

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

Edited by **DAVID GOW**

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"Light! More Light!"—Goethe.

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

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writing claiming to come from an old friend of the automatist. The fact of his death was at the time unknown, but afterwards verified, and a great deal of information given, which proved not only to be true, but revealed in the fullest degree the personality at work, in mannerism, in character and in memory. Such instances come under our attention continually, nowadays, and are an agreeable change from the days when messages were often found to be unreliable—a mixture of truth and error. The conclusion is that the mental atmosphere of to-day is more congenial than it was, and that the methods of communication have become greatly improved.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

SHY ADHERENTS.

Giving, in the *Sunday Express* of the 21st ulto., some reminiscences of all the celebrated people whom he had known, Mr. James Douglas mentions the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall of whom he says: "He was a crypto-Spiritualist, but he told me that it would be madness to make known his experiences, as it would damage him as an advocate." Mr. Douglas goes on to say: "The late Sir Frank Dicksee was also a firm believer in Spiritualism. And so was Lord French." He adds: "There are more mystics among our great men than anybody suspects." We can confirm Mr. Douglas's statement on this point, although we are a little puzzled to know exactly what a "crypto-Spiritualist" is, unless it means a secret Spiritualist. We are reminded, while writing, of the fact that when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle first came out publicly on his campaign as a propagandist for Spiritualism, Mr. Douglas wrote that he had been told by Sir James Barrie that "Doyle is dead honest". This struck us as a curious, not to say rather needless, assurance. When a public man comes forward and risks his reputation and his worldly fortune in order to bear testimony to the truth of an unpopular subject, his honesty should not stand in need of any guarantee. But long usage has made us tolerant of some of the rather eccentric statements made in connection with Spiritualism by people who have little or no knowledge of the true inwardness of the matter.

EVIDENCES MORE ABUNDANT.

Perhaps it is because the public attitude towards the idea of survival has become much more favourable than it was, that the evidences of spirit communication and spirit identity are growing more abundant and more convincing. Another reason for this may be found in the fact that a very determined and systematic effort is being made on the Other Side to furnish these proofs. But whatever may be the reason, we are aware of instances of messages of a most striking character, occurring sometimes in quarters where there is little knowledge of or interest in Spiritualism. A typical example is where, in a certain family, strong physical manifestations broke out, followed by communications in automatic

THE CONQUEST OF FEAR.

Many modern inventions and discoveries—railway trains, for one instance—were, at their beginnings, objects not only of doubt and suspicion but of actual terror. Panic-stricken folks prophesied terrible results. We have seen much the same thing in Spiritualism. Alarming tales were told (and are still told) in some quarters of the disastrous consequences of meddling with the Unknown. The very idea of spirits gave rise to bogie stories, for fear is a potent weapon in fighting any new idea. The alarmists, in some instances, really believed in their tales; in other cases, we imagine, they simply wanted, like the Fat Boy in *Pickwick Papers*, to "make your flesh creep". Very much to the credit of humanity there have always been people who rise above the chicken-hearted types and are not much enamoured of the doctrine of "Safety First". They have disdained not only the fear of the Unknown, but that more ignoble fear, a cowardly deference to public opinion. They have faced the peril and adventure, and to-day we are reaping the harvest of their courage in an increase of knowledge and confidence. We are penetrating the Unknown Regions and finding them much less perilous than they were represented to be. Instead of bogies and spectres we find the inhabitants to be very much like ourselves. And in a few years' time some of the "weird things" will be as familiar and as commonplace as aeroplanes and wireless sets.

SEARCHLIGHTS.

Long waving fingers feel along the sky,
 And seek beneath a thousand burning stars
 For one poor lonely plane, whose throbbing jars
 The night-time stillness it has dared defy.
 Oh, gallant moth, bejewelled butterfly!
 The sky is crossed by radiant silver bars,
 And truer aim all hidden progress mars,
 By gleams that capture though they beautify.
 So all who start upon the lonely quest
 Of truth, must face the dangers of the heights,
 No flight for those who wish for guarded rest
 And need the peace security invites.
 The search indeed is hopeless and forlorn
 For those who heed the piercing light of scorn.

—E. HALL HAINS.

THE VALIANTINE SITTINGS IN BERLIN.

BY H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

(Continued from page 351)

On Friday, the day prior to my addressing this letter to Frau von Dirksen, she had approached me in regard to the financial arrangements with Mr. Valiantine. I told her that the arrangement made by Dr. Quade was that Mr. Valiantine's return fare (from London to Berlin) which amounted to £20 should be paid, and a sum of £100 contributed towards the expenses of his travelling from New York. Frau von Dirksen then saw Mr. Valiantine and handed him three thousand marks (nearly £150). I consider it imperative to mention these figures because the implication has since been made that the money side represented a chief motive. When I state, however, that Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine's return fares from Williamsport (Pennsylvania) to London amount to £250 and, with the ensuing expenses of their stay in Europe, which would bring the minimum cost (without recompense for Mr. Valiantine's time), to at least £450, it will at once be seen that the contribution made by Frau von Dirksen was only equitable. In addition to this, I would like to say that I personally defrayed all the costs for the special trip to Berlin. The return fares for four people and the travelling expenses amount to £90, and the additional expenditure during our stay there amounted to about £80. Such costs, however, I was only too happy to contribute in the interests of psychic research.

Mr. Valiantine although not well-to-do, is not a poor man. On Saturday, May 4th, he wrote to Frau von Dirksen, saying that the conditions were so disturbed that he did not wish to continue and, in the circumstances, would not agree to accept any contribution from her; he therefore returned to her the three thousand marks which she had given him towards his expenses in travelling from America. As I was lunching on this day with a member of the British Embassy I did not return to the house until late afternoon. Frau von Dirksen immediately came to my rooms almost in tears, and profuse in protestations and apologies. She was emotional and effusive, and assured me that she would insist on the correct attitude of the sitters in future, that the conditions which had been originally specified should be maintained, and that the action of the sitters should be rigidly disciplined. She begged me to rescind my decision and also implored my wife to intercede for her. She was evidently, this time, sincere. Eventually I agreed to defer my decision. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that she went to Mr. Valiantine and throwing down the letter which he had written to her returning the three thousand marks, said she wished to "forget she had ever received the letter".

We agreed to hold a sitting after dinner on that night, and the sitters on this occasion were chiefly members of the von Dirksen family. It was perhaps a trifle better than the previous sittings—there was slightly less chatter amongst the sitters and less movement, but it could not be described as anything but comparatively poor.

On the day following—the Sunday—there was the usual large dinner party. Frau von Dirksen had invited among other sitters, a clergyman of one of the principal Berlin Churches, Professor Driesch,

Chairman and past President of the English Society for Psychical Research, and a certain Baron—whose name I forget—a charming man, to whom I shall refer later. Conditions again seemed to be disturbed. There was certainly no semblance of harmony among the circle. The German clergyman—good fellow as he may be—was certainly occupied in voluble dialogues with various of the sitters. Certain of the Valiantine "guides" came through and spoke in their individual and characteristic manner in short sentences. To this I can firmly testify. One of the German spirits endeavoured to speak, but I have no knowledge (neither has Valiantine) of what the voice was attempting to say. It was certainly indistinct and only managed to articulate a few short sentences. The sitting did not last long because it was broken up by Baron ——— who asked if he might leave the room as he felt ill, and said that he felt as if a tremendous lot of power was being drawn from him.

We stayed on afterwards for a short time, but nothing transpired, and the sitting was then closed.

Professor Driesch chatted to me for a while when the sitting was over, asking me to visit him whenever I was in Germany, and told me that he thought the "sitting was very interesting", but I informed him that I regarded it as entirely negative. At this particular sitting, as frequently happens at the Valiantine seances, various of the sitters were touched at different times. Afterwards, Frau von Dirksen, in talking to me alone, said: "We believe in you implicitly, but are you sure that it is not Valiantine who touches the sitters?" I told her that such an action on his part would be absolutely ludicrous. I regarded any psychic touch as of no value whatever in proof of phenomena, and a fraudulent touch would merely represent a proof of lunacy on Valiantine's part. I was, frankly, annoyed at this element of suspicion again being introduced, and I told her that as I was to leave Berlin on the following morning—as had been arranged—I thought it would be better if I took my wife and Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine with me, and closed the series of sittings. Again she begged me fervently to allow them to continue, expressing her regret at mentioning the thought which had crossed her mind.

When I retired for the night, I asked Valiantine to come with me to my private sitting-room. I told him that I did not feel at all satisfied with the situation and together we held a private sitting. Valiantine and I together, can, as a rule, when sitting alone, get into communication within a few minutes. This particular sitting was quite dramatic. We were told that there was grave danger that one of the sitters might suddenly turn on a light, and that if the sittings were continued, it was imperative that the danger of such an action should be impressed upon Frau von Dirksen. A proven instance of such a danger is recorded by me in my book *Towards the Stars*.

Because of its importance I will briefly quote the incident, which took place at Dorincourt, on February 23rd, 1924, at a sitting at which were present my wife and myself, Mr. and Mrs. De Wyckoff, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, and Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans. The servants had previously received instructions to turn off all lights in the corridors, but by some mishap a rather powerful electric light appears to have been switched on in the yard of the garage, the building of which is close to and partly facing one of the windows of the room in which the seance was held. One or two of the sitters had noticed that Valiantine was breathing rather

heavily. It may be assumed, therefore, that he had gone into a trance. The garage light came through the window over the top of the curtains, and in a sufficient quantity for one to see dimly the faces of the sitters. Valiantine was then observed to be in a limp condition, and we saw the trumpet suspended without visible support close to Mrs. Bryans in mid-air. At the moment the light appeared, however, it fell to the ground. Valiantine was now breathing very heavily. We sat on in the dark for about ten minutes, when we heard him murmuring: "Oh, my stomach." As he seemed to be in such distress we decided to turn on the light. De Wyckoff got up from his chair and took two steps forward to the switch when the spirit voice of Bert Everett cried from the ceiling: "Don't turn on the light." The voice was unmistakably urgent and frantic.

De Wyckoff went to Valiantine's assistance and said that Valiantine was enveloped in a whitish sort of film. Mr. Caradoc Evans then crossed over and later described this substance as a slimy, frothy bladder "into which you could dig a finger but through which you could not pierce". I felt the face and hands, and they were dead cold. De Wyckoff, Bryans, Evans and myself—the ladies had left the room—remained with him in the dark for about half an hour until he revived sufficiently to be half-carried to a couch in my study.

It is a scientifically established fact that ectoplasm comes from a medium's body, and that the effect of light on some mediums is to cram this ectoplasm back into the body with a terrific shock. This, I seem to think, is what happened to Valiantine.

After a time he was put in bed, and the morning following, on account of his continued illness, Dr. H. Cooper, of Surbiton, was called in. That day he remained in bed. On Tuesday, with the exception of a black bruise on the stomach, measuring about two inches by three—evidently caused by the shock of the returning ectoplasm—he was quite well.

It will be realised that after such an experience the warning given of the possibility of an *exposed* light being flashed on *inside* the seance room in Berlin was an imperative one.

Strangely enough, although it was midnight Frau von Dirksen came up to my rooms, accompanied by my wife. I told her at once that Valiantine and I had held a private sitting and what had taken place. I warned her that if, after I had left Berlin, such a trick were played upon Mr. Valiantine by any of the sitters, it might prove disastrous and that I should hold her personally responsible. She gave me her word of honour that she would impress upon every sitter the danger of such an action, and that she would personally guarantee their strict behaviour. I may mention here that during the subsequent sittings no light was flashed on: I am convinced, however, from what has since transpired, that the warning given was a gravely essential one.

On the Monday morning I left Berlin for London, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine with Mrs. Bradley, to watch over conditions, and conduct the further seances to be held there. Frau von Dirksen, it is only fair to say, had been quite charming to me during my entire stay. She accompanied me to the station to see me off on the train, saying how much she was looking forward to a visit to England, and to seeing me again then.

In all, after I had left Berlin, four more sittings were held, on the Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday—May 7, 9, 11 and 12. According to Mrs. Bradley's notes, they were all comparatively negative, and the fourth one was a complete blank.

On the Saturday, the unmarried daughter of Frau von Dirksen, who was very decidedly antagonistic towards Spiritualism and psychic research, asked if she might join the circle. She was allowed to do so, and sat next to Valiantine. According to Mrs. Bradley's report, the Guides, Bert Everett and Dr. Barnett came through at intervals, saying: "Sit up straight", and again "Do not touch each other", and

other remarks of a like nature. A spirit voice came through and spoke to one of the sitters, saying it was his brother. The sitter asked "Which brother?" and there was no answer. The voice then spoke again, and the sitter asked, "Why are you talking with an English accent?" There was no answer, and after a little while Dr. Barnett announced that the sitting must close. The circle was broken up, but Mrs. Bradley suggested that she and Frau von Dirksen might try and sit again with Valiantine and find out what was wrong. At this sitting Dr. Barnett came through and in reply to a question as to why the sitting was closed he remarked to Frau von Dirksen: "Your daughter was reaching out her hand to the trumpet." On leaving the seance room her daughter was accused of this action but she denied it. However, upon pressure being brought upon her, she admitted that she had stretched out her arms when the trumpet was lifted. Mrs. Bradley asked her what she meant by committing such an action when she had been distinctly instructed not to do so, and she replied that she felt as if something was in front of her. Mrs. Bradley told her that all she had succeeded in doing was to smash the seance. Mrs. Bradley then asked two of the sitters, who had sat during the first part of the evening, and who happened to be Spiritualists, and held seances themselves, whether they thought the voice speaking to the man sitter, saying it was his brother, had an English accent, and they said, in front of Frau von Dirksen, that it "was speaking very good German". After this Frau von Dirksen said to Mrs. Bradley that she was extremely annoyed with her daughter, and that she would punish her.

The last sitting was held on the Sunday evening, May 12th. No phenomena of any description took place. They sat for an hour but it was a complete blank. The circle was reduced by Mrs. Bradley and another sitter going out, but still nothing happened. The circle was again changed, but no phenomena whatever took place. The evening was a complete and absolute failure.

In Berlin Mr. Valiantine gave Frau von Dirksen two short sittings alone in the daylight. The first was held during the time I was in Berlin and the second was held after I had left. The remarkable evidences which have been obtained in the past, during the many daylight sittings given by Mr. Valiantine, are recorded in my books. These sittings have been given with the closest observation of Valiantine's face and lips. The results obtained are attested to by innumerable witnesses during the last few years.

The first daylight sitting with Frau von Dirksen was apparently not successful, but she informed me, in the presence of Valiantine, that raps were heard inside the trumpet, that she had heard a "voice", although she could not understand what was said. She stated, however, that she could not see Valiantine's face, because while he held the trumpet his hand obscured his face.

At the second sitting, she received some sort of communication, and she told Mrs. Bradley, as at the previous sitting, she could not see Mr. Valiantine's face, but that he had told her to hold a mirror in front of her so that she could observe any movement. Mrs. Bradley asked Frau von Dirksen, after this sitting, whether she had received any communication, and Frau von Dirksen replied: "Yes, it was very good. I heard my husband's voice." Frau von Dirksen appeared to be extremely pleased and Mrs. Bradley then asked her whether she would write this down and she replied that she would. She, however, omitted to do so, and Mrs. Bradley again at a later date, asked her if she would put this statement in writing and again Frau von Dirksen said she would. She still did not do so, and on being asked for the third time she said that she felt she had not received any evidence. She also added that there was one particular question which she had put to the "voice" to which she did not succeed in getting a reply.

(To be continued.)

O'SULLIVAN'S RETURN.

By F. W. MITCHELL, F.R.G.S., F.S.S.

During a sitting in June 1920, at which Mrs. Etta Wriedt was the Medium, a faint voice gave a name like "Alexander". I remarked "Is it Alexander?" An emphatic reply was given: "Yes, and for you."

I welcomed the visitor and furiously began to think whom he could be; the only Alexander I could remember, was a gentleman whom I knew to be alive.

The voice continued: "This is the last place in the world I should ever have expected to see you," and went on to say, "Now you don't know whom you are talking to." These two sentences were spoken in a strong Irish brogue, reminding me at once of a casual acquaintance I had known for many years, but only saw at long intervals.

I said, "Is it Alexander O'Sullivan?" and a decided answer came: "Indeed, and it is, but you can leave out the O;" three times during the interview when I called him O'Sullivan he said, "but you can leave out the O." I said, "I did not know that you had passed over," and he replied that it was "on the 19th December last."

I expressed great pleasure at having a chat with him, and in the course of his remarks, in a rich Irish brogue, he said, "Indeed I am almost ashamed to come and see you." (I thought he referred to the then unsettled state of Ireland.)

Now I had no knowledge that O'Sullivan was dead, and upon going to my office I turned up the last letter he had written to me, and found that he had called upon me in October 1919, upon a small matter of business.

Immediately I wrote a letter to him at his last address at Twickenham. Not receiving any reply I wrote again, and shortly afterwards there came a letter from his daughter stating that her father had died on December 19, 1919; she also gave the name of his solicitor, in case I had any business transactions connected with his estate.

I interviewed the solicitor, who told me that Mr. O'Sullivan was drowned on December 19th, 1919, by his own act, when he was about seventy years of age.

On July 6th, 1920, I had a private sitting with Mrs. Wriedt and questioned "Doctor Sharpe", her control, as to the manner of O'Sullivan's death. "Dr. Sharpe" stated that O'Sullivan had been born under a watery planet which explained his impulse to drown himself.

"Dr. Sharpe" further stated that O'Sullivan had lived a good life and was quite happy.

Among the many voices which came to me during the sitting was the voice of O'Sullivan. He then explained to me about his death, and that he had the impulse to drown himself; he went to the river, he hesitated, he then thought of me. Afterwards, he had a further impulse and went in. I asked him if he were happy, and his reply was, "Yes, I am quite happy, and I would not mind if I spent the whole of my life where I am; and I would be quite content." I replied, "Should you not try to rise?" and his reply was, "Yes, that is all right, but anyway I am quite content to remain here until my wife joins me."

Now I became aware why he had stated in his first interview that he was almost ashamed to come and see me.

On the 19th July I was turning out an old drawer of last year's papers, and among them, quite by accident, I found a number of printed documents that O'Sullivan had left with me when he called in October. These documents I had not read, and for the first time I noticed that whereas those dated the 8th October were signed in the name of "J. Alexander O'Sullivan", some other printed documents of various dates were signed "J. Alexander Sullivan".

I may add that I asked O'Sullivan at the private sitting why he had omitted the O; he informed me that he had done so because he found the English people did not understand the O, and so he left it out.

HUXLEY AND SPIRITUALISM.

By THE REV. GEORGE VALE OWEN.

In the current issue of *The Review of the Churches* Mr. Arnold Lunn has a striking article on the great naturalist, Thomas Huxley. In paying his generous testimony to the subject of his article, the writer quotes the passage from a letter which Huxley wrote to Charles Kingsley:—

Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every pre-conceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses Nature leads, or you will learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this.

A noble passage this, written in all sincerity. But Mr. Lunn is reminded of another letter of Huxley and he adds the comment:

"Sit down before fact," by all means, but Huxley failed to realise that spiritual are as important as physical facts.

And after giving a brief account of the activities of the Dialectical Society in the matter of their investigation of psychic phenomena and their invitation to Huxley to take part in their quest, he gives the reply. Huxley wrote:—

I regret that I am unable to accept the invitation of the Committee of the Dialectical Society to co-operate with a committee for the investigation of "Spiritualism"; and for two reasons. In the first place, I have not time for such an inquiry, which would involve much trouble and (unless it were unlike all inquiries of that kind I have known) much annoyance. In the second place, I take no interest in the subject. The only case of "Spiritualism" I have had the opportunity of examining into myself, was as gross an imposture as ever came under my notice. But supposing the phenomena to be genuine—they do not interest me. If anybody would endow me with the faculty of listening to the chatter of old women and curates in the nearest cathedral town, I should decline the privilege, having better things to do. And if the folk in the spiritual world do not talk more wisely and sensibly than their friends report them to do, I put them in the same category. The only good thing I can see in the demonstration of the truth of "Spiritualism" is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper than die and be made to talk twaddle by a "medium" hired at a guinea a seance.

Mr. Lunn remarks that this is "much as a Cardinal might reply if he was invited to examine the case for Anglo-Israelism", and adds:

The Spiritualist would be entitled to reply: "Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses Nature leads," even to the abyss of the Spiritualist Heaven.

Which makes further comment needless, except, perhaps, to express a hope that the wide circle of readers which the *Review* reaches will take a lesson to themselves. There is as much need of such a salutary reminder among churchmen as among scientists. And it is interesting to note how the various objections in Huxley's letter are reproduced by our opponents to-day.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF JESUS.

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

THE SURVIVAL LEAGUE.

Sir,—There is a tale told of a man who went up to Heaven and, meeting St. Peter, said: "I understand we all have mansions up here, where is mine?"

"There it is," said Peter.

"What! That dirty hovel! I would not let my cat live in it."

"I am sorry," said the Apostle, "but you see we can only make the houses from the material sent up to us during your life on earth. You sent us up such inferior bricks and cement that 'tis the best we have been able to do for you."

The above little fable is recalled on reading in *LIGHT* of the Survival League, which is about to be founded to propagate the truth of life after death. But why make another platform when there are about 1,000 churches in the land already preaching the same truth (which is only the minor portion of the truth)? The Council would be better employed in striving to teach the congregations in the church that "the land of surprises beckons very lovingly to them all, but that they must learn many things, and practise many graces and keep clear eyes and helpful, loving hearts, and so be quite ready for their life there".—Yours, etc.,

E. H. WORTH.

2, Aldrington Road, Streatham, S.W.16.

THE PROBLEM OF TIME.

Sir,—The difference between Mr. Morgan and myself is merely what I say of Time—imaginary. He thinks of Time as something existing of itself, while I think it is at the most a useful word to express our awareness of the pauses between events—whether two pulse-beats or an annual revolution of the earth. I, myself, am *not* aware of two degrees of Time—one planetary and the other durational. I am not sure that I grasp the meaning at all, and I fancy that my feet are too close to the ground altogether to get the full meaning of the last three paragraphs. I came across something this week in one of Sir A. Quiller-Couch's books, *News from the Duchy*, which has very slightly to do with Time. The Lieutenant has arrived with Collingwood's dispatches about the victory of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson, after sixteen days to Falmouth and up to the Admiralty at night and is "all in". We read:

But in the Lieutenant's brain, across this serious, even awful sense of the moment and its meaning, there played a curious secondary sense that the moment was not—that what was happening before his eyes had either happened before or was happening in some vacuum in which past, present, future and the ordinary divisions of time lost their bearings. The great twenty-four hour clock . . . wore an unfamiliar face. Yes, time had gone wrong, somehow: and the events of the passage home to Falmouth, of the journey up to the doors of the Admiralty—though they ran on a chain—had no intervals to be measured by a clock, but followed one another like pictures on a wall.

Here is a case where, under great stress, not only Time became unreal and went wrong, but the very intervals between the events all seemed to run together.—Yours, etc.,

E. HARVEY.

Bromboro', Cheshire.

Sir,—In a recent issue of your journal Mr. Leigh Hunt quoted the description of the personal appearance of Jesus Christ attributed to Publius Lentulus, but he was uncertain whether this description was authentic. As the same description has been included in certain Books of Quotations, it may be useful for me to quote the following passage from Dr. Percy Dearmer's article entitled "Christ in Art" comprised in *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, edited by Dr. James Hastings. The description specified by Mr. Leigh Hunt is quoted in full in Dr. Dearmer's article:

In the West the greatest artists have striven from age to age to represent our Lord in the utmost majesty and beauty. The type which they ultimately settled upon was doubtless influenced by the supposed descriptions of Christ's appearance, though none of these have any historical value.

The most famous is the letter of "Lentulus, president of the people of Jerusalem" to the Roman Senate, a forgery of about the 12th century.

Thus we may safely conclude that there is no authentic portrait or description of Christ.—Yours, etc.,

E. W. DUXBURY.

106, Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale, London, W.9.

THE ENEMIES OF THE SOUL.

A question relating to the best means of defence against hostile spirits whether here or hereafter, was thus answered by the guides of the late Mr. J. J. Morse, the great trance Medium:—

Until you know how to control or repel an assumed disastrous force you will always remain subject to the effects of that disastrous force: therefore, until you know how to circumvent the machinations of your enemies in this world you will always be the victims of the craft and duplicity that is being constantly directed as a disastrous force against you. In the Spirit-world, if you do not know the powers you possess yourself of repelling advances from this kind of spirit you will certainly render yourself subject to their attacks. Nay, not only subject to their attacks, but you will also render yourself a victim of their attacks; but when you learn that there are two elements in your nature which can arm you with a panoply of proof and maintain you intact against all attacks, you may then say: "I bid defiance to the powers of evil, and although hell be leagued against me, trusting to myself I will dare its fiercest attacks." That soul whose life is an absolute expression of the highest and noblest desires, that soul whose will is as true and as strong as steel, and makes the individual feel "I am master of myself"; every soul blessed with this dual development can safely give battle to the enemy, for such armour will protect you against any assaults. You may find it operate here also. If you will neither be brow-beaten nor cajoled, how much assault you can withstand! How many shocks you can resist, and then go strongly with the full strength of your spiritual character unsoiled and uncontaminated, though the world may seem to be all disaster around you!

MRS. NORDICA.—We learn with sorrow from a letter written by Mrs. Nordica at Colombo, en route for New Zealand, of the death of her husband, whose remains were buried in the Red Sea.

LIGHT.

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COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE LIVING.

A STARTLING EXPERIENCE.

S.M.S., a lady reader in Long Island (N.Y.) has had a shock in the course of her experiences in spirit communication. The story she has to tell may be thus summarised:—

During a visit to London in 1925 she had a sitting with one of our best mediums, and received a communication from her father and mother. It was most evidential. "They were their individual selves—one slow and serious, the other gay and bright." A long forgotten mannerism on the part of one of them was brought to mind. The mother sent a long message to her sister to prepare for passing over. The sister died within three months of this message, although there was no reason at the time of the communication to expect anything of the kind. Questioned about past happenings the communicators replied, giving proof of their knowledge by mentioning at least one matter unknown to the sitter but afterwards verified. S.M.S. then asked for news of a missing brother and was told he was with his parents, and he was brought to his sister. This brother gave a message in a way fully characteristic of him. He said he was in the spirit world, gave some account of his death and of the circumstances of his life in Canada before passing on. He mentioned family names and other particulars. He gave evidence fully as convincing as that of his parents.

There was a disconcerting sequel, for in May last our correspondent found her brother in Canada, alive and well, and the only clue to the puzzle appears to lie in the fact that the brother is clairvoyant and has shown other tokens of psychic faculty especially in the direction of photography.

S.M.S. is naturally perplexed, never having heard of any case of a similar kind. But as we all know these things *do* happen and have happened to some of us. They are known as "communications from the living". There was Mr. S. G. Soal's remarkable experience given to the Society for Psychical Research; Sir William Barrett also told of a remarkable case and so did Miss Felicia Scatcherd.

What is the explanation? It is not clear—it belongs to the mysteries of human personality. Even our friends on the other side are not able to clear it up, although some of them, being as keenly interested in psychical matters as they were here, are investigating the question. They can, as a rule, only offer theories and suggestions, but they are aware of some

facts from personal observation. One of those facts is that occasionally the spirit people will meet on their own side some person ostensibly a spirit like themselves who is still a denizen of earth. While on that side he believes himself to be a spirit, and may even be under the illusion that he has passed over in the ordinary way. This may happen even when the person concerned is bodily awake. He may even be walking in a city street, in a state of mental abstraction. Doubtless he has what is termed a "loose" soul, one easily detached from, and re-attached to, the physical frame. Such cases are naturally rare—the majority are too firmly attached to and identified with their bodies to be guilty of any such fantastic tricks!

We offer these observations as being at least suggestive. We cannot deal exhaustively with the question. We have so much yet to learn. But when all is said, is it not very evident that the phrase "Man is a spirit" is more than a mere platitude? Surely it is a truth full of possibilities as yet unimagined.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL.

"Science commits suicide when it adopts a creed" is a remark attributed to Huxley. But Scientists, being human, it is hardly to be expected that they should confine themselves to the mere discovery and registration of facts without drawing certain conclusions from them and basing some kind of a creed thereon. And not that alone. We have long witnessed the spectacle of a scientific orthodoxy growing up, and assuming all the pontifical airs of the ecclesiasticism whose existence it threatens. That state of affairs, however, is passing away, as it was bound to do, for Science is continually interrogating the Universe, and putting down its answers, a work in which Theology has miserably failed. To-day it is looking at Psychic Science—which we once described as the "Cinderella of the Sciences"—in a way almost suggestive of the Fairy Godmother. It is not only invading the seance room, but even in the direction of mathematics it is making some startling discoveries in the subject of Time (as witness Dunne's *Experiment with Time*). We can promise it some revelations in that direction which will throw new light on the nature of Man and the Universe. Of course, it is not altogether new. Proclus, the Greek mathematician, demonstrated the existence of the soul by mathematics some fifteen hundred years ago. But fifteen hundred years is only a small matter where Science is concerned.

A NOTE ON PEPYS'S DIARY.

A correspondent, A.A.C., sends us another quotation from the Diary of the immortal Pepys, as follows (the reference is to the War with the Dutch):—

August 19th, 1665. "[We have] lost five commanders, beside Mr. Edward Montagu and Mr. Windham."

This Mr. Windham, A.A.C. points out, was the Mr. Windham who entered into a formal engagement with the Earl of Rochester, that "if either of them died, he should appear, and give the other notice of the future state, if there was any". We do not recollect if this compact had any result, although, of course, there are several cases, in the history of the last few centuries, of compacts of this kind which had strange consequences. We have recorded several instances in the past. A.A.C. adds, as an interesting speculation, that this Mr. Windham was probably of the same family as that to which the late Lady Grey of Fallodon belonged, for she was before her marriage Pamela Wyndham. The spelling of the name is different, of course, but Sir William Wyndham, Bart., who is believed to have been his brother, used the customary form.

SIDELIGHTS.

The wife of Petty-Officer Elliott, of Weymouth, dreamed some weeks ago that she saw the Submarine H.47 sink with her husband on board, reports the *Daily News* of July 11th. Another member of the crew of that ill-fated vessel, "Sandy" Goodlet, who also perished in the disaster, told a woman friend, before he sailed, that he felt he would never see her again.

* * * * *

Miraculous cures at a Grimsby healing mission are reported in the *Daily Dispatch* of July 10th. Mrs. E. Wall, of Manchester, a woman evangelist, was the leader of the mission, assisted by her husband and son. A Sheffield lady, Miss Brittain, declared that while she was praying, a cataract from which she was suffering at the time had been removed, and Mrs. Kelf, of Grimsby, claimed that after thirty-six years of blindness her sight was restored and she could see across the auditorium—the mission was held in the Prince of Wales' Theatre. Mrs. Wall, the evangelist, told a *Daily Dispatch* representative that she herself had been cured of cancer by divine intervention.

* * * * *

Professor Alexander Erskine, the famous psycho-therapist and neurologist, recently described to an audience at the New Burlington Galleries a strange experiment with a hypnotised person. The Professor had been attending a young woman, wife of a wealthy man, living in a famous London square. She was paralysed, and Professor Erskine, having cause to suspect that she was suffering from the effects of drugs, decided to call in another specialist for consultation. The two specialists met, but before setting out to visit the patient, an experiment was decided upon; a male patient, who was sound asleep, was questioned as to the movements of the lady whose case they were investigating, and who was living many streets away. The sleeper answered, "She is not in her bedroom but in an ante-room, on a couch, and a man is giving her a spoonful of liquid from a green bottle. The servants are out because the master of the house has taken them to a pantomime."

* * * * *

Professor Erskine and his confrère then visited the home of the lady. Instead of the customary footman, a maid answered the door, saying, "The footmen have gone to the pantomime with the master, sir." The two consultants then interviewed the patient, who eventually admitted the truth of the details given by the hypnotised subject—she had been in the ante-room, and a member of the household staff had administered cocaine from a bottle, about half an hour previously. This is an *Evening Standard* item of July 12th.

* * * * *

In *Everybody's Weekly*, July 13th, Mrs. S. Griffiths, of Egerton Street, Chester, described a prophetic dream that occurred a few months before the birth of her first child. In the dream she found herself in a cemetery, placing flowers on a grave; but, strangely enough, instead of being sorrowful, she felt full of joy. When the child was born, the doctor pronounced that it would be a cripple and a hopeless idiot. At the end of a month the baby became ill. Says Mrs. Griffiths, "I prayed to God to take him out of his suffering, which He mercifully did, and so I found myself placing flowers upon a grave, happy and thankful that God had been so kind as to take my little one and care for him always."

YOUR NEWSAGENT CAN SUPPLY "LIGHT" WEEKLY

"Clairvoyance and the Turf" is the title of a paragraph in *Horse and Hound* of July 13th, and the writer tells of an alleged spirit communicator who prophesied correctly that a Goodwood favourite would *not* win. The story is said to rest on the authority of Colonel Meysey-Thompson. (Presumably this is Colonel E. C. Meysey-Thompson, J.P., of Knaresborough, who raised and trained several artillery brigades during the War, and whose name is closely linked with hunting and shooting activities.) The story is that Mr. Henry Thompson, who was in London for a few hours, attended a Spiritualistic seance, conducted by an unnamed Medium, who is described as "making a great stir in the Metropolis".

* * * * *

Mr. Thompson asked to be put into touch with a certain "Bill Scott", with the result that "presently came some vigorous and characteristic language, which left Mr. Thompson in no doubt that he had the right number, so to speak". The sitter asked, "Who will win the Goodwood stakes?" The reply came, "You won't. . . . Your horse has broken down."

* * * * *

The astonished owner went off to Goodwood where he saw his trainer who remarked, "I am so glad you've come!" Said Mr. Thompson: "Yes, and I know why—the horse has broken down." Very much astonished, the trainer replied, "How on earth did you know? There was not a soul there this morning except the lad and myself, and I've kept him locked up in the saddle-room ever since we got back."

* * * * *

Discussing the numerous recorded instances of persons who have seen their own "spectres", a writer in the *Bristol Evening News* of July 5th ("Shadows of the Living" is the title of the article), recalls the well-known case of Sir Carne Rasch, who was seen in the House of Commons at a time when he was actually ill in bed. Sir Arthur Hayter was one of those who saw Sir Carne Rasch, and was struck by the extreme pallor of his face, and also by the fact that Rasch was not sitting in that part of the chamber which he usually frequented. "I was impressed," said Sir Arthur, "by the remarkable, striking, and altogether unusual presentment of the member for the Chelmsford Division. I do not say that it was eerie, but it attracted involuntary and irresistible attention." Continuing, the writer says, "Sir Gilbert Parker, who also saw Sir Carne's double and was equally positive of its identity, said: 'When Rasch accepted my nod, with what looked very like a glare, and met my kindly inquiry with silence, I was a little surprised. And when he suddenly and silently vanished, I put my hand to my head in utter bewilderment and asked myself if it were possible that poor Rasch, whose illness had been reported in the papers, had died.'"

HEAVEN.—If Heaven be a state of perception as well as a place, then we may say that we ascend to it even during this life, during moments of extreme spiritual exaltation or self-sacrifice and love. We can be in hell or Heaven whilst yet in the flesh, for we are spirits here and now, we live in eternity, and have immortal existence as a present possession. No one can ever see a spirit whether incarnate or discarnate; all we can perceive is its mask—the person. The spirit or Individuality ever eludes us.

—I. TOYE WARNER-STAPLES, F.R.A.S.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE ON THE SCREEN.

A "talkie" film of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was lately shown in the United States' Cinemas, and will soon reach this country. In the film he appears walking down a flight of steps at his country-house, accompanied by his dog. The first part of his talk deals with his Sherlock Holmes stories, after which he passes to the consideration of his "psychic ideas". In the course of his statements on this subject he refers to the curious fact that his first experience in Spiritualism occurred at just about the same time that Sherlock Holmes was in his mind, that is to say about the years 1886 and 1887, "so that nobody can say that I have formed my opinions on psychic matters very hastily"; and he mentions that it is just forty-one years ago that he wrote a signed article upon the subject which appeared in LIGHT, putting himself on record as an investigator of the subject. He continues:—

During these forty-one years I never lost an opportunity of reading, or studying and experimenting on this matter. I suppose I have sat with as many mediums, good and bad and indifferent, as perhaps any living being—anyhow, a larger variety, because I have travelled so much all over the world, and wherever I have gone, either in Australia or America or South Africa, the best that there was to be had in that direction was put at my disposal. Therefore, when people come along and contradict me—people who have had no experience at all, read little and perhaps never have been to a seance, you can imagine that I do not take their opposition very seriously. . . .

I am talking about things that I have handled, that I have seen, that I have heard with my own ears and always, mind you, in the presence of witnesses. I never risk hallucination. I usually, in most of my experiments, have had six, eight, or ten witnesses, all of whom have seen and heard the same things that I have seen. Gradually I became more and more convinced in that matter, as I studied year in and year out, but it was only in the time of the War, when all the splendid young fellows were disappearing from our view, the whole world was saying, "Well, what's become of them? Where are they? What are they doing now? Have they vanished into nothing or are they still the grand fellows that we used to know?"—it was only at that time that I realised the overpowering importance to the human race of knowing more about this matter. Then it was that I flung myself more earnestly into it and that I felt the highest purpose to which I could possibly devote the remainder of my life was trying to bring across to other people something of that knowledge and assurance which I had acquired myself. Certainly the results have justified me.

I am quite sure I could fill a room of my house with the letters that I have received from people telling me of the consolation which my writings on this subject and my lectures on this subject have given them; how they have once more felt the touch of a vanished hand and heard the sound of a voice that was still. And that is the grandest work I think that a man could do. I have this truth, but it has taken such root that now I know that it is only a question of time before the whole world shares the same knowledge which I have myself. But don't for one moment suppose that I am taking upon myself to say that I am even the principal exponent of it. There are many great mediums, many great psychical researchers and investigators of

all sorts. All that I can do is to be a gramophone on the subject—to go about to meet people face to face, to try to make them understand that this thing is not the foolish thing which it is so often represented, but that it really is a great philosophy and, as I think, the basis of all religious improvement in the future of the human race.

This film is presented to several thousand people every night and with such effect that one of them wrote recently that the audience felt the subsequent film to be quite an anti-climax.

BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT.

GRADES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Mr. R. A. Bush, President of the Wimbledon Spiritualist Society, sends us a psychic communication which he thinks may be of interest in view of the discussion on the nature of the subconsciousness.

The communicator begins by pointing out that there must be a medium or agent of receptivity to the impressions which impinge upon the central organ of consciousness. This medium must be organised, otherwise the impression would be a mass of confusion. It must also possess a co-ordinating faculty with all the various bodies associated with the human organism and must possess a selective control over these impressions or vibrations. Further it must have some interpenetrative function as well. The communication continues:—

This subtle organised body envelops closely the innermost centre of our being; therefore, it is a highly refined spiritual body nearest to the ego or central spark of the divine life. The ego (or self) operates upon this body at will, attuning it to whatever range or quality of vibration it desires, although the actual decisions and efforts may not be cognised nor followed by that consciousness which appertains to the physical. The ego is like a player upon a stringed instrument of infinite range and capacity. It can inhibit or induce responsiveness to any particular vibration or sphere of activity it pleases. In sleep the ego inhibits response to physical impressions; therefore, physical unconsciousness ensues, and when it re-awakens responsiveness to that plane on its return from functioning in the spirit-spheres it does not bring with it memory of those finer vibrations, because the physical nervous system cannot respond to them. This constitutes the forgetfulness of sleep. Likewise, when this body, *i.e.*, the central conscious organ, is withdrawn from the physical plane it cannot remember the past impressions of the earth-conditions. Only when again attuned to physical vibrations does the memory of them return. Thus is explained the difficulty of a spirit-being, especially when far advanced, remembering the details of the past life. The conditions must be particularly suitable to be able to give details that are of little importance to the divine ego, although such impressions may have seemed important during the physical period of manifestation.

Memory can only be awakened in any sphere when in complete accord with that sphere. The ultimate store of memory is in the divine ego, but *it can only express that memory through the organised body, of any particular plane of activity.* . . . One may say by analogy that a string of a piano is only "alive" or "awake", when vibrations to which it can respond impinge upon it; otherwise it is mute, or "asleep" and unresponsive. You cannot

cause a string tuned to C to become aware of or responsive to the atmospheric undulations that move a B string; but man's ear, being a more delicate and complex instrument, can consciously receive the vibrations of all the notes in the scale of octave. Therefore, more progressed mortals may be conscious of a vaster range of vibrations than the ordinary person can imagine.

THE PERSONAL SIDE.

DR. ABRAHAM WALLACE.

The name of Dr. Wallace is so well known and his activities in Spiritualism and Psychical Research have been so thoroughly recorded that it is quite unnecessary in this place to do more than refer to them in passing, although we may pay a high tribute to the courage and ability with which he has for so many years testified to the truth of a subject which has only of late years begun to receive serious attention.

Dr. Wallace began his career as a student of Arts in the old Glasgow College. He studied Anatomy under Professor Allen Thomson and looked forward to becoming a pupil of Professor Lister in the Surgical Class Room, for he had seen Lister at work in the medical classrooms and the Wards in the Royal Infirmary. But Lister left Glasgow and went to the Edinburgh Medical School, which was then at the height of its reputation, and in the winter session of 1870 young Wallace and some of his fellow-students went also to Edinburgh. Here, as a student at the University, he attended Lister's Clinical Surgical Class for three sessions, during one of which he became a dresser. That was in 1871.

Dr. Wallace graduated in 1873, and he became Junior Assistant to the Professor of Midwifery, and Physician-Accoucheur to the Fountainbridge Dispensary, Edinburgh. And here we may quote from Dr. Wallace's pamphlet, *Reminiscences of Lister*: "During the autumn, before taking up my tutorial duties in the Winter Session, I visited most of the centres of medical education, and the celebrated hospitals on the Continent, including Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Leipsic, Munich, Paris, etc. Everywhere I was well received, when I was known to be a student with the great Lister, and had to tell of the latest evolution of 'Listerism'."

The years 1873-75, during which Dr. Wallace was pursuing his tutorship, were made famous by one of Lister's patients, W. E. Henley, the poet. Henley, it will be remembered, was a friend of R. L. Stevenson, and Dr. Wallace occasionally saw "R.L.S.", although he did not personally become acquainted with him.

In 1889 Dr. Wallace came to London and settled in Harley Street as a specialist for Midwifery and Diseases of Women. For some years he was on the staff of the *Lancet*. He was also a member of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research.

He has had an adventurous and deeply interesting career and doubtless if he wrote his reminiscences it would be a rich and anecdotal volume, for Dr. Wallace has lived greatly and his wide sympathies have brought him into touch with men and things to an extraordinary degree.

As was announced lately, Dr. Wallace has retired from active work and has settled at Paignton, in Devon, to spend his declining years. His career has been so remarkable, especially in connection with his experiences in psychical phenomena, that we may hope to persuade him to give us a few of his psychical reminiscences in LIGHT at some time in the near future.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

We all know the Cassandra type of prophet who is always foretelling evil or mischief. It was of one of these that W. T. Stead remarked, "She so constantly prophesies misfortune that now and then by the law of averages it comes off". MEM.: Those who specialise in prophetic fulfilments should remember the law of averages and allow for it.

* * * * *

A correspondent of the American S.P.R. journal *Psychic Research* referring to table-tipping remarks that "there are still many intelligent people who ridicule it, claiming that any motion of the table is caused by unconscious muscular action of the sitters". If this statement had been put in the form of a Resolution I should have moved that the word "intelligent" before the word "people" be deleted.

* * * * *

This idea of "unconscious muscular action" was first put forward more than forty years ago by Professor W. B. Carpenter in his book *Mental Physiology*—he described it as "expectant attention". It was regarded as a scientific brain-wave of the first quality by people unaccustomed to think, and easily dazzled by high-sounding phrases. But the hollowness of the theory was soon made apparent. It was obviously quite insufficient to explain messages referring to matters unknown to the sitters, accompanied by manifest signs of personal intelligence. But, of course, there are always people of the Rip Van Winkle type who wake up after many years' slumber to the discovery that things have changed tremendously since "yesterday".

* * * * *

Reincarnation may be true or it may be untrue, but I have grown weary of that argument which asserts that "Reincarnation is the only way of vindicating the love and justice of God". It seems so clear that if the injustices of earth can be remedied as they are remedied at last, in the career of the soul in the realms beyond, that any mechanical adjustment which turns upon the idea of successive re-embodiments in the flesh is unnecessary. The Deity is surely not so limited in His resources as to be compelled to one particular method. Still, the problem is one that does not seem capable of any final solution, for even spirit communicators who claim to have lived for many years in the spiritual world and to have sought for proof of the reincarnation idea tell us that while they have found no such proof, they are not prepared dogmatically to assert that reincarnation is a fallacy.

* * * * *

Experienced Spiritualists are familiar with the wide differences of character and personality displayed by controls and communicators. These differences are even shown in their methods of signalling by raps or tilts, but, of course, more conspicuously in their messages. I was once talking to the guide of a well-known trance medium, who, referring to another guide who occasionally controlled, remarked: "Now he is a very different character to me. He regards everything in quite a detached way, and never seems to be pained or distressed by the troubles of those who come to see the medium." He did not make it a subject of complaint, but merely remarked upon it as a peculiarity of temperament. And certainly this did not necessarily indicate any lack of sympathy. Some people are sympathetic enough but very undemonstrative.

D. G.

A DREAM AND A SEQUEL.

Veridical dreams are, relatively speaking, fairly common, but here is one with an unusual sequel. Mr. T. Wildman dreamed of a railway smash; not only did the dream coincide with the disaster, which was actually taking place at that time, but the dreamer was "seen" amongst the wreckage by one of the passengers. Here is the story in Mr. Wildman's own words, which we quote, with permission, from the June issue of *The Clerk*.

I dreamt I was on a train, travelling from Leeds to Scarborough at an unusually high speed. Every compartment appeared to be crowded, and I found myself feverishly pacing the corridor and scanning each compartment for a friend, whom I was convinced was on the train. Suddenly there was a roar, followed by screams such as I have never heard in waking hours. Mutilated bodies, amid flames, stretched out feeble hands, and called for help which I could not give. I remembered we had just left Malton, and somehow kept on travelling, whilst I continued to search restlessly for my friend, and then I noticed we were at York, but still travelling towards Scarborough. At York there were cheerful crowds and happy faces and the friend, for whom I had been searching, entered the train which moved on, and I stood in the packed corridor with him, in such distress that I awoke with the intensity of the emotion.

Mr. Wildman telephoned to his friend at York, on awaking from his dream, but failed to reach him; the friend (who, we are told, "had dabbled in psychic matters") was out of town.

Later in the day, Mr. Wildman learned from the newspapers that a terrible railway smash had actually occurred outside Malton Station. He continues:

The following day there was a knock at my door, and I heard the voice of my friend inquiring about me in great emotion. "I saw him," he cried, "I saw his spirit." Upon my going forward he stared at me as though I'd risen from the dead. Then he explained how he had been flung out over the embankment when the crash came, with no worse results than a few bruises. He had not noticed me on entering the train at York, but had seen me amongst the wreckage later, when he came to assist the ambulance people. And seeing what he described as my "spirit form", assumed I had been killed.

It would appear, therefore, that there are ghosts of the living as well as the dead, and that upon this occasion the part of man which never sleeps (and indeed, if immortality be a fact, never dies) had striven to render assistance to a friend who was in danger.

PREJUDICE OR COWARDICE?—What restrains those who ridicule or condemn Spiritualism from testing it? Is it prejudice, or is it cowardice? They will chatter about it; they will criticise, theorise, and dogmatise; they would like to make a cockshy of it, but they won't try it. They fear, perhaps, that it might affront their ignorance and dispel their illusions. Artemus Ward told of a corsair who languished in prison for many years till a lucky thought struck him; he opened the window and got out. The exercise of common sense, however belated, is strongly commended, therefore, to those who have been blinded by their own unreason hitherto. Till they seek to ascertain by personal experiment whether Spiritualism be truth, error or imposture will they kindly refrain from laying down the law concerning it?—From *Life—Death and Destiny*, by ROBERT ALEXANDER.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"THE UNITY OF RELIGIOUS IDEALS." By Inayat Khan. (The Sufi Movement, 54, Above Bar, Southampton. 7s. 6d.)

This is a volume of thoughts on Religion, the God-Ideal, the Spiritual Guidance of man through the ages and some of the greatest prophets and teachers through whom the Message of God has been given, as men were able to receive it, by the "Apostle of Sufism", to the West (from 1910 to 1927), a true Master of Wisdom who aimed at establishing a human brotherhood with no consideration of caste, creed, race, nation, or religion, and a Universal Worship in which all could join: A short account of the Sufi Movement concludes this book of beautiful thoughts.
K. M. E.

"LES MISSIONNAIRES DE L'ASTRAL." By Suzanne Max-Getting. (Paul Leymarie, Paris. 15 francs.)

This is a series of communications from a spirit who sets out in seventy-five short essays some of the things he has learned since entering upon his new sphere of life. The themes chosen are many and varied. He talks of the practical difficulties of mediumship, the frequent failure of prophecies, the action of psychic fluids, ectoplasm and materialisation—to quote only a few of the subjects chosen by the spirit dictator. (The messages were received, we are told, by "mediumistic dictation".) Much of what he tells us is in harmony with similar communications from other spirit sources, although this communicator (we are informed it is Madame Max-Getting's husband) takes an independent line when dealing with certain aspects of life and philosophy. He stresses the importance of a general recognition of survival of mankind and considers that modern science will eventually bring about this recognition. There are many portions of this book which I should like to quote, if space permitted, but I will confine myself to a few brief lines on a subject which interests and puzzles the inexperienced psychic student—prophecies that fail to materialise. Says the communicator:

Predictions rarely take place at the date indicated by us. The prediction is made at the precise moment when we have a vision of what will be, but we are often unable to perceive that there are fluids interposing between this image (which is a true realisation of the prophecy) and ourselves. These errors which we commit can be put down to fluids which are due to a super-imposition of vibrations.

One gathers that these fluids mask the real vision, causing a false or distorted picture. But there is another source of failure, points out the communicator. Often a sitter will involuntarily influence the medium, causing him to say things which appear to emanate from the spirit side but which really come from the emanation of the circle. "These are fluids contained within you, without your knowledge; they interpose between your emanations and those of the medium. . . . If one could make the emanations luminous, one would be able to make impressive and unexpected discoveries regarding the radiations given off by every individual; then many persons would be thoroughly convinced of truths which they now ignore."
W. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. J. WOOD (Weston-super-Mare).—Your explanation of the Witch of Endor story is certainly ingenious, but in view of the fact that one authority says that Hebrew scholars look upon the tale as simply in the nature of a satiric parable, and not an account of an actual occurrence, it does not seem a case which one could profitably analyse.

D. STEPHENS.—Thank you for the story of your Swiss experience, but it has not sufficient evidential value to make it suitable for publication.

E. R. NEVILLE.—We have your letter. Such communications as have been received indicate that the "evil forces" of which you speak will not triumph in the long run but will simply serve the uses of all obstruction and opposition, that is to say, give strength and impetus to the forces of progress.

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VOL. VIII. No. 2. July, 1929

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Camberwell.—The Central Hall, High Street.—August 4th, 11, Service; 6.30, Mr. Lowe. Wednesday, 7.30, Public Meeting at 55, Station Road.

Richmond Spiritualist Church, Ormond Road.—August 4th, 7, Mr. Ella, trance address. August 7, 7.30, Mrs. G. Cooke, address and clairvoyance.

Croydon.—The New Gallery, Katharine Street.—August 4th, 6.30, Mr. Edmund Spencer, address and clairvoyance.

Cricklewood.—Ashford Hall, 41, Ashford Road.—August 4th, 6.30, Miss Maddison. August 7th, 3 and 8, Miss Eva Clark.

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Members are kindly asked to note that the premises of the Alliance will be closed from Friday, August 2nd, until Wednesday morning, August 7th, and for the **SECOND** and **THIRD** weeks of August (from the night of Friday, August 9th, to the morning of Monday, August 26th), and that during those periods no books can be exchanged.

DEFENCE FUND.

The Council have much pleasure in announcing that the whole of the costs of the Police Prosecution have been subscribed, and that therefore the Defence Fund is now closed.

At the same time the Council desire to express their sincere gratitude to all those friends who have shown their sympathy in such a practical manner.

CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP:

Membership of the Alliance is offered to all. It should be clearly understood by the enquirer that membership does not commit a member to any special belief. It commits one to nothing but the intention to use the facilities offered for the purpose of studying the subject.

THE VALUE OF READING:

The Alliance strongly advises the enquirer first to undertake a preparatory course of reading, even if it be comparatively short. There are several reasons for this. Communication between the two worlds may be a simple fact in Nature, and probably operates naturally and frequently without conscious awareness on our part. Those communications of which we are intellectually and emotionally aware, depend upon the exercise of the psychic faculties, which are by no means simple. We know comparatively little about them. They are associated with certain mental and physical peculiarities requiring much study.

RELATIONSHIP OF SITTER AND MEDIUM:

It will readily be seen that the enquirer who becomes familiar to some extent with the nature and scope of mediumship is better able to appraise the results of a sitting than one who comes with preconceived notions, all of which may be influenced by mistaken ideas. The experimenter needs to be capable of sympathetic and intelligent response to what may be given him. He must use common-sense in this, as in all things; he must be content to accept and examine carefully in the light of his reason whatever is given to him. He will court failure if he demands particular

results. It should be remembered that in every psychic experiment the initiative and constructive work is from the spirit world. The medium is in effect a passive recording instrument and the sitter an observer. The sitter should also endeavour to be passive and sympathetic, merely recording all impressions and statements. The critical analysis should be made after, not during a seance.

The extreme delicacy of the psychic states should never be overlooked. The mediumistic gift is subject to constant variations in power and sensitivity. A variety of factors go to make either good or bad conditions. The gift itself varies in power. The psychic state of a medium may harmonise with the psychic state of a sitter, or it may not. The experiment is influenced not only by the state of mind of the sitter at the time of the experiment, but by his general mental condition and character. As in ordinary human Society, some people mix with their fellows more easily than others, so in psychic experiments some combinations are favourable and others unfavourable. Every sitting is thus in the nature of an experiment. The sincere enquirer with an open mind, will receive experiences of a supernormal nature, and usually, when he has the co-operation of an interested spirit friend, he will sooner or later obtain evidence of the identity of his friend.

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