colony itself, and came back with the report that its people were very much like other folk—good and bad, wise and foolish.

But this story was generally rejected, as being too commonplace and lacking in sensation and romance.

MORAL: Nothing is so incredible as the simple truth, whether it deals with this world or the next.

THE NECESSITY OF EVIL.

... All physical energy and manifestations of activity are due to two things—the power behind and a resistance in front. And it is in the overcoming of this resistance that the phenomena, the energy of light, heat, and electricity, etc., are revealed. We do not see electricity in the electric light or the lightning flash; we see the glowing matter of the filament of the lamp or of the particles in the air. It is in overcoming these resistances that the power of electricity is revealed. If all resistance could be abolished no one would ever have discovered electricity. Therefore, resistance is as essential a factor as the force itself. When a steamer crosses the Atlantic, or when a locomotive travels, the progress in each case is only made possible by the resistance it encounters. So the moral forces of the universe are revealed and realised by the resistance of evil which they encounter.

And is not this physical fact exactly similar to the moral problem that is before us? As the forces of nature reveal themselves to us, and become self-realised, through the stresses and strains they generate in some reluctant medium—so the moral and spiritual forces of the unseen reveal themselves to us, and become realised in us, by the stresses and strains they create in the reluctant or opposing medium of our inert or evil lives.

With our limitations, what we term evil seems therefore as real and as necessary a thing for our spiritual life as good; for in overcoming the former the Divine life becomes manifest and our higher self is, to that extent, realised. It is in the attaining and not in the attainment, in the effort and not in the rest, in the struggle and not in the victory, that the process of self-realisation, the deeper consciousness, the larger and higher life, which we desire and mean by immortality, truly consists.

—From "Seeing Without Eyes,"
a Lecture by the late Sir William Barrett.
(Published by The Spiritualists' National
Union, Ltd., 162, London Road, Manchester.
Price 2d.)

For though Death be a Dark passage, it leads to Immortality, and that's Recompense enough for Suffering of it. For Death is no more than a turning of us over from time to Eternity. Death is but Crossing the World, as Friends do the seas; They live in one another still.—WILLIAM PENN.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

"There is nothing new to be said about Christmas," was a remark I heard the other day. Well, then let us say something old—old sentiments, old jests, old customs have sometimes the flavour of old wines and old books. "A merry Christmas!" That is old enough although it seems a little to have lost its savour. For one thing the word "merry" has rather changed its meaning in modern times. It has a slight smack of ribaldry. It is not so sedate as "happy." There was a time when this country was known as "Merrie England." Will it ever come again—not merely for a season but for all the year round?

* * * *

As to the complaint about "nothing new to be said," of course, one could drop a "v" into the middle of Noël and give it a flavour of novelty. And then, of course, there is the New Year, although it gets very old at the end of twelve months. There seems to be nothing for it but to give a new face to old things. Our great purpose in LIGHT is to proclaim the reality of a life beyond the grave. It is, of course, a very old truth, but so far has the world grown away from Nature that to multitudes it comes as something very novel and startling, and has upon some minds all the effects of a new and "heady" wine.

* * * *

The Christmas ghost is a little out-of-date. Once it flourished famously, and no Yule-tide was complete without ghost stories in the magazines or anecdotes of the uncanny by the fire-side. This was especially the case in Charles Dickens's day, as one can see by his Christmas tales. Even in *The Holly Tree* he mentions how, for a fortnight at an inn in the North of England, he was "haunted by the ghost of a tremendous pie."

* * * *

But it is only natural that the ghosts—the old ghosts—should have passed away. They were romantic, thrilling, mysterious, but very unreal. What Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has called the "New Revelation"—alas, that it should be new!—has introduced us to a ghost of another kind, a ghost that is real, natural, human; a ghost that to some of us has become an "affable, familiar ghost," as Shakespeare put it. If the world shrinks from this kind of ghost it simply means that man has become terrified of his own likeness!

* * * *

At Chelsea Town Hall recently, at the last of the three public meetings, arranged by the London Spiritualist Alliance for propaganda, Mr. H. E. Hunt being the speaker, Mr. Shaw Desmond, the well-known author and journalist, who presided, referred to an article on ghosts which had just appeared in a leading London paper. I was glad to hear him say that even ten years ago such an article would have been impossible, and he cited the fact as an example of the change in public sentiment towards Spiritualism. That is a statement I can fully confirm, especially when it is remembered that the newspaper in question was at about that time carrying on an active campaign against mediums. Progress, indeed, is cumulative, ten years nowadays registering an advance that a whole century in the past might have failed to record.

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It seems, according to an evening newspaper, that the police are contemplating a raid on fortune-tellers and crystal-gazers. It is probably easier than catching burglars.

D. G.

THOUGHTS ON MEDIUMSHIP.

BY T. W. ELLA.

Mediumship is the foundation-stone upon which the whole fabric of Spiritualism is built.

Without Mediumship there can be no Spiritualism; the one is the companion of the other, these twain go hand in hand down the pathways of humanity in the worlds terrestrial and celestial.

The ramifications of Mediumship are illimitable; opening out whole vistas of throbbing, virile activity, of which ordinarily the human incarnate is quite unaware; and bringing into cognisance an after-death world, peopled by all sorts and conditions of men and women of all climes and ages, young and old, ignorant and wise, good and bad, of all gradations of consciousness.

Through Mediumship we have access to minds—human minds—who can illumine or befool, instruct or delude; for such is the constitution of the masses in that specific area known as the initial range of life after death, from which come the bulk of communications.

As Spiritualists we recognise that the continuity of human, personal life signifies that men and women, whoever they may be, after physical decease are identical with what they were before it, in every detail and particular of thought, feeling, memory and temperament. Not that people after death are *perpetually* the same; thought and feeling signify alterableness.

On either side of life there is change; but because we change slowly here in our ideas, views and interests, we can appreciate that these changes will be correspondingly slow—determined by our temperament—in the life after death.

As far as we can apprehend, *mind* is the primary vehicle through which the self functions. It is the receiver, transmitter and depository of thought; the seat of sensation and the store-house of memory.

Mind radiates an aura electric and magnetic; through this we attract or repel, produce harmony or discord, goodwill or illwill.

The more intense our feelings, the stronger the reflex action in the aura. Ordinarily men and women receive and radiate a multitude of feelings and emotions from both sides of life.

Frequently the aura is a tumultuous mass of rampant oscillation; a whirl, a vortex, a lurid or a livid colour mass.

On occasions it is iridescent and translucent, sometimes a calm and unruffled surface reflecting pristine purity of thought and feeling. Verily an area of contradiction and conflict.

Such conditions preclude the development of useful Mediumship. Nevertheless the mind-field is the initial area in which Mediumship is unfolded.

Therefore, the essential need is for each to gain a mastery over his own mind; that it shall be more under control, quietened and restful.

To obtain this, we must go apart a few minutes each day, and in the silence endeavour to concentrate on one thought, for instance: Light. Meditate upon the significance of Light, its vastness, grandeur, revealing beauty, order, design and purpose.

The essence of this thought is gradually absorbed by our aura and its reflection manifests in a more coherent, blended colour-field which possesses a distinctive influence; rhythmic, hence harmonious, and through the law of attraction inevitably draws to us those from the other side of life who, having evolved to higher states of consciousness, are alert and aware of what is being done, and they respond to our efforts. Mingling some of their aura with ours they are able to impart to us some of their knowledge which will increase our understanding and help us to become clearer channels through which may be radiated a little of their Love and Wisdom.

Thus day by day we may become cleaner vessels; shrines wherein is contained a little of the milk of human kindness, the hidden manna of the Love of God.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"The Voice of God." By Winifred Papillon. (Rider & Co. 2s. 6d. net.)

A small book of devotional outpourings stated to have been received clairaudiently. This class of book, though of course containing no evidential features, brings comfort to many who seek something beyond material things.

W. H. C.

"The Mammonist." By Violet Tweedale. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

This book is simply packed with incident, in which the psychic and occult has considerable part. Lord Edenhurst, the ruthless millionaire, and Malcolm Naysmith, "Labour Minister for Lockwood," stand out by contrast, Naysmith the lovable and Edenhurst the unbending, while Miriam and Mary Grace are the two women who hold the interest of the reader. Other people in the book also "live," and are not mere puppets of the author, who, after having written thirty-six novels, shows even in this that her hand has not lost its cunning.

E. K. G.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE ON "PUNITIVE SPHERES."

Speaking at the Spiritualist Community Service at Grosvenor Hall on Sunday evening last, Sir Arthur said that so far as earth-bound spirits were concerned it was his opinion that these should be regarded as spirits who have not yet reached the spirit land: who are in the astral body, and may yet reach happiness or perdition. The earth-bound spirit is much nearer to us than to the spirit realm. Earth-bound spirits are not necessarily unhappy. The post-mortem scripts of Oscar Wilde and Jack London were cited as those of earth-bound beings; Sir Arthur reiterated his belief that both were genuine; it was almost impossible for anyone but Oscar Wilde to have produced such a characteristic style; in Jack London's script the remorse of the writer is most clearly revealed; remorse for the materialism that he preached with such vehemence during his life.

Much of the information we have on the hells of the after-life often reveals a very terrible state of affairs.

These hells have been investigated by several. Swedenborg, a clairvoyant medium, visited several and described them minutely, bringing a trained mind to the task, albeit one tinctured with the Lutheran theology of his day. Andrew Jackson Davis was another investigator in this field. Judge Edmonds, an American lawyer, has given an account of the infernal regions; let us hope it is exaggerated! The author of "Gone West" has also painted a terrible state of affairs in describing the passage downwards of the spirit of a British officer. Vale Owen also has described the great bridge which separates the hells from the brighter spheres; this bridge has been described also in two other scripts.

But if one "plays the game" in life, he need not fear the punitive spheres. If we live our lives in unselfishly working for the good of others no harm can come to us.

Let us oil the wheels of life with kindness and tenderness; only in thinking and working for others can that peace of mind come which is the law of life and of God.

In the unavoidable absence of Mrs. A. Johnson, Mrs. Barkel gave convincing proofs of her wonderful clairvoyant powers.

E. C. C.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

"SPIRITUAL EXERCISES." By Aelfrida Tillyard. (Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge. 7s. 6d.)

"THE SEARCH." By J. A. Krishnamurti. (George Allen and Unwin. 3s. net.)

"MORE GHOSTS AND MARVELS." (Oxford University Press. Cloth 2s.; leather 3s. 6d.)

"TO MINISTERS OF CHRIST." Anonymous. (C. W. Daniel Co. 1s. net.)

"LED BY LOSS." By Clarke Shepherd. (58, Southwark Bridge Road, S.E.1. 7s. 6d.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS."—We cannot pay attention to letters which give neither name nor address. Had you given these we could have written you with the information you seek.

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