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Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

Edited by **DAVID GOW**

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Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research

"Light! More Light!"—Goethe

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

No. 2557. VOL. L.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

SCIENCE AND SENSATIONALISM.

Some five years ago on this page, referring to newspaper attacks on specimens of psychic photography which had been submitted to the attention of the Press, we wrote:—

So long as there are Spiritualists who submit their phenomenal results to the judgment of uninstructed, biased and sometimes unscrupulous persons, so long apparently shall we have to endure the kind of criticism of which Spiritualism has so long been the victim.

It seems appropriate to repeat that opinion, for still we see the disposition to seek publicity for things still in their raw stages, unfinished, only "half made up", and not even properly understood by those who put them forward. "Boosting", "booming" and "publicity-stunt" hunting have nothing in common with serious scientific work. Very fortunately for us there are competent scientists engaged in psychic research work, quietly and unobtrusively. And there are serious Spiritualists who carry on investigations and gain results which would create a Press sensation if they were known. But they will not be known until the time is ripe. "Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip!" is a sentence from Tennyson that often comes into our minds when we contemplate the babblers who cannot wait until their facts are mature.

THE CRAFT OF THE CONJURER.

Mr. Will Goldston, the founder of the Magicians' Club, and one of the leading lights in the conjuring profession, tells us that Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, "the Grand Old Man of Conjuring", was a believer in Spiritualism. But to be a believer in Spiritualism (or in some aspects of it) and to be a Spiritualist are not quite the same thing. We have known those who having had proof of the reality of Spiritualism have yet continued to attack the subject in their professional capacity as journalists or conjurers, finding that attacks paid better—financially at least. That cannot be said of Mr. Goldston who has never hesitated to avow his belief. Not long ago, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, writing in a daily paper, remarked that all over England there are hundreds of "home

circles" where people prove human survival for themselves; and he added: "they never ask a conjurer to call in to certify they are sane. Conjurers know nothing about the matter. They have no more to do with it than plumbers." Quite so; but they have always been clever enough to gull the public into supposing that they had. Our memory of Spiritualism cannot go back to a time when the conjurer was not busy "exposing" mediumship. But then we have rarely heard of a conjurer who "took up" the subject unless it was for the sole purpose of advertising himself and his performance. They are an astute fraternity, the conjurers. They originally claimed to expose mediumship generally. Nowadays they are careful to make it a question of exposing only fraudulent Mediums. It is a safer policy—there are so many believers in Spiritualism nowadays. But where are all these fraudulent Mediums who are "exposed" by the conjurer? We think they belong to that region of "illusion" in which the conjurer specialises!

AN AID TO RELIGION.

More than once has Hannen Swaffer—always the alert journalist—called attention to the pamphlet by the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, in which is given a summary of the results collected by the Society for Psychical Research, as providing the "missing link" in the chain of evidence for a life after death. We have seen in the writings of those who provide the current literature of the religious world, other significant tokens of the fact that sheer necessity, nowadays, drives them to take account of the facts of Spiritualism and Psychical Research. Very timid are some of those allusions. Sir Oliver Lodge is often quoted as a great and revered authority. And quite naturally. But there is often a little timorous, almost whimpering, complaint about the "dangers" of psychic research, and frequent reference to "fraud". The religious mind is not always a robust mind. It appears to be very much in dread of some discovery that may shake its faith, which rather suggests that its faith is in need of buttressing by knowledge. But we should say that the truly religious mind, which is confident of the Divine direction of the Universe, will not be in the least fearful of new discoveries and developments. It will realise that a Supreme Intelligence can make no mistakes and will provide in the end complete vindication of itself. There is a future life, and in that life many things, that at present perplex the tired pilgrim, will be made finally clear.

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PSYCHIC RESEARCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY THE LATE DR. ELLIS T. POWELL.

[We have sometimes been asked to reprint some of the articles contributed to *LIGHT* by the late Dr. Ellis T. Powell, who was not only a fine journalist but a man of great scholarship. On several occasions he wrote and spoke on the miraculous element in the New Testament in the light of Psychical Research and with special reference to the true meanings of the Greek text—not always accurately rendered in the English translations. He was no mere arm-chair critic but a man actively and prominently engaged in practical affairs. He held the degrees of D. Sc. (Lond.) and LL.B. (Lond.), was a barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple and an authority on financial questions, in connection with which he produced an important work entitled *The Evolution of the Money Market*, being a history of the Money Market from the earliest days. Until a short time before his death Dr. Ellis Powell was editor-in-chief of one of the most important financial newspapers in the world, the London *Financial News*.

Just now when Modernism is endeavouring to explain away or ignore the New Testament miracles as being supernatural, it seems appropriate to reprint an article by Dr. Powell based on some of his addresses recorded in *LIGHT* and published by him in pamphlet form. This we are enabled to do by kind permission of Mrs. Ellis T. Powell.]

Nowadays psychic science and its achievements are universal topics of discussion. It is almost impossible to find a person who is not interested in the alleged possibility of communication with the departed. One of the main difficulties is the "honest doubt" of Christian people. Confronting the still more ample extension of knowledge, they hesitate, however, about investigating, or accepting accounts of psychic manifestations because they fancy these things are forbidden by Divine Law.

Some of those who believe that the phenomena take place, are convinced that Satan himself is the real operator behind the scenes. Of course, the answer may be given that none of the secrets of Nature are barred to man, if he can manage to unravel them. The very fact that he *can* do so is the best demonstration that the Creator has no objection to it. To the suggestion of Satanic agency surely the obvious reply is that if there be such a personality as Satan, his interests are not advanced by persuading men that the human spirit survives bodily death. His propaganda has most to gain by leaving them in the despair or apathy engendered by the contrary belief. But perhaps the best of all methods of dissipating the hesitations of Christian people is to investigate briefly some of the phenomena recorded in the New Testament, in order to ascertain to what extent, if at all, they conform to the known laws of psychic science, so far as modern investigators have been able to discover them. No question of criticism, "higher" or otherwise, confronts us in such an inquiry. That the records presented to us in the New Testament come from a very early period in the Christian era no critic has ventured to deny. Critical assault upon them is concerned only with the attribution of the various books to the individual authors whose name they bear, or with the possible interpolation of passages here and there, inserted (so it may be said) by some daring copyist to support his own theological opinions. Our scrutiny has a totally different tendency and purpose. We are con-

tent to take the records as they reach us, as brief stories of alleged psychic episodes which were accepted, and passed current as genuine, among the men and women who trod the pathway of this mortal life nearly nineteen hundred years ago. We desire to ask whether these experiences correspond to ours. If the records purport to tell us of the return of the dead, we desire to know if the phenomena there described are such as in any degree resemble those which in our day are witnessed under circumstances which we believe to be the same, as regards the apparent presence of the departed.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

When we come to the selection of the episodes (and the corresponding passages of the record) for examination, our procedure is fairly defined. The Transfiguration may well occupy us as an introduction to the subject, basing the analysis of the phenomena as closely as is practicable upon the Greek rather than the English text. At the outset we find that the disciples are taken up into a high mountain, a place apart. This was an obvious necessity for the success of the great experiment (for so, with all reverence, I venture to call it) which was to be tried. Stillness and the absence of interruption were peremptory requirements. Yet surely, if this record were the fiction of a romancer, anxious only to glorify the subject of his story, he would have been far more likely to say that this great manifestation took place before a wondering multitude, than on a solitary mountain side. St. Luke alone adds that Jesus went up into the mountain "to pray." It was His habit to pray at night (see Luke vi. 12; Matt. xiv. 23—5). Although none of the Evangelists states that the Transfiguration took place at that time, we should expect that it would, for the reason that night would be most favourable (if, indeed, it were not almost essential) for the manifestation which was to take place. In confirmation of this hypothesis, we have the words of Luke (ix. 37) in allusion to events "on the next day when they were come down from the mountain." The fact that the disciples were "heavy with sleep" is adduced by commentators as a further confirmation of the idea that the Transfiguration took place at night. But I shall give some reasons for attributing their drowsiness to another cause.

The narrative of the actual manifestation opens in St. Luke with the fact that "as he was praying" the fashion of his countenance was altered—literally, in St. Luke's words, became other (*ἕτερον* = heteron) than it had been. We have the root "heteros" in English in such words as heterodox, i.e., holding *another* opinion than the correct one. St. Luke's expression, "other than it had been," is a curious one, which cannot be exactly paralleled, I believe, elsewhere in the New Testament. There is a near approach to it in the brief account given by the author of the appendix to St. Mark's Gospel (Mark xvi. 12, 13), when he says that Christ showed himself in another shape (*ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ*) to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. The language of St. Luke suggests to me that there was a different expression ready to his mind, which, for reasons of his own, he was anxious to avoid employing. Therefore he used this almost unique circumlocution to prevent a misunderstanding, and to make his meaning perfectly clear. If we turn to this point

of the narrative in St. Matthew and St. Mark, our surmise will be confirmed, and we shall see another reason for assuming the psychic origin and accuracy of the story. The other two historians state that the countenance of Christ was "metamorphosed" (*μετεμορφωθη* = *metemorphothe*) before them. The word was clear and unmistakable in its significance so far as the minds of the Jewish readers were concerned, and it was for them chiefly, as we know, that St. Matthew and St. Mark wrote. But St. Luke, writing for a wider circle of Greek readers, must have been reminded that to them the word "metamorphosis" would suggest those fabulous transformations of human beings into beasts, stones, trees, fire and water, which figured so largely in their mythology. He decided to avoid an expression so misleading, and he does it by the means of the unusual phrase which has been quoted. The Greek verb which he employs means a change in the abiding form, a change in the manner of existence. A mere alteration in external appearance is described by quite another Greek verb which is used, for example, by St. Paul when he speaks (2 Cor. xi. 14) of Satan "transformed" into an angel of light. Here he is referring only to an apparent change, and obviously not to an essential one, such as the word "metamorphosis" would have implied. Looking at the records in this way, with a minute analysis of the forms of expression, I take them to mean that the human characteristics of the countenance of Christ ceased to be manifest, and the spiritual took their place.

The immediate results of this Transfiguration were, according to the narrative before us, to alter the aspect of Jesus. His face shone as the sun, and his garments became dazzling with the glow of a white light. They were exceeding white, says St. Mark, with one of those vivid touches for which he is famous (probably taken directly from the lips of St. Peter, himself a witness of the scene), "so as no fuller on earth can white them." The whiteness stands in need of no explanation to those acquainted with the phenomenon of materialisation.¹ It is the precise characteristic which we should expect to be present. It is the most striking feature of the materialisation seances, that the spirit personalities are able to clothe their materialised forms in a flowing texture of shining white, which they seem able to produce at will in almost any quantity they please. But the alleged dazzling whiteness of garments is a fact which, so far as I know, has hitherto lacked adequate attention on the part of the apologists for Christianity. It is an extraordinary thing that the writers of this Transfiguration story, who are alleged by hostile critics to have been drawing on their imagination, should have described the phenomena as being precisely what modern scientific investigation has shown them to be. If this was guesswork, it is the most wonderful of its kind; so wonderful that I find it easier to believe that the Transfiguration took place, than that a mere romancist drew from his inner consciousness a description, demonstrably accurate in every detail, of something foreign to his experience and to contemporary actuality. A curious feature, worthy of allusion as we pass, is the fact that in some of the best MSS. the Greek verb "became" (referring to the garments) is in the plural, as if to bring into prominence the idea that all the separate items of the garments glowed white against the midnight sky.

(To be continued.)

¹ Materialisation is the process by which the spirit personalities clothe themselves in some plastic material, drawn from the medium, so as to render themselves visible to the eye and palpable to the touch (where permitted) for a few moments. Most advanced psychic students have witnessed materialisation. I have seen it hundreds of times, under circumstances which precluded all possibility of fraud.

"THE QUEST" ON PROFESSOR RICHEL.

The Quest for the current quarter maintains its high quality, and there are a number of articles which show not only a fine level of thinking but a marked progressive tendency. The intellectual vigour which characterises our contemporary is especially shown in a notice of Professor Richet's latest book *Our Sixth Sense* of which the editor, Mr. G. R. S. Mead writes:—

We really might have expected that after fifty years of study so able a mind as that of Professor Richet would have something more to tell us. Nowadays, in the present well-nigh hectic speeding up of scientific theorizing, it is by no means the sign of a live mind to keep on reiterating, as does the Professor, "*hypotheses non fingo*"; it is rather an indication of regression to the "scientific" fetishism of half-a-century ago, and of a timidity that shrinks from wetting its feet in the sea that washes the dry sands of the physiological strand. I take it, however, that this exposition of the subject, though so antiquated, will serve a purpose *vis à vis* the academically-sceptical, who still refuse to investigate. There is an abundance of cases with which to ram this elementary thesis home into the crania of the "tough-minded"—some of us would say to bore it into the skulls of the fossilized—but these are for the most part already well-known.

Elsewhere in the notice, the reviewer remarks that cryptesthetic metagnomia "sounds like a railway accident and is no decent naming of one of the extended simplicities of human awareness," and he rather laments the fact that the Professor will give the "rationalistic materialist in general the excuse of quoting him as an authority of fifty years of experience, who still declares the spirit hypothesis, the survival of bodily death, and all that leads in that direction, unproven, and the phenomena sufficiently 'explained' by the Mesopotamian vocable he is so proud of fathering."

BRITISH COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

On Wednesday, 11th ulto, Sir Frank Benson gave an address on "Shakespeare as a Psychic". In the course of his remarks he said that many of the world's greatest poets and teachers had based their philosophy of life on the belief in survival, and Spiritualists were, by their investigations, setting milestones and torchlights to guide humanity on its way. He considered the Bible and Shakespeare as the most valuable text books on psychic happenings. The lecturer said that from the days of W. T. Stead he had taken a practical interest in psychic evidences, and gave his first experience of materialisation phenomena, when in the presence of many, he took a clearly-recognised relative by the hand, walked with her to another part of the room, exchanged a brief conversation and saw her melt into invisibility. The words addressed by Hamlet, to his father's ghost, showed that Shakespeare knew something of the conditions of a materialisation.

Sir Frank dwelt on the egotism of Macbeth which laid him open to evil influences. "The Tempest" he considered, showed Shakespeare's appreciation of intelligent forces in relation to the powers of Nature. A study of other Shakespearian plays would show other aspects of psychic power given with true understanding only possible to one who was himself a sensitive. The lecturer delighted his audience with some fine recitals from apposite passages in the Plays.

Mrs. Champion de Crespigny presided and led the interesting discussion which followed the address.

A DEAD SON WATCHES HIS PARENTS.

[Mr. Dafydd Thomas, Barrister-at-Law, contributes the following brief report of a communication from a dead soldier to his parents. It is typical of many thousands of cases in which messages of apparently trifling import, and of slight scientific value, nevertheless prove to be of deep significance to those in the home circle.]

At a sitting which I recently had with Mrs. Estelle Roberts, among the various spirit visitors there came one Walter Needham. This is the name of a godson of my late wife; he was an air pilot, killed in the War. Walter's parents are known to me, but as they live in the country I see them rarely and seldom have any communication with them.

I gave Walter the usual greetings, whereupon he conveyed this message: "Tell mother I am going to be with her for Christmas. . . . Father was sitting at home the other evening; he was writing a letter and appeared to be a little anxious about that letter. Will you tell him Walter advises him to go through with it—not to be anxious about it."

Then came a message which he desired me to give to his mother. He had "got from her mind" something about a hat. She had had a hat in her hand, he said, and was brushing the side of it. Walter, who was standing directly in her aura, watching his mother, saw her a little later take out from a drawer a "blue something"; this blue article had something to do with dress; he saw his mother fold it and put it back in the drawer again.

That, in brief, was Walter's message to me. I wrote to his mother giving these particulars, and I quote from the letter she sent me in reply:—

He was quite right about the hat. I took it out of the wardrobe, one morning last week, and put an ornament in it instead of a feather mount already there, and feel sure I just brushed the side of the hat where the feather had been. The blue article, he mentioned, was a large royal blue scarf, and I put it on and was wondering what to do with it; so that is what, no doubt, he refers to. . . .

The letter that Walter spoke about was also quite right. Edgar has been bothered about it and it is not settled yet.

THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC.

BY HILDA ROGERS JAMES.

Music, if it is real, is something more than mere material vibration. It may convey a message as clearly and intelligibly as written or spoken words. And perhaps even *more* clearly to certain natures, and in certain moods or states.

Especially is this so in grief or in sickness—when there is not the heart to react, the strength to think clearly, or the hope to see any light shining beyond the gloom and darkness of tiredness and despair. But the music must be *real*—not a mere series of notes without a meaning, like a string of words without faith, hope, or intelligence behind them. And the Medium through which it comes—the interpreter or transmitter—*must* be able to lose self and become receptive. For the spirit of music is as little a part of oneself as the air or sun. There must be *sympathy*—the capacity for feeling and understanding the message—but there must, above all, be the power of becoming passive.

Everyone who reverences the music of the Old Masters will know that to be hampered by the effort to play "correctly" is fatal to the interpretation of its very real message. And that forcing the intellect to be active must interfere with the passive mental attitude.

Where there is good technique (which has become so absolutely mechanical that it can be forgotten) *and* the spiritual perception, it must mean relative perfection. But even if there is not perfect technique, playing may be intuitive and unconscious and the means of passing on to others the message of the composer.

And I believe the reason that real music appeals so forcibly to sensitive people is because the message answers some need of the spirit—it brings nearer and makes more real the great eternal truths—truths which are apt to be suppressed by the "facts" and "reasonings" of the world. It seems to me all of us have a knowledge of these truths—unconscious, sometimes, in the unawakened, but nevertheless a knowledge that is a real part of our being.

I often think of Beethoven's own words: "And those who understand the message will be freed from much of the misery which others drag about with them."

He also said: "I have even been near to God, and have fearlessly communed with Him."

Beethoven realised to the uttermost the agonising sorrows and mysteries which face the whole of humanity, and yet at the same time had the most wonderful belief in (and perhaps *knowledge* of) the reality of the spiritual, the survival of consciousness, and the ultimate happiness of all beings, "some time—somewhere".

"SUCH HARMONY IS IN IMMORTAL SOULS."

From *A Discourse on Dreams*, by Synesius, the Platonist, with a Preface and Paraphrase by Mr. Alex. C. Ionides Junr. (printed for private circulation), we are permitted to quote the following example of Ancient Greek wisdom:—

For one part binds another with a spell even as it manifests itself, and wise is he who knows the relationships of the parts of the world. For one is attracted by another, having before him pledges of what for the most part are absent—voices, materials, and shapes. In the same way that we inwardly feel sympathy with another, so the pain of a wounded toe may be felt in the groin, while nothing in between suffers; yet both are parts of one living thing, though there is much in each that differs from the other. And so, according to the same law, a stone or herb belongs to some god in this world, who yields to it by nature and is spell-bound. So, too, when the lowest string on the lute is struck it makes not the next one to it, the sesquioctavus, but the third and the fifth vibrate. This is an example of a prior-begotten concord. There is discord as well as harmony between parts. The world is not simply one, but is a one consisting of many. And there are parts in the parts—some agree and some jar, and their differences harmonise in the oneness of the whole, just as the harmony of a lute is a system of discordant and harmonious sounds. Oneness is a harmony of opposites, both in the world and the lute.

The idea expressed by Leibnitz as *The Pre-established harmony* glows in the thought of Browning when in *Abt Vogler* he says of music:—

"But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
 Existent behind all laws that made them, and lo,
 they are!
 And I know not if, save this, such gift be allowed
 to man,
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth
 sound, but a star."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

A MEDIUM AND A BIOGRAPHY.

Sir,—I should like to call the attention of your readers to a very readable and instructive biography of a famous Medium, Mrs. Piper, written by her elder daughter, and recently published by Kegan Paul. Her powers reached a maximum at the junction of the 19th and 20th centuries and are now on the wane, but in this volume we are enabled to learn something of their incipient stages, and the gradual rise to unobtrusive fame of so special a benefactor to humanity.

Despite the difficulties under which true Mediums still carry on their beneficent work, we have recently been reminded what far greater difficulties they had to overcome, and with what hostile superstition they were regarded, a century and a half ago. A sympathetic and admirable representation of what endowment with psychic faculties might mean, in those not far distant but terribly ignorant times, was broadcast by Miss Rebecca West on the 11th December, and is reproduced in *The Listener* for the 18th December, 1929. I hope that those who have attained some knowledge of the subject will read this article even if they already heard it on the loud-speaker.—Yours, etc.,

OLIVER LODGE.

A POEM AND A MESSAGE.

Sir,—Having recently lost my wife—a parting which can only be realized by those on earth who have been “tuned in” with each other in perfect physical and spiritual union—a poem composed by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, entitled “That Day”, frequently comes to my memory.

It will be remembered that the second verse of this poem reads:—

“Some day, some day, or you, or I, alone,
Must look upon the scenes we two have known,
Must tread the self-same paths we two have trod,
And cry in vain to one who is with God
To lean down from the Silent Realms and say:
‘I love you’ in the old familiar way.”

To seek her who had been so much to me in life became a definite purpose and after a lapse of two months, which time I considered should be allowed to associate her with her new surroundings, I decided to endeavour to establish communication.

This was accomplished by the co-operation of a Medium of high repute and intense sincerity—to whom I told nothing of my desires other than that I wished to communicate with any friends on the other side who desired so to do with me.

Relations who had passed over earlier in my life were quickly and accurately described and then my wife made herself known, expressing joy at my communicating with her.

She undisputedly established herself—revealing to me how thin is the veil between us—by saying that since she had passed over she had seen me take a photograph of herself from a book and place it in a frame on the mantelpiece of my room. The photograph in question is a small snap-shot and the room one in a house which she has never visited in life. As no person on earth, other than myself, was aware of my action, what interpretation can be put on it than that the smallest acts of love performed on this earth towards those passed over are visible to the loved one on the other side?

Spiritual union between us was deemed to be

complete when the Medium described her as “now leaning towards you and saying: ‘I love you’.”

Re-reading Miss Wilcox’s poem I have, in the light of this knowledge, ventured in my copy of her book to make the following alterations in italics in the fourth and fifth lines.

The poem then becomes, to me, pregnant with understanding though the earthly loss remains the same.

“Some day, some day, or you, or I, alone,
Must look upon the scenes we two have known,
Must tread the self-same paths we two have trod,
*And tune our ears with one who is with God,
Yet lean down from the Silent Realms to say:
‘I love you’ in the old familiar way.”*

—Yours, etc.,

G. D. FARWELL.

Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

CLAIRVOYANCE: SOME EXAMPLES.

Sir,—A few months ago I called on a friend and when I entered her narrow hall I saw her daughter in a red dress and hat standing there. I greeted her and shook hands and then entered the drawing-room, into which she did not follow me.

My hostess took me into the garden for tea, and in a short time her daughter came in and held out her hand and said: “How d’ye do!” For the second time I answered, surprised, but all three were astounded when she assured me she had never left her room until that moment and did not know I was the caller! She still wore her red dress and hat as she did in the hall.

Last August, lying awake in Llandrindod, I “sent” myself into my London home and “stood” by my maid’s bed. On my return, ten days later, I asked her had she seen me, which she had done (also my dog), but she said I was dressed in a gown I scarcely ever wear. As a rule the “thought clothes” of the “astral” body are either a favourite garb or those I am actually wearing at the time.—Yours, etc.,

PAX.

“THE MAGIC OF COINCIDENCE.”

Sir,—Your reference, in the leading article of *LIGHT*, for December 14th, to the lady novelist’s experience has reminded me of a similar case. Some years ago a writer of fiction, whose name has escaped me, told me that he once met Marion Crawford abroad. They were strangers to each other but became “chummy” and agreed to go together to Venice for some weeks as they were both writing books. One point on which they agreed was that in their spare time they would never mention literary matters, and neither had the least idea what the subject of the other’s book was.

Shortly after they had separated, Crawford’s book came out and to the horror of my informant its title, “The Witch of Prague”, showed that the main theme was the same as his. I do not think he had intended to use the same title, but his own book was about a witch at Prague, and he found the scheme of Crawford’s book so like his own that he has never been able to make use of it—he being a comparatively unknown author and Crawford at the height of his fame.

The interest in both these cases of “coincidence” is how far they were not coincidence at all but were caused by psychic influences—psychometry in the case of the lady you mention and telepathy in that of the others.—Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR M. HEATHCOTE.

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LIGHT.

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THE PROBLEM OF PRE-EXISTENCE.

Sir Oliver Lodge has several times pointed out that the term "physical" implies something more than matter. He has done so again in his last book *Phantom Walls*, recently reviewed in these pages, where he says, "Matter is physical, but the ether is physical too." Many physical things, in short, are not material, and these include magnetism, light and electricity. And the lesson is enforced by the consideration that matter itself is of comparatively rare occurrence in the unimaginable vastness of space.

There is something stupendous and revolutionary in this latest message of Science through some of its foremost teachers. We get a new set of values, bearing suggestively on some of our difficulties, for, with matter thus pushed into the background as something of minor importance, the way is cleared for a better understanding of life in its deeper aspects.

We have frequently occasion to deal with that much-disputed subject, re-incarnation, generally understood (no doubt erroneously) as the return of a departed person to the life of the body. In the sixth chapter of his book Sir Oliver Lodge touches on the problem from the standpoint of the question of pre-existence, with which re-incarnation is often confused. On this subject he remarks, in effect, that as the physical body is only a temporary instrument, then it would appear that we must have had some kind of existence before we came into the material world. But in this regard we have to discriminate between life and *individual* life. The question of personality comes in, and that stage of personality carrying self-consciousness could not conceivably be reached until our life came into relation with matter. To quote from the book:—

My view then is that this individual self did not pre-exist, but has formed its character while in association with matter during this present epoch, this particular episode of earth life.

But Sir Oliver Lodge adds his opinion that this individual self at death rejoins its "larger self", that which represents its "pristine permanent reality"

carrying with it the character and attributes it has gathered during its earth existence.

This leaves a considerable margin for speculation as to the nature of this "larger self". It is a field in which one may easily be in "wandering mazes lost", to say nothing of being involved in disputes with various schools of differing opinions, as for example, those who hold that they have "lived before" and who claim to carry memories of their past lives on earth; and those whose view is that each new birth represents a "shoot" or a "ray" from some "larger self" which enfolds the memories of all those who, having descended from that primal source to earth, return to the spiritual realm after their brief stay in matter, not necessarily absorbed in it to the exclusion of their claim to be an independent existence but still forming a part of the larger consciousness represented by this central self. It seems to be but one step from Science to Mysticism, and perhaps it is the function of Science to be the interpreter of the mysteries of Religion and Occultism.

Lately we were introduced to another doctrine of the re-incarnation type which curiously enough is hinted at in the poetry of F. W. H. Myers. It is a theory of linked lives and a kind of spiritual heredity. Each of us is born as one of a group of spirits connected by a special affinity—we belong to some particular spiritual family or class. It seems to work out in this way: Here, for instance, you have a poet or an artist who shows a curious likeness in his mind and work to the ancient Greek tradition. He may even suppose himself to have memories of Ancient Greece, and in this appear to be strangely justified. But—so the doctrine teaches—he never in any actual way has lived on earth before, either in Old Greece or elsewhere. He is really the descendant of a line of forerunners from whom he is spiritually although not physically descended. He is closely allied with them in thought and sympathy—there is between all of them a community of consciousness and memory. He is a part of the "spirit" represented by that group, and expresses it on earth. Shelley and Keats may be cited as possible illustrations of the idea.

We admit it is dim and vague—this idea. But it has the merit of explaining things that would otherwise be inexplicable—it has some points of useful suggestion even though it is open to the charge that it seeks to explain one mystery by means of another!

THE DIM FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL.

The Rev. Frederick Edwards sends us his last volume of poetry, *The Natural Year* (Broder, New York City). He is well known in American Psychical Research and was formerly Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Detroit, Michigan. We have in the past printed some of his poems in LIGHT, and we take the following sonnet from his present volume. It expresses a deep thought in connection with that foreknowledge which is gradually making its presence felt in the human mind:—

PRESCIENCE.

As unseen vapours rising from the sea,
On hidden currents floating in suspense,
Inland on distant mountain peaks condense;
Unmarked impressions pass continually
Into the border realms we hold in fee,
And following secret paths for years, from thence
Return at last with all their affluence
To flood our thoughts with sudden clarity.
Moving for ever through the dark abyss
Of time, the man will never overtake
The prescience of his future from his past;
And consciousness, held to the bond of this,
Within the orbit that it cannot break,
Goes on to meet the man from first to last.

SIDELIGHTS.

"It is not for us any longer to prove scientifically the existence of 'ghosts'. It is for others to disprove it scientifically," remarks Mr. Shaw Desmond in the *Evening Standard*, of December 16th, in the course of an article, "Why I believe in Ghosts".

* * * * *

The mediumistic powers of Eric Hanussen are being keenly debated in the Criminal Court of Leitmeritz, Czechoslovakia, where he is charged with fraud. University professors and psychic experts are being called to testify to the genuineness of the accused man's supernatural gifts. Hanussen claims that the Criminal Court of Cassel (Germany) made use of his services as a Medium, and detectives have testified that when they engaged him his feats were "marvellous". Some of the witnesses who suggested fraud withdrew their charges when called upon to give evidence; others firmly maintain that they were deceived. The *Daily Telegraph* (December 24th) in a report of this case states that the accused man charged exorbitant fees for private seances to individuals, which resulted in thirty-four accusations of fraud being brought against him.

* * * * *

Writing to the *Evening Standard*, of December 24th, Mr. Guy Kendall, Headmaster of University College School, relates an experience which may, he says, have been due to the apparition of a dying man. Mr. Kendall and his wife were waiting on No 1 platform at Paddington Station one Friday afternoon at four o'clock; on the platform Mr. Kendall noticed a professor whom he knew, and he pointed this gentleman out to Mrs. Kendall. Says the writer: "Next morning I read in the paper that the professor had died on the previous day at a house near Reading. On Monday *The Times* contained a portrait of him; and my wife, when she saw it, remarked: 'Of course, that is the man we saw at the station.' Shortly afterwards I wrote to a relative of the professor to condole, and related how I had seen him at Paddington that same day. She replied that it was quite impossible for him to have been in London at all. He had been lying ill at the Berkshire house for some six weeks, gradually growing weaker, till he died at 9 p.m. on the Friday night."

* * * * *

Writing on "Spiritualism Among Savages", in the *Glasgow News*, of December 18th, Mr. Lewis Spence says: "An Indian ex-medicine man, the late Henry Brant-Sero, assured the writer that there was practically no basic difference between the seance as carried out among his people and by spiritualistic circles in New York and elsewhere, at which he had been present. The Indian method, he stated, was to erect a conical lodge of stout poles, firmly fixed in the ground, and covered with skins. This was entered by the Medium, who closed the opening behind him, and sat on the ground, inducing a state of trance. Soon the lodge rocked, the poles shook and bent as with the united force of a dozen men, and weird unearthly sounds were heard proceeding from it by the terrified watchers outside. At length, the Medium asked for questions from those without. Mr. Brant-Sero said that he recollected absolutely nothing of what occurred after going into trance, and that his knowledge of the circumstances was gained from those who stood outside the tepee."

"I took up the study with the avowed intention of proving Spiritualism a fraud, for I was badly saturated with the conjurer's anti-Spiritualism complex. Most magicians become obsessed with the idea that mysterious effects can only be produced by trickery. I determined to prove that spirit Mediums were nothing but a collection of unscrupulous swindlers, preying on the better feelings of the public. Within six months I was an ardent Spiritualist." Thus writes Mr. Will Goldston, the well-known authority on conjuring, in *Ideas* (December 28th).

* * * * *

Writing on "The Psychology of the Supernatural" in *The Listener*, for December 18th, Dr. C. D. Broad remarks that it would be rash to assume that there can be no supernatural beings, or that they cannot influence certain human minds. "The universe," he continues, "may well consist of many mansions, each highly self-contained and connected with the rest only at a few places and times. It is possible that we may appear from time to time as supernatural beings to those beings who appear from time to time as supernatural to us. If ghosts astonish us by occasionally haunting houses, we may equally astonish them by occasionally haunting theirs. And each party may be equally unconscious of the perturbation which it is causing in the other."

* * * * *

The Berlin courts of justice have tacitly acknowledged the existence of ghosts, and "the right of tenants to possess them", remarks the *Daily News*, of December 16th, in a report of the conclusion of the Regulski Case. Little Lucy Regulski, a twelve-year-old daughter of a married couple, living in a Berlin flat, was the centre of certain strange phenomena—moving chairs, loud raps and thumps, flying ornaments, etc. Five medical men made a close scrutiny of the manifestations and could detect no evidence of fraud. Lucy insisted that her dead uncle, Hans, was responsible. The affair caused much local excitement, and the landlord, Herr Ritter, endeavoured to evict the Regulski family, claiming that the doctors' report, which had been published in a medical journal, was likely to damage the reputation of his property. Evidence was given by a priest that the Regulski family believed the phenomena to be genuine manifestations from another world, and this testimony was accepted by the judge as proof that the family had not attempted to disturb their neighbours or landlord, "and that, being innocent of any attempt to produce a ghost, they had the right to occupy any dwelling where they themselves believed spirits to manifest."

A SIGNIFICANT DREAM.

Mr. H. E. Hunt writes:—

On the night of December 16th last I was sleeping at the "Flying Horse", Nottingham, and awaking from a vivid dream noted the time as 3 o'clock. In my dream there was a Boy Scout in a camp, doubled up with pain, and he shouted out just the one word "brandy". We hurried here and there but were unable to procure any.

At 4.45 a.m. the night porter came to wake me and to bring me a cup of tea as I had to make an early start, and he made the casual remark: "Two of the staff were taken bad in the night and came down at 3 o'clock for brandy, but all the brandy was locked up, so I could only give them gin."

The time and the brandy together probably suggest more than coincidence.

YOUR NEWSAGENT CAN SUPPLY "LIGHT" WEEKLY

THE TRAIL OF THE PATHFINDERS.

By V. MAY COTTRELL (Napier, New Zealand).

(From *The Zonia Scripts*.)

Life's greatest mystery is life itself. Not in a materialistic conception of our physical existence, but through the ever-increasing spiritual awareness of mankind, is the clue to this mystery of mysteries to be found.

Life assumes widely differing aspects according to the point of view of the individual and his attitude of mind towards it. To the truly bold and self-reliant among us it becomes a great and glorious adventure, possessing infinite possibilities for good and endless opportunities for personal achievement.

These personalities take life and mould it to suit their own particular needs and requirements, becoming in the process masters of their own lives and destinies. Because of the force and virility of their own natures life assumes a heroic aspect, grand proportions and a significance and meaning far above the ordinary. Their conception of life is high and noble and their everyday lives take form and colour from the lofty nature of their thoughts and aspirations. These are the pathfinders, the sturdy pioneers whose courage and fortitude enable them to blaze trails—for their weaker and less enlightened fellows—through the dense, dark jungle of a materialistic conception of life.

Such strong and virile personalities are at the apex of human development, while those who have little or no conception of spiritual realities are at its base. Between these two extreme points there lies a great gulf of knowledge and experience which only love, on the one hand, and aspiration on the other, can ever hope to bridge. All intermediate stages of development, and the widely varying conceptions of life to which they give rise, hold their full quota of reality for the individual. For it is only as one climbs steadily upwards, nearing the heights, that true perspective is gained. Just as the view from the mountain-top dwarfs the life of the valleys, while at the same time revealing wider and wider vistas as greater heights are reached, so does life assume an increasingly truthful aspect to the individual as his inner nature continues to unfold.

The mental lives of many are lived on a dreary, treeless plain, the outcome of their lack of any real knowledge and understanding of life. While others, gaining the heights but seldom, if ever, see life in terms of their own immediate neighbourhood and their own petty, everyday affairs. Others again, while possessing a rather less circumscribed outlook, are blinded by prejudice and misconception of one kind and another. The opaque mist in their valleys of consciousness and the heavy clouds on their mental horizons obscure the beauty, brightness and true significance of the scene and effectively prevent them from reaching higher levels of knowledge and achievement.

Those on the lower rungs of the ladder of human development have, as yet, neither knowledge nor experience to guide them. Hence they must follow others blindly until their own awakening consciousness enables them to catch fleeting glimpses of the great possibilities and potentialities of life.

Intellect is no true guide to the unravelling of life's mysteries, for intellect, being an artificial product of the brain, is unable to form any real and accurate conception of life and mind.

Intuition and inspiration, those two marvellous attributes of a spiritual awareness, are ever the means whereby life's true and inner meaning is gradually revealed to human beings everywhere. From a low, debased thought-life, or a narrow, meagre, limited, cheerless outlook, comes a lack of every good thing. While from their opposites spring quenchless fountains of healing, invigorating waters that have the power to wash away all that is valueless in the

human consciousness, and to cause to blossom freely therein all that is true and pure and beautiful.

No prolonged and limiting withdrawal from one's fellows, or from the ordinary, everyday affairs of life, is necessary to self-unfoldment, neither is any unnatural mode of living at all advisable at any period in the life-history of the individual.

Short periods of quiet thoughtfulness, amid the daily routine of business and pleasure, work and play, are all that are necessary to the recognition of that larger self which sees and knows whither we are journeying.

Anything that tends to raise our thoughts to higher levels, or that keys our emotions to a greater pitch of expectancy, is valuable in the building up and renewing of the thought-life of the individual—out of which must blossom, eventually, his spiritual experiences.

Uplifting religious exercises, beliefs that are fundamentally sound and wholesome, art in all its various forms—music, literature, poetry, painting, sculpture—as well as the lesser evidences of the creative faculty in man, are all valuable in so far as they help to develop his higher nature. But anything that tends to cramp or warp individuality, to stultify right and natural instincts, to deprive human beings of independence of thought and action, and their bodies of health and vigour, is to be abhorred as being detrimental to the best interests of the individual and to the general welfare of the race.

A constant reaching out after good, a continual opening of the mind to new aspects of truth and a joyous realisation of the true beauty of life, these constitute that right thinking which must of necessity manifest itself as right living in the everyday life of the individual.

Thus do individuals, communities and nations rise or fall, and prosper or decay, according to the strength or weakness, and wealth or poverty of their thought-lives, and the actions to which these give rise. The larger the amount of individual unfoldment the greater and more powerful the land in which it is to be found. A few mighty, outstanding personalities make a country truly great, that could have no pretensions whatever to greatness without the virility and force manifesting continually in the lives and doings of these particular individuals. The more numerous these spiritually-evolved personalities become in any particular locality the more their brilliancy and lustre are reflected in civic and national life.

Out of spiritual unfoldment comes both individual and national gain. But from the lack of a spiritual conception of life springs trouble and suffering for the individual and those terrible national and international upheavals that are a blot on the face of civilization.

MRS. ANNIE BRITAIN.—Mrs. Britain writes to correct an erroneous statement which is being made in various quarters to the effect that she is retiring from her psychic work. She writes: "This error may have crept in owing to my decision to retire from platform work, but I am now concentrating more upon evidential work, with private sittings at my residence, 28, St. Stephen's Road, W.2, for, as you are of course aware, it is necessary to keep to the one type of work if the best results are to be obtained."

OBITUARY: MR. W. R. GORNOLD.—We learned with regret of the decease of Mr. W. R. Gornold, better known as "Sepharial", which occurred on the 23rd ult., at his home at Brighton and was recorded in several newspapers. He was one of the best-known astrologers, the author of various books on the subject, and closely associated with the *British Journal of Astrology*. He is said to have accurately foretold many important events, including the great war, and as a prophet he was held in high repute.

A CHRISTMAS TREE FOR THE CHILDREN OF TWO WORLDS.

By R. H. SAUNDERS.

The authorities of that unhappy land, Russia, in their determination to crush sentiment and religion, have this year prohibited Christmas Trees, but we in England ought to be thankful that this delight of childhood has greater popularity than ever.

For the eighth year we held our service, and the happiness imparted to our little spirit visitors was expressed time and again during the sitting.

I am glad to find that the idea of paying homage in this way to those dear little ones, whom so many regard as "lost", has been adopted in several other quarters, and I know of four trees specially dressed for spirit children. We cannot have too many of them.

All who have sat with Mrs. Roberts Johnson, who helped us again this year, know of her second control, "Joe Griffiths", the Lancashire lad, who is a remarkably good echo of the famous Joey Grimaldi, in that his fun and humorous comments enliven the sitting with laughter, which provides the best of vibrations for sustaining spirit voices. His voice was heard at once—"Eh, theer's summat on t' tree—under t' shade o' t' owld apple tree—only 'tisn't apple. Ah'm queuing oop t' childers." Joe then picked up the small musical box we had placed on the floor and turned the handle. We could hear it tinkling as he carried it round the room, and high up to the ceiling. "Eh, theer's no tune in't," he said, "no rhythm in t' thing—t' tune t' owld cow died of, an' no wonder!"

David Duguid, Mrs. Johnson's Guide, addressed us. "Old and young like the Christmas tree. It conveys a message of love, hope and trust." He was interrupted by a childish voice: "I know there's one for me. I asked for a horse—I see it (*excitedly*)—I see it!" "A football's more in my line," said Joe, who is a most enthusiastic follower of Bolton Wanderers, and has most years predicted correctly the winners of "t' coop".

We sang a carol, and a tiny voice joined in: "I tan sing, too," and the voice went up and down, regardless of all time, and seemed to come from beyond the ceiling. The tree was shaken, and a glass toy detached and carried to a sitter. Every child whose name was upon the tree was there, and many hundreds, indeed, we were told thousands, were present. A number of names were called out: "Archie, Charlie, Willie Rogers, George May, Jimmy Metcalf, Andrew Chaplin (only three years old, and had difficulty in giving his name), Harold Waterhouse, Ella, Mary, Doris, Dorothy, Robbie, Olive, Joyce, Donald," and many others. At one time we got several boys' names in succession, and we asked where the girls were. "Eh—theer's lots here," said Joe. "Coom forrard little girls" (to the spirit children), "thee's moosn't be shy," and then we got several girls: Barbara, Edith, Amy, Alice, and so on.

Towards the end the great Persian physician, Abduhl Latif, manifested. He said: "When these toys go to the Hospital I follow and see the little patients. The love and sympathy and earnestness which animated our good friends here in the organisation of this function are of help in my work, and have a beneficial effect upon the sufferers: the influence of love is ever radiating, and helps the healing. Those here, young and old, are so pleased to find they are not forgotten by those on earth."

Many adult voices were heard, and it is a point worth noting that many of our visitors have manifested through several Mediums—Mrs. Garrett, the Trance Medium; Mrs. Blanche Cooper and Mrs. Roberts Johnson, the Voice Mediums; and so we get confirmation through different forms of this wonderful psychic force.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

Some of the statements which I hear or read concerning Spiritualism and Mediumship, uttered by uninstructed persons, remind me of the saying of Josh Billings who said that the trouble with most people was that they knew so many things that were not so!

* * * * *

A consideration which should give pause to any person who bases criticisms of religious communities or movements on the conduct of some of their followers, is the truth that "the treasure is given in earthen vessels"; "earthiness" is the common and natural condition of all of us. But the fact that, as gardeners tell us, clay is an excellent soil for roses, has a significance of its own.

* * * * *

In a Sunday paper there is a portrait and description of "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon), who is described as a "pleasant, human woman", with various other compliments to her pleasing personality. But as the writer of the article is under the impression that her name is *Cranston*, and likewise labours under several other misapprehensions, it is clear that the public in this and other directions has been getting a good deal of misinformation. But that is an old story and is, after all, not of too much consequence.

* * * * *

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph*, describing a luncheon party in London at which many distinguished people were present to meet Dr. and Mrs. Crandon and Dr. Eugene Osty, said: "Mrs. Crandon is the last person in the world whom the uninitiated would expect to have been chosen as the Medium of remarkable manifestations." Yes, the "uninitiated" have much to learn in this subject of Mediums and Mediumship, for Mediums range, physically, from trained athletes down to people of very poor physique; mentally, from people of the highest brain capacity to utter intellectual mediocrity; and, socially, from prince to pauper.

* * * * *

When, a short time ago, I went to the Royalty Theatre to see Dennis Bradley's witty play, "The Amorists", I recalled the day, long years ago, when I had first visited that theatre to see a play by Richard Henry. In those days Spiritualism was merely whispered about. I could have numbered on the fingers of one hand all the distinguished people in London who were then seriously interested in it. I looked round and reflected. Dennis Bradley was the author of this play. Sitting near me was Shaw Desmond. On the stage was an actress, well-known not only on the stage but also in Spiritualism. Hannen Swaffer, in his rôle of dramatic critic, had written of the play. When I mentally contrasted the past with the present the effect was almost stunning.

* * * * *

In the presence of a great wonder a little wonder becomes of small account. I have been reading a long report in the *Blackpool Times* of clairvoyant delineations, given by Mr. A. Vout Peters at the Blackpool Co-operative Hall. The reporter was clearly impressed by the accuracy of the Medium's descriptions. But in his journalistic comment on the evidential value of public clairvoyance he remarks that the explanation "may be no more than telepathy". So that telepathy, which in this case means the power of reading the minds of others, has become suddenly commonplace! But it is not so many years ago that such a power publicly demonstrated as such, would have been a great wonder in itself. To-day it is the custom to accept it as a matter of course; sometimes as a kind of defence against the acceptance of what, after all, is not a much greater "miracle"—communication with the departed.

D. G.

SPECULATIONS ON THE AFTER-LIFE.

By CHIRON.

Where is this future state of existence carried on and under what conditions? What of the stature and appearance of those beyond the veil? Do they fly, walk, or how do they move?

Let us from our knowledge and experience think out what is likely and what may be possible—that is, conceivable by our limited human intellect. They may be about this earth—they may be in what we call "space". What appears to us empty may conceivably be occupied by beautiful cities, gardens and cathedrals.

Why not? For it is *we* who are the shadows, and our earth is no more solid than we are. In surroundings probably more beautiful than ours, because unspoiled, the inhabitants of a higher sphere may be close at hand.

What then of their appearance? Much the same as ours, in all probability. It sounds reasonable to expect that we shall be able to recognise our dear ones when we meet again; reasonable also to think that the outward appearance may be influenced to some extent by the individuality. One possessing what we call a beautiful nature may appear very beautiful in after life; conversely those with warped and twisted minds may exhibit a somewhat dwarfed and stunted aspect.

As to movement from place to place, I think we may rule out flying. Walking is not unlikely, and, when necessary, movement by exercise of will power. I do not mean that those who have just passed over will be gifted at once with these marvellous powers. They will presumably be as they were at death and will have to progress.

Then there is the question of language or thought-transference and the question of increased powers of vision. I am speaking now of those who have progressed so far in the higher life that they possess powers superior to ours, and undreamed of by us. It requires no great flight of fancy to grant that this may be so.

The difficulty is that the human mind cannot grasp the true significance of what we call "time" and what we call "space". We have an arbitrary system of fixing time. It enables us to express our meaning to each other. We find it convenient on this plane, but on another, time, as we know it, may not exist. Space is still more beyond us. We cannot think of space that reaches on for ever, yet we cannot conceive of its having an end. We can only leave it at that.

There is another way of looking at it. We have here on earth our instruments for telephoning and television. They would have been deemed impossible some years ago. It is now possible to see and speak with a friend on the other side of the ocean. To a certain extent we may say that those instruments annihilate space as far as sight and hearing are concerned. What, then, of the advanced beings of whom we speak? They must surely be able to do as much or more with less effort and greater efficiency. Something in the way of what we call telepathy or thought-transference may be employed; vision may be increased to an extent we can scarcely realise.

Can we go a step further? Is it too much to suggest that on a higher plane not only do they see and hear but can exercise the sense of touch at any distance? Remember that sight, hearing and touch are not things in themselves but sensations. Space then, as we think of it, may be practically non-existent.

The idea is worth considering and lends a new realism to the expression "God is everywhere."

So far I have not brought in any biblical quotations in support of the theory, though many occur to me. At the same time nothing I have said is in any way opposed to religious belief.

Those on the other side may, as I have suggested, attain to great powers. Purified, endowed with faith and a strength that we can only dream of, they may be able to produce by mere effort of will things that would formerly have required the work of hands. This, of course, implies a certain amount of creative power.

Are thoughts "things"? They may be, or may become so. Who can say how far a thought may travel? Or what its power may be? Thoughts of ill-doing undoubtedly have a certain power to harm, while kindly thoughts may have good effects exceeding the hopes of the well-wisher.

Again comes the question: How far are man's efforts helped? Does he progress after death, aided and instructed only by those who have, like himself, lived on this earth; or are there other helpers? What of the angels?

From the earliest times the idea of angels has been passed down to us. Are they to be understood as being good men who have been as we are, or are they a distinct race, pure, holy spirits of great power?

We see the vegetable kingdom—we see insects, birds, animals and man. It is not unnatural to suppose that there may be a form of life superior still. This earth is not the Universe, and we cannot take it for granted that we are the last word in Creation.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"If." By George Tweed. (Alston Rivers. 7/6d. net.)

This novel with its sex tangles, less noxious than those of the ultra-modern story, contains some pretty fancies of fairies in a garden; it may be termed a book of human portraiture, with some well-observed studies of personality, though the purely psychic element is slight.

"Magic Mating." By G. de S. Wentworth James. (Alston Rivers. 7/6d.)

A novel with an undercurrent of purpose—the ideal of perfect mating. In the story the ideal is more than once frustrated; the meeting, at last, with the ideal man of mystic trend is emotionally described, and poignancy is added when Death intervenes to thwart a mating which only in the Hereafter is to be completed.

"Blackmail." Novelised from Charles Bennett's Play, and Talking Film, by Ruth Alexander. (Alston Rivers. 7/6d. net.)

Those who have seen this play, and the film, will no doubt welcome this compact novel. It has no psychic interest, however, and thus differs materially from Mr. Bennett's psychic play, *The Return*, which many readers of LIGHT witnessed at the Everyman Theatre in 1927.

E. K. G.

"Experiences in the Unseen World." By William Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon), through the hand of M. E. Cox (Psychic Press. 2s.)

It may be that those who remember "M.A. (Oxon)" and who were well acquainted with his life and thought may not discover any special traces of his personality in these communications. However, doubtless those concerned with the book have satisfied themselves of the identity of the communicator. The messages certainly ring true as regards the descriptions of life on the other side. There is much that is instructive, and the descriptions tally very closely with other accounts. Personality in these matters is not of the first importance, if the accounts given are in themselves trustworthy, as these appear to be. The main thing is the *content* of the messages. When these are teachings, their quality can be judged by any capable mind. When they are descriptions of life in spirit-realms we have what Sir Oliver Lodge has described as "unverifiable matter", and we can only compare them with statements from other sources. In the present instance I found much of interest in the experiences recorded. They have a special appeal to the initiated—striking a deep human note and sometimes a truly inspiring one. There is much that is picturesque in the scenes described.

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 Croydon.—The New Gallery, Katharine Street.—January 12th,
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