

Light

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NOTES BY THE WAY

IT has been said that the path of the Mystic is that in which the heart's influence predominates, and that the Philosopher will the more readily follow the way of the intellect. It is not easy to observe these distinctions for while the heart or the head seem to rule each a different province, they would appear to unite in what might be called the Intelligence, of which the intellect forms a minor part; for the intellect presents itself as a non-moral faculty, with very little relation to the affections. Of course, the head and the heart rarely or never reach an exact balance—one or the other usually shows a relative excess. We have the case of the hot, impulsive mind rushing into foolish actions, on the one hand; and on the other, the cold, calculating intellectualist who may inspire our respect but rarely our affection. But in all religions worthy of the name the heart is always given the higher place; indeed, we cannot conceive of a purely intellectual religion—it would, at the most, be simply a code of ethics. And although the balanced mind represents a desirable condition, in this imperfect world, an exact balance would lead not to progress but to inaction. The two great Universal Principles—Love and Wisdom—keep us in constant oscillation, as we swing to each alternately as to opposite poles. It is so here, and it may not be greatly different in the Hereafter with its "spheres of Love" and "spheres of Wisdom," which suggest that the future life is very far from a condition of dull uniformity but rather of divine variety.

* * *

ONLY occasionally do we hear, at those meetings in which members of the audience put questions to the Medium, any query which we regard as a good one. Most of the interrogations submitted on these occasions have been answered and adequately answered, innumerable

times both in Spiritualist journals and in many books dealing with Spiritualism. That is one reason why we strongly recommend inquirers to make a study of the literature of the subject. Some of the inquiries put forward at these meetings are so simple that a little thought would enable the questioner to solve his difficulty for himself. The reflection, for instance, that the world beyond is not a *material* world should alone dispose of problems based entirely on material considerations. It sweeps away at a stroke a great deal of argument, as, for instance, where a critic objects that it is impossible to conceive of another world in which all activities of life here, as he knows it, are carried on as before. We admit the argument, but as we have never contended for the reality of such a world, it is quite outside the point. We do not find it impossible to conceive of a world in which the *essential principles* of life here are continued under other and appropriate forms. There is a life of the mind, a life of the emotions, quite independent of the bodily forms in which they are expressed in this world. Moreover, no close observer of life, here, can fail to see how much there is in it which gives us clues and hints to some of those statements made by spirit communicators concerning conditions which remain mysterious only to those who do not think them out and relate them in imagination to what we are told concerning the world beyond. As we have said before, we find our present life quite as wonderful—not to say "impossible" and "unprecedented"—as any kind of life that may follow it. The more we learn of life here and now, the less we shall be disposed to question the existence of a life of another and higher order.

* * *

SPIRITUAL things, although they may only be "spiritually discerned," have nothing in common with vaporousness or unreality. Things may be celestial without being cloudy and remote. A thing is not the less actual because it is only dimly seen or, as it may happen, not perceived at all. There are those who jibe at the idea of spirits. Yet, as the late Harold Begbie put it in one of his books, "The man who looks into our eyes and whose body we can touch is as definitely a spirit as the invisible hosts of heaven." Physically, of course, we see only the bodies of our fellow-creatures, yet there is an interior or spiritual awareness between us all. Instinctively we know there is more in each of us than is physically apparent, and yet so many still take the fleeting things of sense and time as the only standards of reality, and banish reality itself into a region of speculation, mystery and remoteness. Of course we are rapidly passing beyond that stage. Science has gone a long way past it, as those who have studied the latest books of Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor Eddington are aware. Spirit was once described as something "nondescript and elusive." Time has brought in a strange revenge since those days, for it now appears that this description is better fitted to Matter. As to Spirit, it appears to be something which we can never seize and from which we can never escape.

WHAT IS LIFE?

(By GEO. LINDSAY JOHNSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.)

(Continued from page 195.)

IN my last article I mentioned that there was something we believe to be immortal which does not undergo dissolution and break up into elementary matter but escapes from the body at death. This "Something" we call "the Soul." Now I read not very long ago a little book called *Where are the Dead?* compiled by a number of authors in answer to a letter in the *Daily News* by a man who signed himself "A.J.C." Among the contributions are two articles by Sir Arthur Keith and Julian Huxley, which pretend to show that as mind is the product of the brain and inseparable from it, it follows that both perish together at death. If these articles are analysed the reader will find that they contain nothing new, but consist of the worn-out arguments which have been uttered *ad nauseam* by hosts of scientists, and which are not based on facts, but merely on bare assumptions and deductions. Thus they argue: "The body perishes at death, the brain is part of the body, and is the source of all our sensations, perceptions, feelings, and personality, and mind, therefore it follows that as these qualities make up our entire Ego we must become blotted out at death." This is what logicians call "Petitio Principii," or "arguing in a circle." The whole of their arguments are based on an assumption, not knowledge, and therefore cannot prove that the Ego or personality and individuality is the product of the brain, and as everyone knows that the latter perishes at death, therefore we must likewise perish. Keith argues that as Life has always a material basis, a physiologist cannot imagine how life can possibly exist apart from matter. If our lives are to survive, our bodies must bear them company.

It is a common error, even among scientists, flatly to deny what they cannot understand. At one of the sittings at the Académie des Sciences in Paris, one of the members declared that he had seen frogs and even fish fall from the sky, at which all the others laughed at him, and declared it to be impossible, since they could not account for it scientifically. And yet it was ultimately demonstrated that these creatures had been drawn up into the air by a waterspout, and carried away far inland by its means. As Flammarion aptly puts it, "A single experiment if accurately made, or a single fact, if accurately observed, even if it should contradict all Science, is worth more than all the theories in the world." To give one more instance. There is no better authentic story than that of a religiously infatuated girl named Louise Lateau, who twelve days after Easter in the year 1868 fell into an ecstatic and highly emotional condition during which she dwelt constantly on the wounds or stigmata of Christ. A few days later a wound appeared on her left side. Then the imprint of a wound appeared on her right side. Then the imprint of a wound, apparently made by a large nail, appeared on her left foot, and a few days later all five wounds were developed, while five months later the imprints of the thorns appeared on her forehead, and actually gave rise to drops of blood. Now in 1877 Professor Virchow, one of the leading Pathologists in Europe, delivered a lecture before the Academy of Sciences in Berlin that ended in these words: "These stigmata undoubtedly exist, for I have seen and examined them. There can only be two possible explanations. Fraud or Miracle. Now a miracle is an impossibility, therefore the only remaining explanation is trickery."

But we have grown wiser since then, and we know now that these stigmata are produced neither by miracle nor by trickery, but by the influence of the Mind over Matter, which is the explanation of all the cures alleged by the Christian Scientists. In the same way and for the same reasons, both Sir Arthur Keith and Professor Julian Huxley affirm that every phenomenon which cannot be

scientifically explained by Science or which appears to be in opposition to Science, must be either due to fraud or childishness, or perhaps a very few cases (about ten per cent according to Huxley) may possibly be explained by either telepathy or clairvoyance!* The Scientific world is of easy belief in fraud: it can credit any amount of skill and ingenuity, provided only that what it cannot otherwise explain, except unpalatably, may be thereby shown to be a trick. If it were meted to scientists in their own measure it would go hard with their characters, but the outer world is not so unreasonable as they are; and of this they get the benefit.

I referred in my last article to the formation of a replica of the body, about which I have something more to say.

As before said, both Keith and Julian Huxley are convinced that there cannot be any hereafter for us, since the brain and mind both perish with the body, and therefore it is self-evident that there can be no hereafter for us in any sense whatever. Let us examine the subject critically, and I think we can prove that those conclusions are based on false premises. The scientist, unfamiliar with the recent developments of psychic science will launch out into learned arguments to demonstrate that the mind is entirely bound up with the brain, and so dependent on it that every disease of the brain produced a corresponding effect on the mind; that mechanical pressure on the brain, produced unconsciousness and insensibility; in a word, as the body dies, so the manifestations of the mind die also. All these arguments we have heard *ad nauseam*, and neither Sir Arthur Keith nor Professor Huxley has given us a single fact that is new. What they have just said about the mind and the brain is perfectly true, so far as the *objective* mind is concerned, but I would remind these two scientists that they both appear oblivious of the fact that the researches of modern psychologists, including Freud, have definitely proved that man has a dual mind—an *objective* or physical mind and a *subjective* or psychic mind, and consequently two planes of consciousness—a normal and a supernormal plane, and that the latter, subjective mind, continues to manifest itself when the former lies totally unconscious or asleep. This latter is the Soul proper, and is that part of our Ego which survives death and continues to function by itself when the normal or objective mind has vanished for ever along with the material body and brain. How do we know all this? I will endeavour to tell you in the simplest possible language, for if I were to explain it in Freud's language and methods of thought, the majority of my readers would give it up as hopeless, and leave off none the wiser. Let us see what evidence we have to show that each one of us possesses two distinct minds which are entirely different in their action and properties.

Now I think this can be proved in a number of ways. It was mentioned in my last article that a semi-transparent body has been observed by clairvoyants (in every part of the world) to issue from the dying body of a person and to float immediately above it, united by a fluidic cord which breaks at the moment of death. As this is of vast importance, since its proof would go a long way to convince mankind as to the reality of the soul as an independent entity which survives death, it may be advisable to give a few further facts on the subject. Moreover, if we can bring independent testimony to show that this entity can visit other people at any distance from the body still united by the fluidic cord so that the person in question is not only alive, but conscious of the fact while his soul (or spirit) is engaged in conversation with some friend at a distance, it seems to me that the existence of a soul independent of the physical mind can be considered as proved. The Reverend Charles Tweedale, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, in his most convincing work *Man's Survival After Death* has given several instances which the reader will find recorded in

* *Where are the Dead?* page 32. Cassell & Co., London.

Chapters X, XI and XXI (Third Edition) Here are a few instances briefly abstracted from the above work with the author's permission.

"The Spiritual Body is a replica of the mortal body, deprived of its defects, and it dwells within it during the existence of that body in the earth life. It is the Ego, the personality, the living soul, the real man, and survives the death of the mortal body . . . there are times during deepest hypnotic trance when the observer obtains a glimpse of the spiritual body under conditions other and apart from the phenomena about to be described." Dr. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Prof. of Chemistry, Edinburgh, in his work on Animal Magnetism says: "The sleeper in the mesmeric state has a consciousness quite separate and distinct from his ordinary consciousness, he is in fact not quite a different individual, yet the same individual in a different and distinct phase of his being, and that phase a higher one."

Andrew Jackson Davis tells how he saw the Spiritual Body withdraw itself from the mortal one, and issue from the head of the dying person first as a cloud of luminosity which hovered above the bed, and was attached by a fine luminous cord—a sort of psychic umbilicus—to the dying person's head. This cloud then slowly took the form of the person, and continued to hover over the recumbent mortal body, attached to it by the cord of light, just as a captive balloon might be moored to the ground. As long as any trace of this cord remains, death does not take place, and it is possible for the Spiritual body to return to the mortal, and for the person to be restored to normal health.

C. Flammarion, the distinguished Astronomer, tells us that in addition to the evidence of Clairvoyants, we have the testimony of those who, when apparently at death's door have been restored to life, and have related their experiences on their recovery afterwards. Such was the case of a Doctor Viltse whose narrative will be found in the St. Louis Journal of Medicine and Surgery for the year 1889, and from which I have extracted the following brief notes. "During my illness," he says, "Doctor Raynes under whose care I was at the time, told me afterwards that I fell into a state of complete insensibility and unconsciousness, and my pulse failed entirely. While in this state I felt that although I was still in my body, my Ego, or real self, had nothing in common with it, in fact I was dead to all intents and purposes, in other words a corpse, and nevertheless I felt more full of life and activity than ever. I could feel that I was leaving my body, and I observed with intense interest the process of leaving it. Then a force which I failed to understand shook my whole frame, and I felt myself emerging from my body, beginning from my toes and creeping upwards towards my head, and I felt myself escaping through the sutures of my skull. On emerging from the body I perceived two ladies seated near my pillow, and I felt very embarrassed at appearing in a state of nudity in their presence. The moment I was outside my body I felt myself floating about like a toy balloon. In this painful state of embarrassment I glided towards the door in order to escape the gaze of the ladies, when I suddenly found myself fully attired. On perceiving this I returned, and while doing so, my left shoulder touched the arm of one of the gentlemen present. Judge of my astonishment when my shoulder passed through his arm without the slightest resistance. I looked at him to see what he would do, but he was evidently unaware that I had touched him. I noticed with astonishment that the people were kneeling around my corpse and sobbing. The situation appeared so comical that I burst out laughing. But the remarkable thing about it was that nobody appeared to take the slightest notice of me or my laughter. Observing the door open, I

stepped out into the street. Never before had I seen the street more distinctly than I did at that moment, but what struck me most was that my height had increased. Moreover I noticed that my garments fitted me perfectly, and were made of some kind of tissue. My thoughts were far more lucid than I had ever experienced before."

It is unnecessary to continue the narrative any further, as the sole object in relating it was to show that the Soul and Spirit can retain their personality and self-consciousness apart from the body. I need only add that everything the Doctor saw and did when outside the physical body, as narrated by him, was afterwards confirmed in the fullest manner by his friends who happened to be present.*

In a later article I hope to explain exactly what is meant when we say that the mind perishes with the brain, and shall endeavour to show how far the observations and theories of the New Psychology of Freud and his School can be reconciled with the observations of Modern Spiritualism: and further I hope to show how the statements of Keith and Huxley are perfectly in accord with our own (at least up to a certain point) as regards the relationship between the mind and the brain, and yet how they utterly fail to prove the existence of a life after death, owing to their want of knowledge respecting the two different kinds of Mind which we all possess, viz., the Objective and the Subjective Minds, the former variety being apparently the only kind which they appear to be aware of. This fully accounts for their disbelief in a future life.

THE SURVIVAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA

THE Indian Spiritualistic Society of Bombay, which has recently issued its triennial report, was founded by a small group of Indian gentlemen, headed by Mr. V. D. Rishi, for the purpose of demonstrating in India "the continuity of life after death and the possibility of communication with those who have gone over." The first attempt to found the society was made at an informal meeting in the Saraswati Hall of the Aryan Education Society's School in Bombay, under the chairmanship of the late Mr. N. V. Gokhle, B.A., LL.B. From 1923 to 1926 Mr. Rishi lectured in North India, and conferences were held at Coconada, Belgaum, and Cawnpore, which aroused great local interest. After visiting Europe in 1925 to study practical methods of spreading spiritual knowledge, Mr. Rishi returned to India, and the society was formally launched, with the co-operation of a few earnest workers. Two All-India Spiritualistic Conferences were held, one at Hardwar, in 1928, the other at Lahore, in 1929; a resolution was passed at the conferences expressing appreciation of the efforts of those Western scientists who have endeavoured to arrive at truth regarding survival after death. In the current report issued by the Indian Spiritualistic Society a tribute is paid to Shet Tulsidas G. Khatao, "but for the munificent help of whom the Society would not have come into existence."

* The complete account of this remarkable case can be found in Prof. L. Chevreuil's last work *On ne meurt pas*, page 294-300, Tubby Jeuve et Cie, Paris. It is also fully stated in Myers' *Human Personality* Vol. II, pp. 315-321.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN GENERAL LITERATURE

By E. W. DUXBURY.

IT is interesting to note how frequently, in modern times, the writers of books of Memoirs or Reminiscences refer to psychical incidents which have impressed or mystified those concerned. Many of these relate to the faculty of "prevision," or supernormal perception of the future, the reality of which has been recognised and vouched for by Professor Richet. At the same time the recognition of this faculty raises some of the most difficult and profound problems known to philosophy. It may be interesting to many readers of LIGHT if I cite a few examples taken from general literature.

The first story has a special interest in view of the recent death of Frau Wagner, the daughter of Liszt. It is taken from the book entitled *Franz Liszt, the Man of Love*, by Guy De Pourtalès, translated from the French by Eleanor Stimson Brooks (Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 1927). It is related that before the Countess Marie d'Agoult had met Liszt and had entered upon her subsequent intimate association with the famous musician in Switzerland, she went to see, in June, 1834, Mlle. Lenormant, the well-known seeress, who was visited by many important people in what is described as her dirty office in the Rue de Tournon.

This is what the seeress told her. "A complete change will very soon take place in your life. You will even change your name because of it, and your name will become famous in Europe. You will leave your native land for a long time. You will love a man who will make a sensation in the world. Beware of your imagination. It is easily aroused and will lead you into dangers from which you will escape only through great courage." She related this interview to a friend, who replied:—"You lack nothing now but the great man."

The Countess d'Agoult's subsequent connection with Liszt is now a matter of history.

My next story also relates to a famous musician and appears in *Melodies and Memories*, by Nellie Melba (Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 1925). The writer was much impressed by the incident, which occurred when she was a young girl in Australia, and the idea of a musical career for her was not in contemplation. She had attended a school picnic, and eventually she and two other little girls wandered away by themselves into the bush. They suddenly came upon a cottage; standing at the door was a youngish woman, who was a complete stranger to them. She invited them to have some milk, and then asked if they would like to have their fortunes told, to which they eagerly assented. Little of interest was said to the other two girls, but when it came to her own turn Dame Nellie Melba describes how the woman bent over her hand closely, her brow wrinkled. "Little girl," she said, "you are going to travel a great deal. You will visit almost every country in the world. Not only that, I see you everywhere in great halls, crowded with people; and you are always the centre of attraction, the one at whom all eyes are directed."

The little girl giggled and told the woman that she did not know what was meant. "You may, someday," replied the woman. It is needless to add how literally this prediction was fulfilled in the case of Dame Nellie Melba.

The next story had a more tragic sequel and is related by Mr. Ernest Thesiger, the well-known actor, in his book, *Practically True* (Wm. Heinemann, Ltd., 1927). He mentions how, at times, he acquires a supernormal knowledge of past events in the lives of strangers whom he meets, and very occasionally he can also foresee the

future. He describes how he was once at a dinner-party, from which a woman guest was unexpectedly absent, so that he was placed next to a man. During dinner he was suddenly overcome by an attack of faintness and had to leave the room. His hostess followed, thinking that he was ill, but he explained that it was caused by the man next to him.

"It is dreadful," he said, "I got the sensation that he was being mauled to death by some wild animal. It was so vivid that it made me physically ill." He asked his hostess if the man went in for big game shooting or anything of that kind.

Many years later, at another dinner, he met a man whose name was an unusual one and who recalled to his mind the man who had had such an unpleasant effect upon him. "Are you any relative," he asked, "of a man of your name, whose initial, I think, was F?"

"He was a cousin of mine," was the reply. "Poor chap, he got killed in a horrible way. He fell over a tree-trunk while shooting in India, and was attacked and killed by a tiger."

It would be difficult to regard these two incidents as merely a case of coincidence.

The following case is related by Mr. E. F. Benson in his book entitled *Mother* (Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., 1925). He describes how he was staying in Egypt with his mother and his sister, Maggie, when the latter succumbed to a chill and was soon seriously ill with lung trouble. The doctor came to see his patient three times a day, and Mr. Benson used to wait for his report after lunch before devoting himself to his archaeological researches. On such an occasion he was sitting in the garden at Luxor at the back of the hotel, and in front of him was a broad sweep of sandy path, with a small raised terrace beyond, on to which the long windows of the dining-room and drawing-room opened. A flight of three or four steps led down to the sandy path. After waiting some little time, Mr. Benson seemed to see the doctor come out of the drawing-room, looking pleased and rubbing his hands together. Instead of walking down the steps, the doctor jumped down on to the path and coming forward, said:—"Well, we've found what we wanted." At that instant Mr. Benson became aware that the appearance and words of the doctor were hallucinatory, since there was no one there. When the doctor did appear, his report was unusually grave. Mr. Benson, however, narrated his vision to his mother, feeling sure that it had a quality of reality about it. The patient's condition continued to be grave, and a few days later the doctor sent for Mr. Benson to explain the position.

He found that his patient had liquid round the lungs, and a tapping operation would probably have to be done that day. The tapping itself was a small matter, the question being what they would find. If the liquid was clear, it could be drawn off, with considerable benefit to the patient; if, however, it was found to be purulent, the patient's condition must then be regarded as serious. The tapping was effected that day, and Mr. Benson was waiting after lunch for the doctor's report in the same place in the garden as when he had experienced his visual hallucination.

Presently the doctor came out of the drawing-room window, looking pleased and rubbing his hands together. Instead of using the steps he jumped down on to the path and came forward saying, "Well, we've found what we wanted," thus using the exact words of the auditory hallucination.

Though it is not a case of pre-vision, I will conclude this article with the incident described by Frances, Countess of Warwick, in her book entitled *Life's Ebb and Flow* (Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1929).

She was staying in Paris when a man, who was very devoted to her, was killed in the hunting field. She had not seen any English papers and knew nothing of the accident. In the middle of the night following the accident she heard herself called by name so insistently that she jumped up. She at once thought that something had happened to one of her children, but a reassuring reply was received to her telegram of enquiry.

The Countess writes:—"When a copy of the *New York Herald* came into my hand that day I read an account of the fatal hunting accident, and I knew who called me in the night. The man truly loved me and had tried to communicate with me. I could not stay any longer in Paris, but prepared to return home at once to be in time for the funeral."

DIVINE INTERVENTION

SOME weeks ago Mr. James Douglas contributed a provocative article to the *Daily Express* entitled "Has He Appeared Since Then?" This has stimulated a number of readers of the journal to write their own experiences of what they regard as transcendental happenings. A selection of these letters appear in the *Daily Express* of April 12th, and make interesting reading.

A contributor, A. Winston, of Lisvane Street, Cardiff, says: "I was engaged in prayer. Opening my eyes, I beheld the Saviour entering the room through the open door. He was clothed in white and His countenance beamed with ineffable love. Walking silently to my bedside He stooped over me, put His left arm under my head and held my hands with His right hand."

R. M. Pouncy, of Norfolk Road, Southampton, says: "One night I had a very bad heart attack, so bad that I felt convinced that I was dying. I prayed earnestly. Suddenly I became aware of the figure of Christ standing by my bedside. A wonderful peace possessed me, and I quietly fell asleep in the knowledge that He was watching over me. This is the bare narrative of a marvellous experience."

M. Bowden, of Camilla Terrace, Peverell, Plymouth, writes: "I for one would like to describe three occasions—one on the death of my little girl, whom I idolised; then when one of my sons was lying ill; and, thirdly, a few days before the signing of the Armistice." The writer adds: "These incidents are too sacred to me to give the details, as the world continues to be sceptical regarding such occurrences."

Here is the experience of Miss Annie Laurence, of Sudbury, Norfolk:—"My sister had a very serious operation. We were told that she could not possibly live. One night I prayed fervently that she might be spared for the sake of her four children and her adoring husband. I begged Him to go to her as He went to the sick, of whom we are told in the Bible.

"Later in the day my sister confided to me that she had been awakened by someone standing over her bed with hands outstretched. At first she thought it was her husband. As there was no response she sat up and saw a figure near the bed. Surprised, but unafraid, she put out her hand and tried to touch Him."

Still further experiences are given in the *Daily Express* of April 19th, by correspondents who testify to having had the privilege of receiving communications or visions relating to the Christ.

Mrs. Agnes Dowsett, of Boscastle, N. Cornwall, tells of an occasion when she was sitting up at night with a young woman suffering (it was believed) from diphtheria. Mrs. Dowsett had recently lost her only little boy from the same disease. She prayed fervently for the patient's recovery.

Presently I became aware of a Presence. After looking carefully over the house, wondering who had entered, I returned to the sick room, exclaiming as I did so, "There is someone here." Immediately a flood of light filled the room, and I heard myself exclaiming, "Why, it is Our Lord Himself!" And then I saw that my small son Peter was with Him. The joy and happiness that followed are beyond description. By morning the patient had passed the crisis, while I have never lost the vision.

From a strictly scientific research point of view such evidences as these may scarcely be regarded as valid, nevertheless they certainly form part of a vast mass of similar testimony and as such have value and significance. It seems clear that these witnesses had some kind of psychic experience that uplifted and comforted them. There are many points whereon the evidences are mutually corroborative.

I will content myself by quoting one more experience written with touching sincerity by Mrs. W. Riley, of London, N.8.

In April, 1918, my beloved husband was killed on active service. One morning, feeling overburdened with my loss, I knelt by my bedside and prayed. Immediately I saw a vision of our Saviour on the Cross, high in the heavens, surrounded by a dazzling white light. It vanished. Then I heard His voice in my room saying, "Live for Me." I rose from my knees a new creature.

W.H.C.

OXFORD FINDS NEW KNOWLEDGE

BEFORE even the days of Chaucer's "*Clerk there was of Oxenforde*" the name of the University City has stood for English knowledge of the most profound and exact.

Necessarily the responsibility of Oxford when it puts its name to a declaration of belief is high and cautious; and this very rightful slowness permeates beyond the Theological and Professorial class to the town's people of the ancient City.

It was on April 24th that, for the first time in its history, Oxford had a meeting of its own "Spiritualist Society," under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. H. Nicholls.

To a crowded hall Miss Nellie Tom-Gallon spoke on "What Is Spiritualism?" and in the course of her address discussed the fundamental importance of Spiritualism in our ordinary life. She declared that Spiritualism was the proof of the thing that every Church declared and could not prove for itself—the continuity of life beyond the Earth; she showed the value and satisfaction to be gained from communication with those who have passed on.

She described the many different forms of Mediumship and compared their values, giving personal evidence of many "acid-test" communications in a long experience.

Miss Lily Thomas followed with Clairvoyance of the most successful and pleasing kind, showing a power of holding on to a clue given by a communicating Spirit till she had found the connecting link deep in the mind of some member of the audience.

At the end there was a fusillade of intelligent questioning for the speaker and the Medium, and a final late parting.

All those concerned with this new Society, especially the Secretary, Mrs. Coppock, are to be congratulated on the success of the evening. It is the first of regular weekly meetings of the same type open to all members and enquirers. X.

MORE LIGHT ON SPIRIT INFLUENCE

FROM time to time this topic may briefly, but profitably, engage the attention of the readers of LIGHT, being particularly interesting and useful to younger readers of all ages. This contribution to the subject is drawn from Hudson Tuttle's answer to preliminary inquiries of Emmet Densmore regarding the manner in which the *Arcana of Nature* was produced. Having given free (and strikingly successful) seances for more than a year, Hudson reflected that while for others he had "given everything," the results for himself were meagre and discouraging. At this stage his mother received for him a psychic message that he must choose one of two paths; "one leading over a level plain, thronged with travellers, the other over difficult mountain summits, accessible only by labour and self-sacrifice." "If he chooses the last, I go with him," the message continued, "if the first he passes to others." Thus was given to Hudson the choice of association with either of two sets of spirit workers. He joyfully chose the way of difficulty, following his chosen guide. The public sittings were greatly reduced in number, and the purely private ones correspondingly increased. He writes:—

It was a source of surprise and delight to feel the new thoughts that streamed through my mind. When I doubted, my hand would be seized and write automatically, without my knowing a word written. I usually wrote by impression, or a blending of the process with the automatic, the processes varying with the difficulties of thought transference. Thus, while an idea may be reproduced by impression, a date, a fact, a quotation, a name, are most difficult, and for these automatic writing was employed . . . The writers were my teachers, and were my only source of knowledge.

When the ordinary labours of the day were over, Hudson would retire to his quiet room and take up his pen, whereupon fatigue would give place to a delightful exaltation: "the more weary I was physically, the clearer and stronger the exaltation," he wrote. In this way he learned that it was a waste of time to write when not at his highest state of receptivity, for such writing was invariably rewritten.

The Arcana of Nature was "completed" (as the author then supposed) in 1853, when he was eighteen years of age. Just then came to him the astounding message that he must destroy this MS with all he had previously written, as too imperfect to be of any value. This was done, and the despairing youth started to rewrite the work, impelled to do so "in season and out." When again finished, he asked: "Is it correct?" and was answered, "It will not be re-written but revised." He was further informed that the book would not be published until his instructors had weeded out the imperfections that had come through him. For two years the MS lay on his table, daily some correction or addition being made, the while he wondered if there would be an end of them. "When I sat down to this work," said he, "I would turn over the pages mechanically, without the least idea of the change intended."

At length the authors were satisfied with the work, and it was placed with William White & Co., then publishers of the *Banner of Light*, but publication was delayed owing to financial embarrassment of the firm. The proof was read by S. B. Brittan, one of White & Co.'s readers, and several years afterwards he told Hudson that the writers of the work were "inclined to arrange words after Greek idiom and to condense by elision of

words until the sense was obscured." At the time Hudson could not have undertaken the proof-reading except by the control of those who wrote the text. Many passages were not understood by him, and not for years afterwards, by earnest study, was he able to comprehend them. Not understanding this, many correspondents asked him for explanations, unaware that his interpretations might be less correct than their own.

The *Arcana* was translated into German and published in 1860. Without reading the appendix, where an explanatory account of the origin of the book was given, Dr. Buechner used it freely in the composition of his celebrated work *Matter and Force*, under the misimpression that Hudson Tuttle was a professor in a college near Cleveland. Later the German professor was engaged to give a hundred lectures in the principal cities and towns of America. Hudson was invited to attend a banquet given in honour of the lecturer, to whom he was introduced by Dr. Cyriax, who said: "My dear Doctor, you have spoken in highest praise of the *Arcana of Nature*, you have said it was far in advance of the profoundest science of the day; you have quoted it largely and followed its lead. Now do you know who wrote it?" Buechner answered that he supposed it was the young man who had just been introduced to him, although he confessed to disappointment in his years, and that he had taken him for a professor in Dr. Cyriax's college. The latter replied that the youth did not write it, being at the time a boy, uneducated, working hard on a farm, "and when weary from labour, at night, the power I call spirits and you scoff at, came and wrote it through him. He had no library, no books, nor even access to any." Buechner said this was too good a joke; but the editor of the German paper asserted that it was every word true, and that the German professor must explain it.

At the end of the banquet Buechner went behind Hudson's chair and began a phrenological examination, in which science he claimed to be an adept, concluding by saying: "It is all there, right in his head, and there is no occasion for calling in the spirits."

Thus operate the psychological forces in human life—the transcendental and the ordinary in ever-varying composition. It is from typical cases, simple or compound, that the student may derive most enlightenment, and the foregoing supplies in a high degree the properties of the type.

W.B.P.

THE BRIDGE.

It seems more swift are spirit-shapes than light,
As swift as very thought upon its flight!
But how, Beloved, do you reach me here?
Are time and space within your deathless sphere?
All vision's lost in ether-waves of light
So far outside the range of mortal sight—
Is love a bridge across this cosmic deep
Whereon our happy souls this tryst may keep?

A. K. SMITH.

"WHAT IS LIFE?"—In a footnote to his second article (LIGHT, p. 194) under this title, Dr. G. Lindsay Johnson stated that the book "The Gospel of the Holy Twelve" was obtainable at 3, Evelyn Terrace, Brighton. We now learn that the volume cannot be obtained at that address and desire to express our regrets to the occupier of the premises, and to those of our readers who may have been put to inconvenience. Apparently our contributor made an error in quoting the address, or his information may possibly have been out of date. At the time of going to Press we are unable to carry the matter further as Dr. Lindsay Johnson, to whom we have written, resides in South Africa. Meantime we desire to make it quite clear that nobody connected with the O.T. and U.T.S. or with the volume mentioned above resides at 3, Evelyn Terrace, Brighton.

ON BECOMING A MEDIUM

By W. H. EVANS.

(Continued from page 211).

Here I once again emphasise that mediumistic development is a matter of *co-operation*, not of domination. Do not imagine that because you have been used by a spirit to deliver an address you have nothing more to do. The work has only begun. To think you have no more to do is fatal to further development. I have listened to Mediums who, thinking that the unfoldment of their own native ability would be a hindrance to the work of their guides, ceased all mental study. Labouring under the delusion that the delivery of an address through an ignorant person is a complete proof of spirit power, they avoid all intellectual development and go on repeating over and over again, in the form of a spirit-inspired communication, a dreary round of platitudes, devoid of wit or wisdom. And they frequently gather around them a host of uncritical supporters who accept such rambling statements as inspired utterances. Muddy waters are not infrequently mistaken for deep waters.

Our movement has been cursed with a lot of this type of mediumship. How truly has St. Paul said: "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets!" Happily there are others who seek by co-operation to rise to higher levels of intelligence. Do not stop study because you are the instrument of some spirit-guide. If so the guide will probably leave you and a less intelligent one take his place.

Sometimes when the partially-developed Medium is used as an instrument by unseen intelligences names will be given, but this is rare unless for evidential purposes. Beware of the lure of great names. As a rule the spirit people do not give names unless they specially wish to produce evidence of their identity. If a message is given out as coming from one who was prominent while on earth, the world expects some evidence of identity. The message may be just a piece of moralising, so do not be offended if the critic says: "This might have emanated from anyone, or even from your subconscious mind." When names are asked in connection with this type of message, the communicator will probably reply: "The name does not matter!" And if a name is given, it will usually be a symbolic one conveying little to your mind. Do not bother about names unless seeking evidence of survival. In that case the name will be important. But names can also be a great hindrance to those who may read, or hear, your utterances.

In this matter of great names, the partially-developed Medium must beware of his own vanity. There are those in spirit-life who will test you in this direction. However, if you receive a message and a great name is given, and you feel *reasonably sure* it is authentic, stick to your guns and do not fear criticism. Vanity is bad, but cowardice is worse, and one has sometimes to brave the criticisms and sneers of the ultra-intellectual.

My last point is of equal importance. Mediumship exists independently of character, but its value is increased when the Medium strives unto the highest. For "birds of a feather flock together." Mediumship is not ours for selfish aggrandisement, but for use in the service of humanity.

The Medium is a potential prophet of the Lord. Upon him rests a grave responsibility. He is called upon to tend the altar of spiritual communion. Upon him, to a large degree, rests the responsibility of keeping the movement sweet and clean. He will be tempted more than the average man; will find himself the storm-centre of contending influences; he will be misunderstood. But if he is prayerful, aspiring, striving for the best, he will enlist the "battalions of heaven" upon his side. He will have his periods of deep depression, moments of

weakness when he may fall, but he can win through to the central core where he will realise the inner power which sustains, guides, upholds. He must be careful but also be courageous. He will be called upon to make many sacrifices of which the world and even his most intimate friends will know nothing, but he can win through to the centre of peace and confident trust in God. If he holds on he will be conscious of the divine blessing, and will have riches of which the world knows nothing. But let him remember "many are called but few are chosen." To be chosen he must work and prove his fitness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

"A DEATH-BED PHENOMENON"

Sir,—With reference to the letter of E. M. (in LIGHT of April 12th) is not this a case of overshadowing? It has, I think, been proved that a living person can project a secondary part of himself, probably his soul, to another place, and be recognised, and it is on record that this secondary part has also taken control of and spoken through a Medium. This has occasioned some confusion in some minds, but it should be quite logical, because if a man is a spirit here and now he should be able to use some, if not all, the powers that he will have in the spirit world.

Thought is creative, and strong thought probably caused the Vicar to send or project his soul to the place and person prayed for, and as the body was vacant, the spirit having left, it "overshadowed" and therefore became more like him.

This frequently happens when the spirit entity takes full control of the Medium, although the spirit may be only partly present through having risen to a high sphere.

"Feda" has told me, through Mrs. Leonard, that my mother is only partly present, owing to this cause.

VERITAS.

* * *

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHICAL SCIENCE

"I.J.K." (Ealing) writes:

In a Statement published on April 14th, 1930, the Bishop of Birmingham explains why he proposes to flout the law in order to secure obedience to ecclesiastical authority in his diocese. To the ordinary man the method and example seem singularly ill chosen to achieve the end in view. But, however that may be, the Bishop goes on to make a statement which will be challenged at once by all conversant with psychic matters when he refers to "the error that a spiritual presence can be attached to, or inhere in, inert matter." The facts of psychometry indicate that living things, and particularly human beings, influence objects they touch in such manner that persons having the peculiar sensibility can sense, with more or less detail, from the objects, the mental circumstances of their former owners. These facts are generally admitted by those who have investigated the matter, quite apart from their attitude towards survival. It seems more reasonable to class this influence as spiritual than as material. Good theology and bad science cannot in the long run be compatible, and one is compelled to suggest, with the greatest respect for Dr. Barnes' outstanding distinction in mathematics, that his attitude in this instance is bad science.

Light.

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SLEEP AND THE MYSTERIES

"IT is an appropriate utterance that sleep is one of the lesser mysteries of death . . . sleep is an initiation into death." We quote from Plutarch in his consolatory address to Apollonius. Indeed one could quote extensively from the ancients regarding the association between inspiration and sleep, recognising that by sleep the early writers meant *trance*. There is no doubt whatever about that. We can "search the Scriptures" and find there testimony to trance, even more explicit than the testimony of the so-called profane philosophers who wrote of the inner life of the soul. There is therefore something pathetic in the eagerness of the "higher critics" of the Bible to cast out the "miraculous" element, and with it this question of the trance. We can put aside for the moment the other "miraculous" stories, knowing that they also, for the most part, can be substantiated by scientific Spiritualism to-day.

What is the trance, with which many of us are so familiar in mediumship and also in other forms, occasionally even in our own personal experience? In plain speech we should call it a "deep sleep" as the New Testament occasionally describes it, although the word "trance" is also used. Scientifically it could be called a hypnotic state—not a very exact description. Actually it is a condition in which the personal life of the individual concerned is temporarily submerged and dominated by some other power. It may be on a low or a high level, ranging from a dull stupor through all the intermediate grades up to the sublime state

of ecstasy, known sometimes as "cosmic consciousness." So we may have "obsession" of various kinds; trance control in which the Medium, deeply entranced, is used as the instrument of communication on the part of spirit communicators; or those states of inspiration and illumination which Davis termed the "superior condition." Such a condition may be spontaneous or self-induced. The trances of Tennyson seem to be examples of the latter kind.

A treatise on the trance might fill a large volume. It is not necessary to do more here than to set down a few salient points on the subject.

In the first place, the trance is not at all such a rare phenomenon as one might suppose, in view of the general ignorance concerning it. All prophetic dreams, all those experiences in sleep which relate the sleeper to the spiritual world, have in them some element of the trance. "Sleep talking" and "sleep walking" exhibit distinct traces of the trance state. They are psychic in their nature, and like all psychic manifestations are liable to forms of disturbance and misdirection, for our daily lives—especially in these times—are not favourable to health of mind and soul, and only in rare cases can the trance be wholly natural and harmonious. But in its high and pure form it is all that Plutarch represented it to be. It is "one of the lesser mysteries of death;" it is "an initiation into death." It is a gateway through which the soul, while still in the flesh, may gain access to that "celestial garden" to which it shall pass altogether when finally freed from the trammels of earth. It can raise us up to those high heavens of which the Apostle wrote.

The trance is a fact both in the natural and the celestial order. We have waited for the Theologian to discourse with knowledge on the matter, and we have waited in vain. We now listen for the voice of Science and we listen with hope, for already there are whispers of the matter amongst those men of science who take account of the mind as well as of the body of man.

The poets have given their testimony, and it is well, for the poetry of to-day is the science of to-morrow.

AS THE YEARS GO BY.

Let me grow lovely, growing old;
For many fine things too,
Laces and ivory and gold,
And silks need not be new.
There is great beauty in old trees,
Old streets and ruins old,
Why should not I, as well as these,
Grow lovely, growing old!

—ANON.

SIDELIGHTS

THE NEWLY-DISCOVERED
PLANET
SOME REFLECTIONS

By B. M. GODSAL (California).

TO get a full understanding of how rare an event the discovery of another planet is, one must bear in mind that among all the stars known to man there are still but nine planets—so named by the Greeks from their word meaning “to wander,” because the planets appear to wander aimlessly among the fixed stars. To the most of us, one planet, more or less, makes no difference, but astronomers will labour for years to find out if the newcomer falls in with “Bode’s law,” and whether it moves and behaves in accordance with the family traditions.

A generation or so ago, when the “nebular hypothesis” was still in vogue, it was thought probable that every star, during the first period of its condensation, had at certain intervals thrown off one of a series of planets; and that they, rotating, had in like manner created their attendant satellites, or moons. This theory of Laplace’s is now followed by the “tidal theory,” favoured by Sir J. Jeans, and by other advanced astronomers.

The tidal theory supposes that if two stars moving through space happen to pass close to each other, so that they are not much farther apart than the new planet is from the sun, the more massive of the two stars will raise disruptive tides in the lesser one, and will draw from it a long extension of gaseous matter, which ultimately will attain gravitational stability by breaking up, and condensing into planets. According to this theory, our whole family of nine planets sprang from the sun at a single birth; while the star responsible for their creation kept on its way, and has since become lost in the depths of space.

Mankind is chiefly interested in the likelihood of there being other habitable worlds like the earth. The tidal theory rather argues against such a probability. The average distance between stars in space is so enormous that such a near approach as that which gave birth to the solar system must needs be an extremely rare occurrence. Eddington holds that not one star in a hundred millions can have met with the precise experience that would have endowed it with a system of planets. Jeans thinks that “life must be limited to a tiny fraction of the universe.”

Nevertheless, both of the astronomers just quoted hold that the chances are that somewhere in the universe there are other planets offering conditions suitable for life as we know it. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for maintaining a plurality of worlds; to-day it seems more impious to declare the heavens barren of life. But evidently this earth, with its infinity of delicate adjustments designed for making life possible, comes nearer to being unique than scientists have hitherto supposed.

Recent investigations tend to show that Nature’s ultimate object in dotting space with myriads of blazing suns, is the production of a few planets suitable for the sustaining of life. Matter subjected to the immense pressures and high temperatures that exist in stars becomes annihilated, and passes into radiation. And it seems that within each stellar crucible, primitive matter, in the process of changing into radiation, leaves what Prof. Jeans calls “a sort of final ash resulting from the combustion of the universe.” This ash comprises the familiar chemical elements; which come into being in the outer and cooler parts of a star, whence they would be drawn away to form habitable planets, such as the earth, were another star to approach close enough—in the manner described above.

It is not unreasonable, therefore, to regard the universe as a factory for turning out an occasional habitable planet.

A CORRESPONDENT in the American journal *Psychic Research* for April, gives the following psychic experience. “My niece, Mrs. W. [the name and address are on the file of the American Society for Psychological Research] on the night of March 20th, 1924, arose at some time near the middle of the night to see if the children, asleep in an adjoining room, were properly covered, as they appeared restless. She called to her son, Robert, and asked him what was the matter: and on his stating that he was cold, she took a blanket from a chair and went out into the hall on her way to the children’s room just beyond. The hall was quite dark, although lighted by a street light to some extent, through a window in the front of the house. (She was standing with her back to this light). Before her stretched a long passage leading to the rear of the house and to the bathroom. As she reached the beginning of this passage she saw, just opposite to the door to the children’s room, coming towards her from the rear of the passage, a woman.”

* * *

A description of the woman’s dress and hair is given, and we are told that her right hand covered her mouth and chin, partially obscuring her features. The account goes on, “Her gaze was directed to the ground before her, nor did she raise her eyes at any time. She advanced rather quickly and the sound of her footsteps was distinctly audible. At first Mrs. W. thought she might be a friend of the servant, whose room was at the rear of the passage; but soon she saw this could not be. The figure advanced until it was a foot or two from her face, when, by an extraordinary effort, being now thoroughly alarmed, she managed to turn on an electric switch near at hand. Upon flooding the hall with light nothing whatever could be found to account for the phenomenon. A neighbour stated that the appearance of the phantom corresponded with that of a Mrs. X, who had died in the house some time before, it having been built by the X family, the owners previous to the W’s.”

* * *

In the course of a two-column article entitled “Man’s Survival a Reality,” in the Bristol *Evening World* of April 22nd, Mr. Fredk. J. Crawley, Chief Constable of Newcastle, remarked: “I have, quite dispassionately, investigated psychic phenomena for the past ten years. I find their reality proved, better than any judicial case, because the evidence of thousands of competent separate investigators is cumulative. My attention has been mainly directed to a study of the subconscious mind. The amount of psychic phenomena for which no spiritistic implication is necessary is very great. There is a sufficiency, however, which, in my judgment, clearly demonstrates Survival.”

* * *

The above article in the *Evening World* gave rise to a correspondence by readers of that journal, among them being J.C.L., of Weston-super-Mare, who, in the issue of April 24th, said, “As to messages of value, I personally know many people who have received messages from their dead which have been of the utmost value to them. At one spiritualistic meeting I attended, no fewer than 12 people received messages on personal problems which were troubling them—yet all these persons were absolutely unknown to the Medium.”

—or earth. And it is sufficiently obvious that such an earth, judging by the one we know, is specially designed to be a home and a training-school for man. For experience tells us that man, placed in such surroundings, develops an ever-increasing consciousness, giving him pre-eminence over stars and cosmic forces, which serve merely to provide for his needs.

To suppose that this consciousness can be destroyed by the very mechanism designed to serve it, would be equivalent to supposing that the dominant idea at the back of the universe is foolishness. Fortunately, we have proof positive that human consciousness is indestructible. And now we are learning that the stars in their courses are at work providing homes suitable for life at an early stage of its development. And when we contemplate Nature's lavish expenditure in providing man with a temporary material home, imagination will not so much as attempt to depict the permanent home of life, when untrammelled by the flesh.

Physical science is redeeming past errors; for in pointing out to man his unique position in the material universe, it is preparing his mind to accept the truth of his own immortality.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

By H. ERNEST HUNT.

ABOUT the year 1760 there began the Industrial Revolution; there were the developments of coal and iron and the coming of machinery which created an age of power. This led naturally to the growth of factories and towns, with all the abuses and difficulties associated with them; and to the reign of capital. Manufactures brought increasing trade and accelerated facilities for travel by land and sea. From that period the increase in invention and device has never ceased, and is to-day proceeding at a speed unheard of in the previous history of the world.

With prophetic insight the essentials of such a situation were dealt with by Moses in his words to the Israelites. He tells them that they have been brought into a good land wherein nothing is lacking, "whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass," and he suggests that for this good land they should be thankful—as we ourselves, who live in the good land of this our England, should be. But he warns them that when their gold and their silver are multiplied, and they have built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when all that they have is multiplied, they should not forget the Lord their God; for man cannot live by bread alone.

To-day we are in exactly such a situation as is here foreshadowed. There is the extraordinary multiplication of the interests and activities of the outer world, the incessant call of distracting things, and the same tendency to forget and lose hold of the things of the spirit. Yet the same warning that Moses gave—that if they did so forget they would perish as other nations before them had perished—is as true to-day as it was then. Nation after nation has perished as the result of losing virility through luxury and riches, forgetting the real meaning of life in the mad rush after non-essentials—"where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Nobody decries the "bread," the physical and normal necessities of life; indeed the Lord's prayer definitely makes petition for this "our daily bread." But we may have all the bread that we desire, and more, and yet may suffer from starvation of the soul. We are more than bodies, and therefore we need more than bread. As spirits we need sustenance for the soul, and only in the things of the inner world can we come by this.

Brotherhood is food for the soul, kindness and the helping hand make for its growth. The ideal of service

in the world develops the world's heart and acts as counterpoise to the material side ruled by the head. Love is what the world needs to-day; not a sloppy sentimentalism, but a virile recognition of the fact that our visible body lives in a visible world, while the spirit already lives in a spiritual sphere which is here and around us now. We are intended so to live and work in the visible that we lay up treasure in the invisible, in the character which persists when the mortal body is no more.

Think of your wireless; there are the physical air-waves which produce the physical sounds we hear, but it is the invisible ether-waves that are at the heart of the matter. So in our own sphere, the visible things around us are secondary to the invisible; it is not so much the action that matters as the thought which gives rise to it. The outer is ever the reflex to the inner. So if we desire to make a better world it is useless to continue looking to further multiplication of external facilities, laws, ordinances, adjustments, concessions, and so on; we must make better men and women.

"But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live," proceeds the text, and thus it is. The "words" are those of love, and we recognise them in the world as honesty, square-dealing, service, sympathy, tolerance and kindness; shall we not build these? Millionaire and beggar alike have souls, and they must be nourished, but the bread alone cannot finally satisfy. So in our inner selves, in the quiet pointing of the thoughts to real brotherhood, we attune our hearts to these "words" of God. And seeking first that kingdom which is within, we shall presently wake to find that in the outer world many blessings are being added.

TALKING OF PSYCHIC BOOKS

By A REVIEWER OF THEM.

HAVING perused some hundreds of the class of books that come under the vague description of "psychic," I may have some slight qualification to speak on the subject. There are too many "psychic books." We get quantity at the expense of quality. These volumes pour from the printing-presses of Europe and America, a dismaying flood of grey mediocrity with occasional scintillating patches of outstanding brightness—infrequent jewels set in a tasteless background. They reach me, many of these books. I read them, occasionally with silent applause, more often with set teeth and a feeling of irritated boredom. Then, perused and dealt with, they are placed on a shelf, a swiftly-growing collection of worthy and worthless tomes, until a time arrives for the sorting of the goats from the sheep. Until the sorting-out process, one gets from a glance at this bookshelf an impression of grotesque incoherence. Here is a fine forceful work by Doyle, written in vigorous colourful English; rubbing shoulders with it is a turgid pamphlet compiled by a fervent ignoramus who discourses unlearnedly on "Satan in the Seance Room." Side by side with the lofty prose of Lodge is a copy of Mrs. Twiddle's inspired writing, *Tinklings of the Angels' Music*. (A distinct shock!). Here are works by De Brath, Vale Owen, Mrs. Stobart; a forceful witty volume by Bradley; a calm and authoritative treatise by Richet; two invaluable books from the pens of Campbell Holmes and Drayton Thomas respectively; clear-cut evidences by Florizel von Reuter, by Purchas, by Hewitt, K.C., by Blatchford. One's eyes rest appreciatively on the names of Myers, and "M.A. (Oxon.)." Then, with a slight chill one catches sight of *Dewdrops from the Better Land*, by Wilfred Swills, and Miss Gloria Guph's ecstatic outpourings, under the title of *Oh No! They Are Not Dead!!!!* Averting one's gaze, one next encounters *Messages from Mary Ann, Sex and Psychics, Talks with Julius Caesar*, a

RAYs AND REFLECTIONS

paper-covered biography of Gaga the Holy Mystic, and a mountainous tome by Professor O. Ghosh which staggers under the title of *Metagnomic and Cryptesthesic Sensitivity in relation to Human Awareness*. At this point one takes a deep breath and sets about clearing the book-shelf for the hundredth time.

Why are such quantities of these mediocre works put out? They are well-meant. Their authors are filled with unselfish zeal. But that is not enough. To repair a watch, ride a horse, play a piano or construct a book—these things need training. There is no welcome for the untrained amateur, unless he or she possesses genius. And the ability to indite a readable letter or compose a high-school essay is not sufficient qualification for authorship.

The history of many of the less distinguished "psychic books" (excluding the semi-scientific variety, of which there are mercifully few) might be as follows. Mr. X., let us say, investigates psychic phenomena for the first time and receives planchette messages that astound him. Or it may be that Miss Z. finds that her hand has a tendency to produce automatic script. The details are unimportant; some form of "communications" is received. Filled with propagandist fervour, the recipient of these writings is seized with the notion of "giving them to the world"—in practical language, publishing them in book form. Perhaps a further incentive to this ambition comes in the form of a "communication" indicating the urgent need of giving the messages to an impatient public.

And now for stage two. Some kind of expert opinion is sought. The expert usually says "Don't!"—and at once becomes unpopular. Stage three: a publisher is found who is willing to undertake the issue if the author will put down a substantial sum of money, or guarantee the sale of so many hundred copies. Stage four: a thousand copies are printed, forty are given away, thirty are sent out to book reviewers—and twenty are sold! The balance of these unhappy volumes then cumbers a publisher's warehouse until the day arrives for their disposal as "remainders" or as "pulp."

Are we too kind to these pathetic attempts at book-making? We look at these sad examples of misplaced zeal, and reflect sympathetically on the human side of the history that led up to their appearance in volume form. We write frankly what we think; then, as we would not wound, we charitably scratch out and re-write—letting down something that evades the brutal truth while not being actually dishonest. For it is possible to see some element of good even in the worst. But is this excessive tenderness towards mediocrity (and worse) a bad thing for the movement? Suppose we said with unqualified candour, "Such-and-such book is, in our opinion, quite worthless, and should not have been published!"—what then? Sensitive souls would be wounded. There would be friction in the camp. But the effect might be salutary in the long run. For at present our need, in the matter of "psychic" volumes is fewer and better.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR W. H. EVANS.

Mr. R. A. Bush acknowledges with best thanks the following donations:—

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Mr. R. A. Bush, 8, Mostyn Road, Merton Park, S.W.19, will gladly acknowledge in LIGHT further donations to this Testimonial, which it is hoped will receive the generous support of all friends.

A pardonable error one sometimes encounters is the "singular" use of the word "phenomena." A recent correspondent who sought advice as to some alleged supernatural knockings in his house, after setting down details of the happening, finished up with the question, "Now, sir, should I be correct in calling this a 'phenomena'?" The correspondent was informed that he would *not* be correct in so doing—for more than one reason.

* * *

I occasionally hear complaints concerning the poor quality of some books dealing with Spiritualism—"psychic books" as they are called. The complaint is just, although I would hazard the suggestion that they would not seem so mediocre but for the great number of fine works on Spiritualism published of late years. And although there has been a good deal of low-grade psychic literature I cannot recall any psychic books with a vicious tendency. The books have been "poor but honest," and they appeal to a circle of readers who are not fastidious about literary quality. There is a clear difference between such books and a more pretentious type of literature, those clever novels, which seem to be the product of what someone described as "eroticism, neuroticism and tommy-roticism."

* * *

Here is a charming little story which I heard lately. It concerns an old lady of straitened means who yet is full of the spirit of service, helping others wherever she can. She was accustomed to eke out her tiny income by taking part in magazine competitions out of which she occasionally made a few shillings. One day the competition was for the best definition of Poverty, and she sent in her effort. In due time a letter was received from the magazine, and she opened it with trembling fingers wondering perhaps if it would contain more than the usual small sum. Judge of her amazement when she found a cheque for a very large amount, sufficient to secure her from poverty for the rest of her days, and a letter stating that the competition judges were so pleased with her answer that instead of dividing up the prize in small amounts as usual they had decided to give her the entire sum. Her definition was that Poverty was a state of being helpless to help the helpless.

* * *

Some time ago I heard a literary woman remark on the greatness of a mind which could deduce a future life by means of mathematics—she was referring, I think, to Pythagoras. To us who know little or nothing of mathematics it does seem rather wonderful. But, as we know, it is the mathematicians who are to-day becoming prominent in scientific inquiry, and there is no reason why they should not eventually, in their own way, tackle the question of survival. It is a curious fact that in a long script conveying information about the after-life which reached me lately the discarnate communicators said they had a number of abstruse facts to give but they wanted a mathematician on this side to whom they might convey them—others would not understand. That message, of course, may be important or it may not. Psychic messages are still in an early stage of development and must prove themselves by their results. Meantime we may remember that Proclus, the Greek philosopher, proclaimed that "Every spirit is indestructible and incorruptible," and based this and other similar statements on the authority of mathematics.

D.G.

NOTES AND REVIEWS

"UNSIGNED LETTERS: FROM AN ELDER BROTHER."
(L. N. Fowler & Co. 6s.)

THERE is nothing in the Foreword, nor in the beginnings of this book, to show or suggest that the fraternal relationship referred to is other than that the Elder Brother of the text is a discarnate brother of one incarnate. That is not so. It is the reader who is brother in the brotherhood sense to a member of the Theosophical brotherhood who resides at South Gabriola, B.C., Canada, and is one of the Illuminati, of whom "there may be three or four, or perhaps six living amidst the millions of Earth's children to-day." Not a little of the "teaching" in these letters is truly commendable. The first thing the chela, or disciple, has to learn from his Elder Brother, or Guru, is that "all knowledge, all experience, all worlds," are within himself. This would be well enough, if the chela were approximately perfect—but he would then be a Guru, or one of the Illuminati. His progress would not come by reading books, attending lectures, or joining "occult" societies, but by a progressive unfoldment of the inner consciousness, to be won in one way only—"by living the life." The Work of the Guru Order is to "bring about an entire change and a re-ordering of all conditions of human life." Perhaps the ordinary reader will be able to discern the principle of Brotherhood in the declaration following: "Of the curious, the uncertain, the waverers and the insincere we take no account—they are worthless in either camp, stubble to be burned in the heat of that Day which has already dawned."

The Theosophical origin of these "Unsigned Letters" is disclosed fully in the eulogy of Practical Occultism by H.P.B., as a guide for the chelas of our time. Naturally reincarnation is a conspicuous feature of this school: "Again and again this same group of souls comes back to physical embodiment to carry yet one step forward this Work which is peculiarly theirs."

A.R.

* * *

"HARTMANN'S INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALISM." (The Occult Press, Jamaica, N.Y., U.S.A. Price 1 dollar.)

The compiling of a psychic directory is clearly a difficult task. The compiler is faced with a number of prickly problems, one of which is "What shall I include and what shall I exclude?" In the personal section there should certainly appear such names as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and a host of others that represent responsibility and experience. But where are we to stop? In the list of Mediums it is clearly appropriate that such names as Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mrs. Piper, Mr. Aaron Wilkinson, and a hundred or so others should appear; but how are we to determine what names shall *not* appear?

Should there not be some well-defined limit between what is worthy of inclusion and what is not? Perhaps the answer depends upon individual choice, and it would seem that the choice of the compiler of the book under review has been wide and comprehensive.

These remarks are not offered in a spirit of criticism, but rather as an indication of that very wide and jumbled area which comes under the term "psychic." The difficulties faced by the present compiler must have been considerable. To make a worthy, reliable and thoroughly up-to-date directory needs a big staff and substantial capital, and I do not know what difficulties Mr. Hartmann and his associates have had to face in this direction.

I observe, however, on perusing the book, that it is a strange and apparently incongruous mixture—a state of things which is, no doubt, inevitable in present circumstances. Sections are devoted to periodicals, societies, Spiritualist camps, churches, libraries and other appropriate headings. Within these sections are included items which seem a little inharmonious. But it is easy to criticise, and I bear in mind that the present volume is the only up-to-date directory we have, and, furthermore, there is certainly a need for a publication of this type. It is true there is, or was, an *Encyclopadia of Occultism* (which was also far from perfect), but I am not sure if this book is still on the market. So that *faute de mieux* we must accept *Hartmann's International Directory*, with all its faults upon its head, as being in the main a welcome publication. 'Tis not so deep as the *Encyclopadia Britannica*, nor so wide as the *Dictionary of National Biography*; but 'tis enough!

* * *

"LA PRATIQUE DES SCIENCES OCCULTES PEUT ELLES CONDUIRE AU DESEQUILIBRE MENTAL?" By HENRI AZAM. (Paul Leymarie, Paris.)

In this small book of 48 pages M. Azam vigorously contests the conclusion of M. Henri Dessoille as to the mental effect of occult practices. The word "occult" has an unfortunate sound in English ears, suggesting black magic and sorcery. It is clear, however, that both parties to the discussion have in mind what comes, generally, under the heading of "psychic study," including Spiritualism. M. Dessoille, in a long lecture to members of the Institut Métapsychique International, Paris, in 1929, expressed his opinion that "the practice of occult sciences is extremely dangerous to mental equilibrium." In dealing with "spiritism" the lecturer had the grace to say that his observations were not extended to "intelligent groups undertaking serious work," and to admit, frankly, that he had sought for bad examples to illustrate his case. (In parenthesis, it may be borne in mind that Spiritualism in France is a different thing from what we know by that term in this country.)

M. Azam takes his opponent severely to task in the present booklet, and suggests, indirectly, that there may be mental unbalance among those who see such "dangers" in psychic study, as M. Dessoille claims to behold. He cites St. Theresa of Lisieux, St. Francis Xavier, St. Antony of Padua and Joan of Arc as examples of what the psychiatrist would so sweepingly class as neurotics. The author rightly points out that, broadly speaking, there can be no final standard by which mental unbalance can be conclusively determined. The neurotic of to-day may be the saint of to-morrow. His folly may consist, solely, in talking and acting in a way incomprehensible to his neighbours.

In his concluding remarks, M. Azam says: "I have no animosity against any particular doctrine. I am as sympathetic towards Catholicism, as towards Protestantism, Buddhism, Mahommedanism, Theosophy and Spiritism. I have long since got rid of those dogmatic and social prejudices, which are so many limitations that hinder the flow of the Spirit."

N.

MR. SHAW DESMOND.—Mr. Desmond, the well-known novelist, publicist and lecturer, will sail for Canada at the end of July and expects to be away some five months. Secretaries of societies who desire to approach Mr. Desmond with a view to arranging lectures, will please note he will not be speaking in public in this country during the coming winter.

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 Friday, May 9th, at 5 p.m. MRS. BROWNJOHN
 Friday, May 16th, at 5 p.m. MRS. CANNOCK

VOL. IX. No. 1. April, 1930.
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CLASSES AND CIRCLES.
 Wednesdays, 3 p.m., Circle for Clairvoyance (May 14th)
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 MISS EARLE AND MRS. LIVINGSTONE
 Thursdays, 5.30 p.m., Devotional Groups (Absent Healing). MISS STEAD
 Fridays, 3 p.m., Class for Psychical Development (first class May 9th)
 MRS. CAMPBELL

SPECIAL NOTICE.
 During this Session, instead of the usual "At Home," on Friday, "At
 Home" will be held on alternate Fridays at 3.30. Friday, May 16th, Mrs.
 Wabel Beatty will give a short address on one of the chapters in the book
 "Man Made Perfect," followed by a discussion. (Tea 9d.).

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 Sunday, May 11th, at 6.30 (Healing Service) Mr. PERCY BEARD
 Wednesday, May 14th, at 7.30. (Personal Experiences) Mr. A. VOUT PETERS

JEWISH SOCIETY FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH
 The 5th open meeting of the Society will be held on THURSDAY,
 MAY 15th, at ARMITAGE HALL, 224, Great Portland Street,
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 Monday, May 12th, at 3. Psychometry MRS. S. D. KENT
 Tuesday, May 13th, at 7.30. Clairvoyance MRS. MEURIG MORRIS
 Thursday, May 15th, at 7.30. Clairvoyance MR. GLOVER BOTHAM
 Friday, May 16th, at 7.30.

GROUP SEANCES.
 Tuesday, May 13th, at 7.30 MR. VOUT PETERS
 Wednesday, May 14th, at 3 MRS. NEVILLE

DIRECT VOICE SEANCES.
 Monday, May 12th, at 8 MRS. HENDERSON
 Wednesday, May 14th at 3.30 MRS. HENDERSON
 Friday, May 16th, at 8 MRS. HENDERSON

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6.30 p.m.—*Speaker*: Mrs. St. Clair Stobart.

Clairvoyante: Mrs. Livingstone.

Clairvoyant: Mr. Austin.

May 18th, 11 a.m., Rev. Drayton Thomas.
 Clairvoyant: Mr. Glover Botham
 6.30 p.m., Mrs. de Crespigny.
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May 21st. "Talents."

Wednesdays (alternate) at 5 p.m. Discussion Classes.

Leader: Mr. H. ERNEST HUNT.

May 14th. "The Physical and the Astral Selves."

Thursdays (alternate) at 8 p.m. General Lectures.

May 15th. Mr. CHARLES SIMPSON (entranced by "Dr. Lascelles,") on "A Spirit Doctor's Views on Prayer."

Chair: Mr. Henry Collett.

NOTE: Admission free to members to all ordinary meetings. Non-members cannot be admitted to any meeting except on the presentation of a ticket purchased BEFORE THE DAY of the meeting, or as the guest of a member, who may purchase a ticket at the time of the lecture.

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Bibliography 1d. (classified list of books useful for the student.)

THE SECRETARY attends every day, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., except Saturdays and until the conclusion of lectures, and is at all times prepared to meet enquirers.

VALUE OF READING BEFORE EXPERIMENTING.

The Alliance strongly advises the enquirer first to undertake a preparatory course of reading, even if it be comparatively slight. Communication between the two worlds probably opens naturally and frequently without conscious awareness on our part. Those communications of which we are intellectually emotionally aware, depend upon the exercise of the psychic faculties, which are by no means simple.

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 what is given him, and examine carefully in the light of his reason whatever is given 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 up either good or bad conditions. The gift itself varies in power. The psychic state of a Medium may harmonise with the psychic state of the 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 friends.

Psychic experimentation naturally involves subtleties of psychological nature, the variety of which can never be understood without some acquaintance with the whole range of psychic phenomena.

The L.S.A. is an Unsectarian Body.

OBSERVATIONS

The Psychic faculties are very delicate, and subject to the influence of definite thoughts of the sitter.

A strong suspicion, without any justification, that the Medium is dishonest, combined with a determination to find deception, would act adversely upon the Medium who, in the supernormal state during the period of the sitting, is highly sensitive to suggestion.

It is to be observed that there is a close parallel between mediumistic states and those of ordinary hypnotised subjects.

An open mind and complete passivity is necessary. Honest criticism in the inquirer is natural, but active criticism causing mental activity during the sitting should be avoided.

A critical analysis should be made after, but not during the sitting.

NON-SUCCESSFUL SITTINGS

It is unavoidable that some sittings will be failures for several reasons:

Sitter and Medium may prove psychically unsuited to each other.

The psychic power fluctuates independently of the will and often of the knowledge of the Medium. It is not like a telephonic message.

It should be understood that sitters sit at their own risk as to whether results are satisfactory or otherwise. If a Medium be *conscious* of lack of power, no sitting will be held, and the fee will be refunded on application to the Secretary.