

# Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

No. 2508. Vol. XLIX.

[Registered as Saturday, February 2, 1929. a Newspaper]

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

### THE IDEAL IN PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT.

A correspondent E.S.G. sends a needed warning against the dangers of psychic development in foul moral conditions, particularly instancing sexual impurity. The question is touched upon from another point of view by E.S., a professional lady in India who writes that she is sometimes saddened because the striving to reach the other world is so often pursued on a low level. The true method, she thinks, is that of living so pure and refined a life that the reflection of the eternal comes within the human soul. This, she says, is "spiritualising matter, not materialising spirit." This is good counsel although to some of us it may seem like a counsel of perfection, because we live in a very rough-and-tumble world and the conditions which offend some souls are not at all offensive to others who regard them as quite natural and normal. Still, there is no harm in pursuing an ideal, on the principle that the archer who aims at a star will send his shaft higher than the one whose mark is merely the top of a tree.

### THEN AND NOW.

A contributor writes of the strange inconsistency represented by the fact that a journal will slash at Spiritualism at one moment and on another occasion the same paper will give a remarkable and convincing psychic story. Of course it is inconsistent if we apply rigid rules to the standards of journalism; but a newspaper, particularly when it is a large and popular journal, has to observe a certain amount of fluidity and this is particularly so in the case of a subject which like Spiritualism is still a matter of controversy and not generally understood. No newspaper can be regarded as something self-existent, so to speak; it has to be considered in relation to its readers. An average newspaper may to some slight extent lead public opinion, but it has also to reflect it. As regards those cases where the newspapers will on one occasion publish something antagonistic to Spiritualism, and on another something in its favour, it is a

common enough phenomenon, better understood when it is remembered that a newspaper is not the project of one mind but of many, each naturally given to seeing things from its own individual standpoint. In order to get a true idea of the position of the newspaper press at large in relation to Spiritualism, it is necessary to take a very wide and general view. The outstanding fact for us is that whereas forty years ago the newspaper press would hardly notice psychic phenomena at all, and even then only with a contemptuous sniff, to-day the subject has laid hold of the public mind to such an extent that the press at large is giving it fair attention. The change between *then* and *now* is tremendous. It can only be gauged by one who clearly remembers the attitude of the press forty years ago, as a matter of personal observation, and compares it with the position of to-day.

### DECEASE OF HERR KARL KRALL.

We learn of the passing of Herr Karl Krall of Munich, who succumbed to an attack of pneumonia on January 12th last. Herr Krall's name will be remembered in connection with his experiences with the famous "Elberfeldt horses" and later with other horses which he trained to spell out words, and work out mathematical calculations by a code of raps. He gave, in a paper read at the International Psychic Congress in Paris in October 1927, an amazing account of the phenomena. In *LIGHT* of October 15th, 1927, in the course of a report of the Congress, we published a brief summary of Herr Krall's address in which he referred to his experiences with the horse "Mahomet", which he taught to count by striking its foot against a wooden platform. Another horse, "Zarif", was able to spell out messages phonetically by means of an alphabetical table, specially constructed by Herr Krall. When visitors were introduced to "Zarif" the horse would, on learning their names, spell these at once, on one occasion doing so before the name was announced. "Zarif" would utter independent remarks, in German, by means of the prearranged code; one day, after wandering in a wood, "Zarif" said, without prompting, "Wood very nice!" On another occasion, when a lady was brought into his presence, the horse spelled out: "I don't want to see her." Herr Krall said at the Congress that his experiences with the Elberfeldt horses had convinced him that animals possess the power of independent thought.

### SIR FRANK BENSON AT THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

To a large gathering of the members and friends of the L.S.A. at Queensberry Place, on Thursday evening, 24th ulto., Sir Frank Benson delivered an address, entitled "The Wireless of Eternity". The lecture was deeply interesting, being both eloquent and anecdotal, and enlivened with some excellent humour, and we hope to publish a summary of it in our next issue. In the absence of Captain Bartlett, who was indisposed, Dr. Hector Munro presided.

## ABOUT MEDIUMS &amp; TRICKSTERS.

By J. D. L. (OF PARIS).

"There is nothing in the world so great as the Truth and there is nothing in the world but Truth that I care for."

WASHINGTON IRVING.

In the *Revue Métapsychique* of July-August was published a translation in French of a lecture at the Institut Métapsychique in Paris, by Mr. Harry Price, Director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research of London. The subject of the lecture was "Some Favourite Tricks of Famous Mediums".

It would appear from this article that Mr. Price cut a very wide swath, laying low the reputation of many persons well known as mediums, some of whom probably he had never seen, and others named who are still living.

The object of Mr. Price's experiments with mediums seems to be limited to the different physical phenomena, such as moving an object, producing a rap, or touch—all of which he, as a conjurer, could easily imitate. Fortunately, much more than all these "tricks" has been frequently obtained, and that through some of the very same mediums named and classed as "cheats and tricksters" only.

The word medium, so I take it, applies to a person whose mind can at times be acted upon by a different mind, independent of his own; and the evidence of this is his utter impossibility to command it. He can only permit a communication to occur through his special faculties, and his rôle is to transfer what is communicated. We are informed by Mr. Price that one of the "greatest cheats" was the "subtle comedian" Dr. Henry Slade. We all know that many of the sensitives called mediums are extremely subject to different influences, from very high and good to very low and bad. Their power of resistance sometimes weakens, making them fail in their real mission, which should be to serve only as transmitters of communications from an invisible entity. Now Henry Slade was one of these abnormal beings, weak in will, feeble in health, and at times absolutely "possessed". Of course *traduire* is more or less *trahir*, but the impression left by Mr. Price's lecture was that those he mentioned were "cheats" with no word of what else they might have been. It would be very imprudent to say that Henry Slade was naught else but a "subtle comedian" and if any man does say and publish that I declare here that he calumniates the memory and reputation of a dead man and remarkable medium. Leaving them to others to tell what they "have heard" or what others thought, I will say only what I saw and of what I know.

Slade was in Paris in April 1886. I had several meetings with him, and opportunity to know him well. At the first sitting, April 11th, I went alone. I said nothing special of myself and no questions were asked. I went simply to see what might come—thinking of no one in particular and having nothing special in my mind. I was in perfect health, content, and in a simple state of hopeful and sympathetic expectancy. It was a bright April afternoon. In a scantily furnished room a few slates lay in one corner. I examined one, and laid it on the top of a plain pine table, over a small bit of slate pencil. Now comes the "trick" of the "subtle comedian". In a few seconds, I distinctly heard scratching as if by writing, and seeming to come from under the slate. Then my sense of hearing made me conscious that three raps were tapped as from the slate, which was before my eyes. I then turned it, and here copy from this same identical slate, which is still in my possession, these words written quite distinctly:

It is a blessing to be able to return to our dear ones again. My son, go to America and take your family; it will do you good to go, and you require a change as well as your good wife. I see the future has in store for you

success. . . . I am your affectionate father,  
E. N. L.

Here was signed the three exact initials of my father's name in his peculiar writing, which I at once recognised. Slade had not touched the slate, which in broad daylight had never been out of my sight. I noted at once the particular manner in which my father formed the first letters of our name and his two baptismal names. The three capital letters are formed exactly as my father, deceased some seven years, had always written them. How did they come in a few seconds on that cleaned slate? As for Slade he knew nothing of my family. I was simply amazed.

I copy from notes made at the time:

Five days after, April 16th, went with E. (my wife). Two clean slates laid on my shoulders—heard scratching—raps—we read:

"My dear son and daughter. It gives me great pleasure to have each of you present so you can realise the presence of your father. My son, you will meet with a pleasing success in America; you, however, will return to Paris, I shall be with you to guide and bless.

Believe me to be your

Affectionate father,

E. N. L."

My father died in 1877 and since then in speaking with my wife of going with her to the States, where my mother was still living, we had as yet no precise plan, and while waiting our opportunity we had agreed to speak on this subject to no one, in order to avoid unnecessary worry to her aged mother who was living with us. This explains my utter surprise in reading the appeal and advice purporting to come from my father, and his repeating it when we went together a second time. At this same sitting the medium told my wife to examine a slate and to hold it under the table with her left hand. He then had us join our five hands on the table. After a moment we heard the writing, which showed "We cannot do more now". A third time I went with my son, then aged thirty, to-day engineer and member of the Métapsychique Institute. He remembers well how we examined the slates and how with a bit of pencil between them we heard the writing and read: "My dear grandson, I am happy to come to bless and cheer you. Believe me to be your grandfather," and for the third time he formed as before the same three initials "E. N. L."

#### The Tricks.

Slade said that one of his controls was said to be an Indian spirit, who gave his name as "Owasso". On the 17th of April Slade came to our home and said, aside to me, that he felt that Owasso was with him and was going to entrance him. He seemed annoyed, but almost at once he shivered, ground his teeth and closed his eyes; his language became coarse and the voice spoke words in imperfect English telling me strange things about the medium, that certainly Slade in normal condition would not have desired to mention. I did not encourage Owasso—and soon the medium again shivered, and Slade was himself again—a quiet, unassuming and somewhat timid and awkward young man.

Four days after this he came again and told me he would show me some phenomena. I did not care for that, nor ask for it. He came one day later to lunch with us. As he did not know a word of French, I placed him near me. Then, while we were chatting, (he telling me of his coming marriage and showing me the portrait of his future wife) suddenly the table began to rock, the bottles to totter, and we caught at the dishes to keep them in place. Seeing the family in consternation I asked Slade to put a stop to it. He was already trying, and told Owasso to cease. When all was quiet again and we had resumed our meal, suddenly a chair at the opposite end of the table, about five feet from the foot of Slade's seat, was

violently projected across the room and against the opposite wall with such force that a second chair was overturned and broken. "That was one of Owasso's doings," said Slade, and he went on to tell how once, while at a table with friends, he called attention to a little cat fast asleep on a rug in the room. Hardly had he said "look at the cat", when the little beast jumped up, scowling, with back up and fiery eyes, then rushed affrighted from the room.

As for the chair and table, we tried with friends the next day, sitting where Slade sat, but even by crouching down under the table, we could not reach across to where the projected chair was placed.

#### Seance with Camille Flammarion.

We screwed two new slates together with a bit of pencil between them. We wrapped and tied them, he making a special knot, known only to himself. The knots and string were sealed with wax and stamped with his signet ring. We then went together, and when seated with Slade at his plain little table we heard raps. We waited, but the controls said that "fluids were not in harmony". The table became agitated; Flammarion bent down from his seat, to look under it. He became impatient; no results came; Slade offered to try again another day. Flammarion, being busy, asked me to take charge of the slates and try again. I went alone later, holding the two slates in their wrapping. Slade never touched them. Having distinctly heard the scratching noise, I took the package and went immediately to Flammarion. He carefully examined his seals and declared that the package was "perfectly intact". Then, opening it, we both saw a long line of writing. My savant friend appeared somewhat amazed, but as he had not seen the operation performed before him, science was not satisfied.

Another savant, Signor Tremenchini, from Italy, asked me to go with him one day. He was not nervous like our mutual friend Flammarion. We sat quietly and after some raps and touches he asked if "Vichy" could come and communicate. I thought to myself when I put the question in English to the table that it was a little snare on the part of the shrewd savant, Vichy being the name of a French town; but I had never heard of it as a personal name. However, the answer came in writing on the slate. "Vichy is not here"—which I told M. Tremenchini (with the French pronunciation of Vee-chy). He seemed astonished and said to me "That is the name of a personal friend of mine."

Dr. Paul Gibier, who was director of the Pasteur Institute of New York, cites this experiment in his book *Spiritisme* published in October, 1886 (Durville). On p. 307 we read:

The engineer Tremenchini, honourable Italian savant, writes that he was invited to ask for some communication and that he wrote on the slate a name unseen by anyone of a person of whom he was then thinking. Slade then placed the slate on the edge of the table on my (Tremenchini's) side and after three seconds I verified with the person who assisted at the seance with me, that the word Veechy was written in full.

I did not see or hear of M. Tremenchini after this seance. I met Dr. Gibier in New York in 1903. We were then both interested in materialisations and there was no mention of Slade between us, each ignoring that the other knew him.

It was long after this on my return to France that I first saw his book *Spiritisme* and read the above. I am the person who witnessed the writing alluded to. Dr. Gibier describes with great precision and detail his experiments with Slade. He tells us how, unknown to Slade, he wrote the name of his son on a clean slate. He then slipped it under the table, with a bit of pencil on the upper side, the medium holding it near the edge of the table, with his right hand which thus remained in view. His left hand was on the table with the others. In ten seconds the slate was turned with the written message: "Louis is not here,"

written on the side opposite to where Dr. Gibier had placed the name.

At another sitting he obtained writing on two slates, brought by himself, and which Slade never touched. He placed the slates on a chair and seated himself on them; while he was sitting, the writing came.

#### A Real Trickster on Tricks.

When Dr. Gibier, who was a competent, serious and scrupulously honest investigator, commenced his experiments he was duly warned by his friends, and told that all so-called mediums were but "simple cheats and tricksters" and he confesses frankly that he himself thought that perhaps what he had then seen "was some artifice of prestidigitation". So "to elucidate that point" he engaged one of the best operators of the then famous Houdin Theatre, to clear up the mystery. This person went with his wife, they had a seance with Slade, and here is the result in a public written attestation that he made, and as given by Dr. Gibier in his book:

I affirm, Messieurs les savants, as a prestidigitateur, that the seance of Mr. Slade is true, really spiritualistic, and incomprehensible outside of all occult manifestations. Again I affirm.

Signed

J. of the Houdin Theatre.

Thus spoke a professional trickster.

#### SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE: AN APPRECIATION.

From Mr. Walter A. Warne we have received a copy of *The Spokesman*, a Rhodesian journal, in which some sympathetic references to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are contained in an article, "The Female Philosopher", by "Sophronia". They are as follows:—

During Sir Arthur's twelve years of self-sacrificing campaigning for Spiritualism, he has exhibited all the qualities of a great leader. He has the soul of a saint, reaching out towards things eternal, the brain of a detective avoiding the pitfalls of deception, the courage of a lion, and the skin of a hippopotamus, or he would certainly have been driven mad by the furious and often venomous attacks of his critics and opponents. May his strength be greatly reinforced by this long voyage, and may he live long as the everywhere acknowledged uncrowned king of the Spiritualist Movement!

The characteristic of Sir Arthur that appeals to me is his common sense. His books are a statement of the absolute common sense of a continued existence, in a common-sense sphere suited to our mentality, and the environment we have aspired to in our best moments. The Churches and Science . . . have proved the truth of continued existence under perfectly normal conditions, up to the hilt. One of our rankest and most agnostic materialists, Robert Blatchford, and Hannen Swaffer, a brilliant journalist, have had to acknowledge the same thing; but of a plain common-sense belief to help the average hard-headed sinner on his way, Sir Arthur is undoubtedly one of the finest exponents.

"Sophronia" then refers to the visit of Sir Arthur to Rhodesia.

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## A COLLEGE DEBATE.

### AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUALISM.

"That the case for Spiritualism has been proved" was the subject of a motion moved during a debate at the Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, Camden Town, London, on Tuesday, January 15th, by Mr. Maurice Barbanell. Mr. J. Flynn, a member of the College, opposed the motion. The debate, which took place in the College Common Room, was informal, and much interest in the discussion was shown by those assembled.

Mr. Barbanell, in the course of his address, said: "Spiritualism rests upon the assurance that every human soul survives death. This is not a belief nor a hope, nor merely a desire; it is a law of Nature, and can be proved scientifically. Given certain conditions—and this applies to all natural phenomena—communication between the two worlds can and does take place. It occurs through natural channels, and persons whom we call mediums provide the intermediaries between the spirit people and us. A telephone or wireless-receiving set is necessary to enable us to receive vibrations not normally perceptible to the human ear. That is the function of the medium; to put it more simply, these people act as 'tuning-in instruments'. It may be asked: If one speaks to a spiritual world, where is it located? We cannot, however, say where it is geographically. It can be stated, however, that the spiritual world is a natural part of this one, and we are ourselves living in it."

Continuing, Mr. Barbanell said that in all parts of the world men and women of every race and type had testified to spirit communication. The Society for Psychical Research, an organisation not composed of Spiritualists and whose function it is to collect evidence, had thousands of attested cases, which left only one theory tenable, namely, that human survival is a fact.

After citing the names of famous scientists who had testified their conviction of the truth of spirit communication, Mr. Barbanell said: "I will give you an instance of certain facts happening which can only be explained by the Spiritualistic hypothesis, and I defy anybody to supply an adequate alternative explanation. Through the mediumship of a Christian lady I heard a direct voice speaking in Yiddish of certain facts which it was impossible for her to have known. Further, she had absolutely no knowledge of the Yiddish tongue. I maintain there is no other theory to explain all the facts which Spiritualism represents, and I call upon my opponent to explain away that one fact, for, remember, if only one case of spirit communication is proved, the whole case for Spiritualism stands proven."

Mr. Flynn then addressed the meeting. He had personal experience with mediums both paid and non-professional, but he had never once received a scrap of evidence that would convince an intelligent man of spirit communication. He used to be a Spiritualist but after analysing the messages he received he had come to the conclusion they were trivial and silly. There was much that was undesirable connected with the movement. Every well-known medium had been convicted at some time or another of fraud, and the moral characters of many of them left much to be desired. He quoted the names of D. D. Home, the Fox sisters, Eusapia Palladino and Munnings in this connection. Alleged spirit descriptions which had been described at seances he had attended might have fitted almost anybody. Occasionally he had received a message that "everything would be all right", but he had no need to go to a medium to be told that. One medium has spoken about his wife in the spirit world; he was, in fact, unmarried. At the College they had tested a medium who claimed to see spirits, but this medium was not able to see numbers placed on a blackboard. Mr. Flynn suggested that the spirits

ought to have known what the numbers were. He asked why could not he himself see spirits if other people could? He had heard a lot about wonderful happenings, but when he attended a seance they did not happen! He submitted that the case of Spiritualism had not been proved.

The meeting was then thrown open for discussion, and both speakers were called upon to answer various questions. The general tone of the opposition was that believers in phenomena were victims of hallucination and actuated by the will to believe. There was very little constructive criticism of Mr. Barbanell's case. Among those who spoke in favour of the motion were Mr. Hannen Swaffer and Mr. Eric Sisson.

In the course of his reply to points raised during the discussion, Mr. Flynn said that Spiritualists should read *The Road to Endor* to obtain enlightenment upon the facility with which men may be led astray by fake phenomena. He would not go as far as to say all mediums were frauds; those that were not were victims of hallucination. He claimed that no great message had ever been received from the spirit world.

Mr. Barbanell, in his concluding remarks, said that every pioneer in the past had been ridiculed, that anything unfamiliar is received with jeers. Wireless and electricity had been laughed at in the early stages. He himself had not been born a Spiritualist, but had become one as a result of examination of the facts which had convinced him. He reminded the audience that Munnings had been first exposed by the Spiritualists themselves, and drew attention to the fact that not one speaker during the discussion had attempted to explain the personal case he had quoted. "I can only come to one conclusion; that is that none of you have any alternative explanation to offer, else I am not believed, and I may be put down as a liar! To quote cases of fraud does not invalidate the truth. Mr. Flynn would not reject his salary because there were spurious ten shilling notes in circulation." As to criticising the moral character of certain mediums, it was not the moral character that Spiritualism rested on, but upon demonstrated facts. Telepathy had been offered as an explanation of the facts, but if one accepts the idea of communication it was not a great step to admit telepathy between minds discarnate and those incarnate.

In conclusion, Mr. Barbanell stated that if the facts of Spiritualism are examined with an open mind, the only conclusion that can be reached is that the phenomena are produced by spirit agency. There was nothing mysterious nor uncanny about spirit beings; they were simply our friends trying to penetrate the walls of our ignorance and give to man the greatest message he had ever received.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

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### "THE PROBLEM OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS."

Sir,—I have a high regard for the Rev. G. Vale Owen—almost affection, if one may say so who has never seen him. With his suggestive criticism in *LIGHT* of December 15th, 1928, I am in grateful agreement, except perhaps the minor point that although "conscious" and "subconscious" are adjectives, "consciousness" and "subconsciousness" are not.

But with regard to the kindly criticism of "I.J.K." in the same issue of *LIGHT* I venture a gentle protest.

He says: "It seems as if Mr. Palethorpe were confusing two different things: the Soul itself (which is the I) with what Hudson calls 'the powers of the

soul." I cannot find where I did this. Nor did I misinterpret Hudson, who in chapter 22 of *Law of Psychic Phenomena* says: "It must not be forgotten in this connection that the subjective mind is the soul, or spirit, and is itself an organized entity, possessing independent powers and functions. . . ." Explicit enough, surely. If there is "confusion" it is not mine.

"I.J.K.'s next sentence as far as I can make out, if it means anything, means that when the conscious is asleep, it is—asleep. True, but not very illuminating.

"I.J.K." also says: "There seems to be confusion of thought—a confusion of metaphor with statement of fact—in the suggestion that when the conscious is absent from the body it must be in existence in another place." Dictionary in hand, I ask where is the "metaphor" involved here? The "confusion" seems to be that of "I.J.K."

As to "I.J.K.'s comparison of consciousness with the flame of a candle: the latter is a purely chemical reaction, and there is no similarity—unless indeed he would have us infer that conscious thought is a chemical reaction. Sir Arthur Keith, I think, made a like comparison. To compare consciousness (in sleep) with bandaged eyes, as "I.J.K." does, will not do either. The perceptive power of the eye is dependent on rays of light impinging on the retina. Thought, conscious or subconscious, is not so dependent.

"I.J.K." then goes on to tell us of the "Soul" (which he does not define) and how it acts and works. Apparently he knows. I do not. He has the advantage of me here.

He further states ". . . the fact that by super-normal avenues of impression one may know what is happening at a distance does not necessarily mean that the soul leaves the body." No, not necessarily. Nor did I say it. But he should read, in the same issue of *LIGHT* (Dec. 15th, page 595) the article "Travel During Sleep", where the author states his "belief that the soul has power to leave the sleeping body"; and covers the matter in a way I could never hope to. He should peruse also, in this connection, a most absorbing article with far reaching implications, on "Experiments in Thought Photography" in *LIGHT* of Dec. 1st. And by the way, just exactly what does "I.J.K." mean by "supernormal avenues of impression"?

Regarding his statement: "When I walk along a straight road, I know what is happening at a distance before I get there," if he means without seeing or hearing (as I suppose he does, as it would not be worth the telling otherwise) and as an ordinary oft-repeated occurrence, then he has powers beyond me. I am out of his class. All I have done is to see things that appeared familiar, as I explained, not contemporary actions and happenings in the making.

Further, he says: "Why not assume, as a working hypothesis merely, that in hypnosis the analytic function of the brain is temporarily suspended. . ." etc. Why is it necessary or advisable to "assume" so much? This "assuming" is in reality swallowing blindly certain things without examination. This is the children's game—"Shut your eyes and open your mouth—" you know the rest. If we are not careful we may beg the whole question in our "assumptions".

It seems to me "I.J.K." has made me say things that I did not say and then criticised me for doing it.

The important thing is the survival of the "I" after bodily death, which you and I believe—though I like to think of it as a "continuing" in a different environment. But just what is the "I" that survives? That too is important, surely.

The trouble with many eminent thinkers in treating this and kindred matters, is that they wrap the subject up in words, words, words. The meaning

may be well worth the layman's while, but it is so hard to get at, that the man in the street shrugs his shoulders and "passes it up". Fortunately we have a few (a very few) men like Sir Oliver Lodge who can make an abstruse topic crystal-clear to even a semi-mediocre intelligence like my own.—Yours, etc.,  
V. REGINALD PALETHORPE.

Florida, U.S.A.

Sir,—With reference to Mr. Palethorpe's letter, printed above, it is a maxim of science that hypotheses are not to be multiplied unnecessarily and my suggestions were to the general effect that some of the phenomena Mr. Palethorpe mentioned are explicable in terms of certain super-normal powers of the human mind, recognised by many psychic researchers, who may or may not agree with the interpretation of them accepted by Spiritualists. To elaborate my suggestions further might introduce a polemical element into the discussion and it is good that all points of view be tolerantly presented, so I will not press my own. But I trust it will not seem controversial if I add the personal hope that I shall not have to conclude that the soul is stupid, for one of the greatest trials of old age is the failing of the intellect and one would not like to think the disability is permanent, even in the next world.—Yours, etc.,  
I. J. K.

#### "THE MYSTERY OF A PORTRAIT."

Sir,—May I be permitted to attempt to reply to a letter in *LIGHT* of last week from Mr. C. J. Hans Hamilton concerning the psychic story quoted from *All the Year Round* of 1861 in your issue of December 22nd, 1928.

It may be useful if I briefly recapitulate a portion of the story. A certain Mr. H., while travelling by train from York to London, enters into conversation with a young lady who enters the compartment at Doncaster. On arrival at his destination and while awaiting dinner in his host's drawing room he meets the lady again. At dinner the same lady takes her place at the table with him and his host and hostess. She is not, however, introduced to Mr. H., who assumes from this fact that she may have been a governess. (I gather that in those Victorian days a governess would have been regarded merely as a superior servant and therefore not worthy to be introduced to visitors!) After dinner a large party assembles and the assumed governess has a brief conversation with Mr. H. Next day the mysterious lady is no longer there and "no one would admit that she had ever been there".

Mr. Hans Hamilton finds this rather a tall story and asks if any reader of *LIGHT* can suggest a scientific explanation. He says that Mr. H.'s voice while addressing the invisible person must have been heard by others present.

It might well be that Mr. H. found himself for the time being in a supernormal psychic condition in which he would be dreamily conscious not only of his host and hostess and other guests, but also of the phantom, without, however, detecting any difference between the incarnate persons and the discarnate intruder. In that state he might conceivably carry on a mental conversation with the spirit in ignorance of the fact that he was not speaking aloud, as we understand it, while addressing the spirit. (If this explanation were the true one Mr. H. would possibly have appeared to his host and hostess, and to other observers, to be in an abstracted, thoughtful condition—a brown study. There is, however, no evidence on this point.)

I do not for one moment say that my explanation is the correct one. It is, however, quite in accordance with known facts in psychic phenomena and I think many clairvoyants will support my view.—Yours, etc.,

D. ARMORER.

London, S.W.

## LIGHT.

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## LEFT OUT OF ACCOUNT.

## A NOTE ON OUR OPPOSITION.

When, some forty years ago, Lord Randolph Churchill absent-mindedly left out of account a formidable colleague during the arrangement of a political programme, he received a disagreeable reminder of the fact from the statesman in question, and exclaimed in comical dismay; "I forgot Goschen!" The oversight has become historical. So also has Napoleon's forgetfulness when, in his Russian campaign, he overlooked the necessity of having his cavalry rough-shod for the slippery roads, and came to disaster.

These things are not always a matter of forgetfulness. They sometimes arise from the practice of despising the enemy. When we look over the career of Spiritualism, so full of struggle and adventure—a campaign the full importance of which will only be understood by the historians of centuries to come—we may see several examples of the same kind.

At first it was a "forlorn hope"—a little band of sturdy and resolute souls fighting, not for their lives but for the life of the truth they held dear, against every kind of opposition, the Church, Science, Rationalism, Popular Prejudice and a great stolid mass of indifference. The attitude of the enemy was usually contemptuous and, at first, attempts were made to deal with the unwelcome subject by boycott and obstruction, and the policy of "squeezing out." That failing, the more active method of persecution was tried, and Press, Pulpit, and Platform volleyed and thundered against the thing. But its champions held on grimly, refusing to recognise defeat. That is the British way and it was one of the things which the enemy had forgotten. They were, as Britons, fighting a little army of pioneers who were themselves eminently British in the matter of grit and tenacity. It was bull-dog against bull-dog, in a fight in which no cur could safely engage, certainly not on the side of Spiritualism, which called for every quality of doggedness. The poltroons turned tail after a very short experience of what the battle meant.

But we observe quite a number of things which our friend the enemy seemed to have overlooked. When the Romanist took up the quarrel and poured out his wrath on the subject with cursings and revilings, it seemed natural enough. But when the Protestant and Nonconformist clergy joined in, it appeared that they had overlooked an important point. They could never join forces with the Roman Church, for their hostility to us arose from quite different reasons. The older Church knew and recognised many things in Spiritualism as true, but only to be permitted within the borders of the Church. All the other

religious denominations were heretical to Rome, just as much so as religious Spiritualism. These heretical Churches had cast out some of the things which Spiritualism was endeavouring to conserve, and had thus weakened their own position. So that when scientific Rationalism came on the scene, as one of our opponents, it was plainly observable that Spiritualism was fighting a host of foes that had some sharp quarrels amongst themselves; for Science and Rationalism had no friendship with Theology, and were openly amused to see that the Churches, in opposing Spiritualism, were really attacking their own historical and miraculous bases. But Science and Rationalism in their turn had also left something out of account—that was the religious instinct in humanity, the deep sense of Unseen realities. To these instincts struggling for expression Spiritualism was really a kind of spear-head, yet all its enemies failed to perceive the fact.

But the greatest oversight of all on the part of the enemy was the failure to see that no truth can ever be subdued or suppressed. Had our host of foes been united in their views the fight would doubtless have been even longer and more stubborn, but it would have ended at long last in the same way. As it was, the divisions in the ranks of the opposition made themselves felt in the long run; the fight brought out sharply the mutual contradictions in the attitude of the opposing groups. To-day we are in sight of victory, for all the tactics of the enemy have been met and steadily worn down. And there has been a great change in the psychological atmosphere, which is gradually being permeated by the sense of Eternity and that change of values which comes with a perception of the spiritual bases of life. Those are matters which neither the Spiritualist nor the world at large can afford to leave out of account. It has been a stubborn battle, but in the end it will be seen to have been a necessary one, for only by a stern conflict can men and things be thoroughly tried and tested. That also is a consideration to be borne in mind, because Harmony can only be wrought out through discord; without warfare, Peace and Victory would have neither meaning nor value.

## THE RETURN OF HOUDINI.

Mr. Horace Leaf sends us a copy of a cablegram received from Mr. Francis R. Fast, of 150, Broadway, New York, U.S.A., with reference to the Houdini communication reported to have been accepted by the Handcuff King's widow as being the long-awaited message from her husband in spirit life which was arranged prior to Houdini's death. The *New York Evening Graphic* claimed this to be a hoax, and various charges and counter-charges are in the air. Mr. Ford indignantly denies allegations of fraud, and states that reports of his confession in the matter are false. Meantime, the *Evening Graphic* of January 15th prints a long statement claimed to be a copy of a resolution passed by the United Spiritualist League, Manhattan Group, suspending Mr. Ford from his membership and authorising the board of directors of the Manhattan Group to handle the case "in any way it sees fit". Mr. Fast's telegram to Mr. Leaf reads as follows:—

For your information, newspaper story from here alleging confession by Arthur Ford in connection with Houdini message utterly false in every particular, result of frustrated attempt to blackmail Mrs. Houdini. Ford was approached and threatened unless he used his influence they would print false story about him and message. Next day he refused they printed story.

Just before going to press we have received from Mr. Hamilton Emmons, who has lately returned from New York, an important statement regarding the Houdini communication which we hope to publish in our next issue.

SIDELIGHTS.

Mr. Cyril Scott, the well-known pianist and composer, whose long letter in connection with the discussion on Spiritualism is published in the *Daily News* of January 22nd, states in the concluding portion of his letter: "I consider Spiritualism in its highest form proved. I base my conclusion on twenty years' study and investigation of occult matters, and on evidence which, both for my wife and myself, has been incontestable."

\* \* \* \* \*

Vice-Admiral J. G. Armstrong, writing from the United Service Club, London, S.W., tells, in the *Daily News* of January 18th, of a seance with the medium, Mrs. Annie Johnson, at which a message was given by an old Service friend, Admiral "Atkins"—the name is a pseudonym. Says Admiral Armstrong: "I had never seen the lady before. I went in, and she informed me that there was somebody who had recently passed over who wanted to speak to me; she described him, but said he could not give his name. I asked her, could she give any indications by which I could identify him, other than the description, and she said he informed her that he and I had done some good work together in the Persian Gulf, and gave me other indications which convinced me that it was Admiral Atkins who was speaking."

\* \* \* \* \*

Admiral Armstrong, continuing the story, states that later on the medium caught the name "Webster" but could not say if this was connected with the manifesting spirit. The name conveyed nothing to the sitter, who, on returning to his club, got out a Navy List and looked up the particulars of his dead comrade. The full name given there was "Thomas Webster Atkins". Some two months later, at a seance with another medium, Admiral Atkins came again, and gave this message: "Didn't you think that was rather clever of me to give a name of mine that you did not know, so that you could not put it down to telepathy?" Concluding his letter, Vice-Admiral Armstrong says: "Since that date I have had many experiences and evidence that those on the other side can communicate with us, and do."

\* \* \* \* \*

The writer who calls himself—or herself—"Janus" contributes in the *Yorkshire Observer* of January 18th some observations on the illogical statements of many non-Spiritualists, of which "Janus" is admitted to be one. It is not impossible, suggests this writer, that such illogical criticism may tend to confirm in a belief in Spiritualism those people who are already but half convinced. "When a friend tells me that he has visited a seance, held by friends, where he can trust everyone, and that messages—later verified—have been received through the medium of table-rapping, am I to call him a fool? . . . In the matter of materialisations, for example, years of diligent study in England and abroad have shown that these phenomena take place. Am I to assume that my knowledge (not having witnessed these things) is greater than that of Dr. Geley and Baron von Schrenck-Notzing? . . . Am I to call these eminent men idiots because they have witnessed what I have not? I trust I have more intelligence." Thus says "Janus", who also states: "I am not a believer in Spiritualism."

Says Sir Frank Benson in the *Sunday Mercury* of January 20th: "Eloquent articles are written concerning the stupidity of Spiritualism. No doubt there is some stupidity associated with the propaganda, but is there any 'ism' of mortal man that is altogether free from it? The unprejudiced will hardly allege that the stupidities of Spiritualism are greater and more disastrous than those of mechanical materialism."

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Julian T. Bee, a Manchester business man, stated to be "not a Spiritualist", lost his wife in 1925, since when he claims to have been in constant communication with her, according to a *Daily Dispatch* item of January 18th. Through a Manchester medium the dead lady promised that Mr. Bee would be successful later in obtaining a psychic photograph of her. This photograph, which shows Mr. Bee, and an "extra" (which Mr. Bee describes as an extraordinarily good likeness of his wife), was duly obtained, and reproduced by the *Daily Dispatch*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. W. Kent, of Foley Road, Worcester, manager of a large local furniture store, said that he awakened from sleep one night and saw his wife, who had died a few weeks previously. According to Mr. Kent, the lady appeared quite happy. "She beckoned to me, walked across the room and vanished. I knew what she meant!" On Monday, January 14th, Mr. Kent left his work, saying to his head salesman that he would die during the week. His death took place a few days later, states the *Daily Express* of January 19th, which gives a report of the case.

\* \* \* \* \*

A minister, now a missionary in West Africa, awoke one night during the War to find his brother Jack leaning over the rail at the foot of the bed. He was wearing a cheery smile. But Jack was a soldier on active service, and his mysterious presence at his brother's bedside in the Midlands of England was no doubt startling to the newly-awakened man. Shortly afterwards, the minister received an official notice that the soldier brother had been killed in action; an accompanying letter from Jack's O.C. gave details of how the dead soldier had been fatally sniped in a trench, and added the interesting detail that Jack had been the end man in the British line at its junction with the Belgian Army. The story is given in the *Bolton Evening News* of January 21st, by a writer related to the minister.

A FRENCH MAGNETIC HEALER.

M. GAILLARD TO VISIT LONDON.

Monsieur Joanny Gaillard, of Lyons, who possesses, in addition to gifts of magnetic healing, the unusual faculty of being able to mummify fruit, vegetables, and dead animals, will shortly pay a visit to this country to demonstrate his powers. The National Laboratory of Psychical Research have made the necessary arrangements, and will bear the expenses of M. Gaillard's visit. Experiments will be carried out in the laboratory under the control of a scientific committee, and remarkable results are hoped for. M. Gaillard requires several days to mummify completely the objects submitted; for instance, from one to two weeks in the case of fruits and vegetables such as oranges or potatoes. He claims to be able to retard the growth of vegetation by magnetic passes, and also to sterilise wounds in the same manner.

YOUR NEWSAGENT CAN SUPPLY "LIGHT" WEEKLY

## PSYCHIC RESEARCHERS AT TABLE.

The Psychic Research Circle has become too well-known to need introduction to the readers of *LIGHT*. Founded less than three years ago by Mrs. P. Champion de Crespigny, assisted by a group of enthusiastic friends, it has rapidly extended its reputation and influence, until at present it forms one of the most important subsidiary groups of the Lyceum Club. Among its members are Mrs. Kelway Bamber, the Dowager Lady Boyle, Mrs. Murray Chapman, Miss Mary Monteith, Miss Nellie Tom-Gallon, Lady Berry, M.D., and others whose names our readers know well. One of the pleasant activities of the Psychic Research Circle is the holding of an annual Dinner to which are invited many of the best-known personalities in the psychic movement. The latest of these was held at 138, Piccadilly, London, on the evening of January 21st, when the guests included Susan Countess of Malmesbury, Sir Frank Benson, Mr. H. Dennis Bradley, Dr. Lamond, Mr. and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, and Dr. R. and the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould. The Marquess and Marchioness of Aberdeen looked in at the close, and were warmly welcomed, Lady Aberdeen being the president of the Lyceum Club. Mrs. Champion de Crespigny, who gracefully presided, made a brief speech after the Loyal Toast, in which she referred to the growth of the Psychic Research Circle, and the increased interest in psychic matters generally that is now being shown all over the country. "If you travel about this country," said the speaker, "you will find there is scarcely a town, or even village, that has not some kind of psychic centre, no matter how small. The sceptics scoff, they talk loudly—and the result is that another centre of psychic enquiry arises!" (Laughter.) Referring to the *Daily News* discussion on Spiritualism, Mrs. de Crespigny thought that, taken as a whole, it was more fairly conducted than any of the newspaper enquiries into the subject had been hitherto. Of course, the usual ignorant comments had been made by uninstructed correspondents. Her own article in the *Daily News* had been criticised in this way, and, while she had no objection to being thought a fool or a knave, yet she hated to be called a liar. (Laughter.) In the *Daily News*, recently, Mr. A. A. Milne had settled the question of spirit communication for ever, in a reference to some verse alleged to have come from the spirit of Dryden; but Mr. Milne was ignorant of the subject, and knew nothing of the difficulties of communication. Distortion in transmission was not infrequent. She had heard a horribly distorted rendering of the voice of Tetrizzini on a gramophone record, but this was no reflection against the prima-donna herself.

Sceptics were fond of attacking Spiritualism along a certain favourite line: they pointed to famous scientists, such as Lodge, Barrett, and Crookes, and said, in effect: "These men are admittedly great in their own work—Science—but that fact does not necessarily qualify them to speak with authority on psychic matters." Those same critics would then proceed to condemn the subject, of which they obviously knew little, apparently overlooking the fact that their own claim to speak with authority rested, perhaps, upon a reputation as a novelist or a physician. If a scientific reputation was no qualification, why should a reputation as a popular physician or a writer of novels be regarded as conferring the right to criticise spiritual matters with the voice of authority? The sceptics could not have it both ways.

SIR FRANK BENSON then spoke. He disclaimed any expert knowledge. "I am," he said, "the stupid boy at the bottom of the lowest class." He could confirm what the last speaker had said concerning the growing interest in spiritual matters. As a wandering actor, he had come across numbers of people, of every type and class, and in every part of the country, who

had been disappointed in the answers given by those who should have been qualified to reply to the great questions: Why? Whence? Whither? These people turned for a little light to Spiritualism and Psychic Research. They were seeking; they were obeying some mystic call in their nature, bidding them grope into the beyond.

He recollected an occasion when a park-keeper remarked to him that the coming winter would be exceptionally hard. He knew this because the water-rats had moved their bolt-holes six inches higher above the water; the animals knew in advance that the water would freeze, and unless they moved up higher, they would be imprisoned. Quite recently it was proved that a young swallow caught in Surrey had flown from Capetown, and returned. It was ticketed, by a label on the leg, before leaving England and again on arrival at Capetown. These creatures, like ourselves, obeyed the call of life.

MR. H. DENNIS BRADLEY, referring to the *Daily News* discussion, said it was amusing to watch the rather valuable display of ignorance among some of the writers. One of them had apparently sought to disprove the subject of survival by showing that a spirit could not have a roof to his mouth! Was it claimed that in the next stage of life we should sit on a cloud with no roofs to our mouths? (Laughter.)

He observed that in a certain newspaper Mr. Bernard Shaw stated that in his youth he had attended a seance and had cheated. Well, Mr. Shaw, in his youth, might conceivably have ridden in a stage coach without paying his fare. But what did all this prove? Mr. Bradley suggested that a careful study of the subject would produce better results than mere cheating at seances. At least two years' hard reading was a necessary preliminary. He had noticed with satisfaction great progress in direct-voice phenomena in the last few years. Arising out of his own direct-voice experiments, there had resulted the development of this phenomenon in four other circles. If a similar rate of progress could possibly be maintained over the next fifty years, the gift might become relatively common. He wondered when the time would arrive when five per cent. of the population would have acquired this power, and said that if the world devoted one-tenth of its time and effort to psychic matters while giving the remaining ninety per cent. to mundane affairs, the results might be astonishing. This state of things might come about in the next hundred years. He hoped he might see it.

MR. HEWAT MCKENZIE, who spoke next, remarked that psychic study led the individual to a condition of healthy humility, making him realise dimly how slight was his knowledge of the great universe. Much time was lost by the young enthusiastic psychic student who tried to convert his friends and neighbours against their will. He had done so in his youth, but now realised it was sufficient to present the facts, answer questions, and give facilities to those who wished to learn, without, however, striving unduly to force conviction on them. Let the would-be investigator experiment for himself; that was far more convincing than mere talk.

Mr. McKenzie pleaded for a friendly attitude towards the medium, on the part of investigators. Some sitters purposely remained inert and unresponsive, for fear of letting fall some piece of information that might be artfully used by the sensitive. He added that those who contemplated seeking their spirit friends might, with advantage, send out a silent call to those friends during moments of quietude, prior to the seance.

The health of the Guests, gracefully proposed by Mrs. Murray Chapman, in the absence, through illness, of Miss Nellie Tom-Gallon, was responded to by Dr. Lamond, who remarked that the popular use of wireless, which habituates the world to the idea of transmission by ethereal means, was preparing the public mind for a comprehension of psychic transmission.

N.

THE SPIRITUALIST VOTE.

The new political journal, *The New Voter*, devotes a long article, in its January 23rd issue, to a discussion on "The Voter and Spiritualism". Our contemporary, while dissociating itself from the Spiritualist movement, nevertheless deprecates "any act which is likely to interfere with religious liberty". "We no longer live in the dark ages," says *The New Voter*, in critical reference to the Witchcraft Act, adding, "Spiritualism should be liable to no more intervention than that to which all religious bodies are subject." Referring to the *Daily News* discussion on Spiritualism now in progress, the writer of the article continues:—

"Broadly speaking, the Inquiry revealed two camps, those who believe in the possibility of communicating with the dead and those who do not so believe. There is a third class, namely, those who, following an old tradition, believe that mankind is capable of getting in touch with one class of spirits only, namely, those that are evil.

"For my part, I experience an instinctive resentment to the positiveness of those scientists who assert that death ends all. If it were merely the expression of a point of view, I should not feel the same resentment. I should know that the opinion was based upon those facts only on which the scientific mind had taken cognisance. But the scientific mind has no right to assertions upon data of which it has no knowledge.

"But neither my sympathy nor my revulsion has anything to do with my main contention, which is that the same freedom of thought and practice should be extended to the Spiritualist movement as to other religious movements. State interference with religious practice is a dangerous thing, and excusable only on the ground of injury to the community. It has not been demonstrated that Spiritualism is injurious, ergo, the right to exemption from State interference should be upheld. *The New Voter* demands that the right be jealously guarded."

SPIRITUALISM IN HOLLAND.

We hear from Miss Stead that she and Mrs. Estelle Roberts have just returned from Holland, where, at the invitation of Madame Noe and the "Harmonia" Spiritualists, they have held Propaganda Meetings in Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam. They were received everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm. The newspapers published long reports, and the interest was so great that the halls could not hold all who wished to be present, and many were turned away. Miss Stead was listened to with keen attention. Mrs. Roberts caused quite a sensation as, one after another, the spirits she described were recognised by members of the audience.

"SPIRITUALISM EXPOSED."—Mr. W. Appleyard tells us that his pamphlet, under this title, has been taken over by Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son, who have purchased for cash (not merely "on sale or return") no less than 50,000 copies,—a fact that speaks most highly for the quality of Mr. Appleyard's valuable little book. Spiritualist societies in the North, and in the Midlands, have taken large quantities for distribution among their members. Copies of *Spiritualism Exposed* may be obtained at the price of one penny each, or thirty-six shillings per thousand, from Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son, or direct from Mr. W. Appleyard, Endcliffe Crescent, Sheffield, who, it may be noted, has no monetary interest in the pamphlet.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

Emerson who had a very true appreciation of the foibles of human nature once said that if an angel came to earth to proclaim the moral law he would be likely to "eat too much ginger-bread or take liberties with private letters or do some precious atrocity." So difficult it is in this world always to practise what one preaches.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I observe the lengths to which zeal and enthusiasm will carry some devotees of a cause which they seek to assist by continually stoking its fires, I think of Mark Twain's story of the steam-boat race on the Mississippi. One of the steamers had so terrific a draught in its furnace that every time a nigger stoker approached the flames with a fresh supply of fuel he "went up the chimney with it!"

\* \* \* \* \*

That the late H. B. Irving was deeply interested in Spiritualism I know by reason of some talks with him at the time he was acting at the Savoy Theatre in two "psychic" plays. But it seems that his more famous father, Henry Irving, was not without some knowledge of the "occult", for Mrs. Violet Tweedale tells us in one of her books that he told her that a ghost he had once seen had suggested to him a particular action he employed whilst playing in "The Bells".

\* \* \* \* \*

I have heard people grumble that they could find nothing very spiritual in Spiritualism. Of course so much depends on where you look for it. There is nothing very spiritual to be found in the world at large if you have not the eyes to see it. It would really seem that if anyone wants to find evidences of the spiritual he must look for it first in himself. Unless he can find it there he is not likely to discover it anywhere else.

\* \* \* \* \*

Telepathy is becoming quite a popular subject. We are continually hearing it offered as the explanation of things which would once have been dismissed as insoluble problems. We hear of the mass-telepathy which enables one football team (with the support of the crowd behind it) to win at the expense of a team less well supported. There may be something in that. And talking of telepathy in games I remember how Mr. Manning Foster once told of an experienced bridge player who said he would never play against a husband and wife as partners, for he had found that two people who knew each other well could communicate their thoughts by other means than the normal ones.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the oddest coincidences which ever came under my attention centred about the name Duncan Campbell. I had a correspondent of the name in Scotland and was one day looking up his address. While thus engaged a telephone call came, with an inquiry for the address of Mr. Duncan Campbell—but this I found was another Duncan Campbell. I had scarcely dealt with the inquiry when a visitor was announced. He explained that he had called with a small parcel for me, a present from a friend. I opened the parcel and to my astonishment it contained an old book, "The Secret Memoirs" of a certain *Duncan Campbell*—a Scottish seer of the eighteenth century. With the slight exception that the seer spelt his name with only one "l", here were three Duncan Campbells in five minutes!

D. G.

## SPIRIT CONTROL.

### THE AURA: ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO SPIRITUALISTS.

By H. BODDINGTON.

(Continued from page 40.)

#### ANCIENT HISTORY.

Paracelsus near the end of the sixteenth century, followed by J. B. Van Helmont and others, believed in the power of the will to direct the fluid. This was scientifically confirmed by Dr. Kilner, who observed the shape and colour it took in obedience to the will of its owners. Paracelsus claimed that it is most active at night during sleep, because the body is quiescent and the soul more dominant and active. He also taught that man is a miniature world, and that the elements of his body, equally with those of the earth, possess magnetic polarities. Thus, out of the past, we find the teaching of spirit people curiously confirmed.

#### MODERN EXPLANATIONS.

Sir William Crookes' analysis of radiant matter will apply equally well to aura: "Radiant matter is produced by the variety of its molecules having room to collide", and which "having been rendered more free and mobile by the reduction of their numbers, act like bullets so small as to defy the imagination; and the number of which, still left in the 'vacuum' of which man is so proud, appears to be infinite". That is another way of saying that the invisible and imponderable are more permanent and volatile than dense material. He proved his theory by the construction of the "Crookes" tube. I suggest that what he demonstrated Spiritualists are demonstrating in every seance room under the name of aura. Presently when scientists get to grips with the new revelation, we may expect them to dogmatise upon the nature and composition of the spirit body as revealed by "radiant matter" emanating from the body. But—that time is not yet.

#### IS THE AURA INHERENTLY INTELLIGENT?

Allan Kardec suggested that the aura could be called "intelligent matter": but intelligence presumes volition, and whence comes this? He says: "From another point of view this fluid may be classed as forming part of the material element; it is nevertheless distinguished from it by certain special properties of its own. If it could be classified simply and absolutely as matter, there would be no reason why spirit should not also be classed as matter. It is the intermediary between spirit and matter . . . and susceptible of being made, through its innumerable combinations, under the direction of spirit, to produce an infinite variety of things of which you know but a very small portion. This universal, primitive or elementary fluid, is the agent employed by spirit when acting on matter. It is the principle without which matter would remain forever in a state of division and would never acquire the properties given to it by the state of ponderability".

From this definition it would appear to be the essential magnetic link forming the basic factor in the manifestation of cohesion. Its presence inhibits the processes of decay. So long as it remains in combination, vegetable and animal life continue; the particles of the houses we live in, the earth itself, are all held in suspension by its operations. Ether itself is but a postulate of particles so infinitely small that we think of them as points of force rather than matter. In the near future Science may postulate an etheric floor or foundation for the spirit world based on the analysis of auric emanations!

#### WHAT IS AURA?

What, then, is the aura? As a working hypothesis I suggest that it is the essence of matter itself—matter reduced to its most primitive form and undergoing continual transformation. Its component parts when

broken up, make it adaptable to what are called "spirit" or "astral" planes. Each particle of matter thus radiates its counterpart both of animal, vegetable and mineral.

Spirit teachers and all experimentalists are unanimous in asserting the manifold properties of the aura. In Crawford's experiments it assumed the form of sensitive rods, strong as steel, yet so alert that they seemed endowed with a special consciousness. It cannot therefore be called a "blind" force, for consciousness operates through it exactly as we do through our nerves. It actually responds to thought-processes so automatically that it appears to take shape and form without consciously expressed volition. It thus may take the form of an adult but anon appear as a child, with corresponding change of raiment, or possibly some scene or episode to convey information that can only be given pictorially.

#### AURA THE BASIS OF THE SPIRIT BODY.

We thus discover clues to its marvellous adaptability. The construction of the form seen by clairvoyants is but a condensation of previously invisible elements. Condensed a little more, it becomes visible to normal sight and we call it etherialisation or transfiguration. With the addition of still denser particles gathered from the medium or sitters it becomes psychoplasm and takes the form of rods, pseudopods and materialisations.

By sheer force of logic we are driven to the conclusion that the spirit body is composed of elements drawn from every part of the physical, and that these essential elements survive the change called death. This is further proven by the psychic law of gravitation whereby all spirits pass at once to the plane best suited to their further unfoldment. We thus discover that Almighty Law in manifestation is the only judge we shall have to meet and that no vindictive or unjust God pronounces sentence.

(Concluded.)

## NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"The Seekers: Talks by Dr. Lascelles." Edited by Rosa M. Barrett. (C. W. Daniel Co. 6s. net.)

Dedicated to Elizabeth Lady Mosley, this book contains an account of the work of healing carried on at St. George's Square, Westminster, by Mr. C. A. Simpson, and of the remarkable circumstances in which it was founded, a story known to most of those who have come into touch with Mr. Simpson and his band of helpers. Portraits are given of Mr. Simpson and of his guide, "Dr. Lascelles", who is stated to have been a medical man on earth, although not under that name. Some of us, Miss Barrett amongst them, have seen sufficient to bring conviction of the reality of "Dr. Lascelles" as an independent personality. The healing circle has achieved a remarkable record of cures and extended its activities in several directions, lately establishing a centre at Queen's Gate, Kensington. "Dr. Lascelles", it seems, considers that spiritual teaching is the main principle of his return to earth, and it is to his "Talks" that the larger portion of the book is devoted. These are many and informative, giving not only fine moral teaching but much in the way of detailed instruction in regard to mediumship, spirit intercourse and psychic healing. There are clear signs of a forceful and practical personality in the addresses, and the statements, in many instances, are confirmatory of much that an experienced Spiritualist will already have learned.

G.

MRS. OSBORNE LEONARD would like her correspondents to understand the impossibility of her answering the many letters which reach her. Owing to family ill-health, she finds herself unable to devote her full time to her psychic activities and she could not attend to these if she had also to give attention to all her correspondence, which must, on account of its very nature, be answered personally.

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 Wednesday, February 6th, at 5 p.m. .... MRS. HEWAT MCKENZIE Experimental class on Thought Transference. (Hon. Principal)  
 Thursday, Feb. 7th, at 5.30 p.m. MR. W. S. HENDRY'S STUDY CLASS  
 Thursday, February 7th, at 3 p.m. .... MR. G. P. SHARPLIN "Psychic Healing" (under control)  
**Group Clairvoyance.** (Limited to 10. Bookings must be made.)  
 Friday, February 1st, at 5 p.m. .... MRS. TYLER  
 Friday, February 8th, at 5 p.m. .... MRS. CANNOCK  
**NOTE.—The College has occasional accommodation for Students or interested visitors from the Country or Abroad.**

VOL. VII., No. 4. January, 1929.

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 Sunday, February 3rd, 6.30 p.m. .... MR. GEORGE PRIOR  
 Tuesday, February 5th, 7.30 p.m. .... MRS. HINCHLIFFE  
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 Tuesdays, 3 p.m. Class for Psychic Development—MRS. G. P. SHARPLIN  
 Wednesday, 3 p.m. Circle for Clairvoyance, February 6th .... MRS. ROUS  
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 Wednesday, February 6th, 7.30 p.m. .... MRS. FLORENCE KINGSTONE  
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Monday, February 4th, at 3, Psychometry .... MRS. KINGSTONE  
 Tuesday, February 5th, at 7.30, Clairvoyance .... MISS F. MORSE  
 Thursday, February 7th, at 7.30, Clairvoyance .... MRS. CANNOCK

**GROUP SEANCES.**

Monday, February 4th, at 7.30 .... MRS. NORDICA  
 Wednesday, February 6th, at 3 .... MRS. E. M. NEVILLE

**LECTURE**

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