

Light

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research

Edited by DAVID GOW

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A Message to Our Readers

To all our contributors during the past year; to our launch subscribers who have supported LIGHT for many years; to the new readers who have found in LIGHT helpful ministrations that have encouraged them to continue to read its pages, and to those who have generously endeavoured to assist us to increase our usefulness by an increased circulation, we tender our warmest thanks for their helpful services—and, as gratitude is said to be “a ready sense of favours to come,” we heartily invite their continued co-operation in “spreading the Light.”

NOTES BY THE WAY

HORACE'S lament over the “flying years” comes aptly to mind at a time when December is nearing its end: “Alas! Posthumus, the years pass swiftly away.” The brevity of life and the approach of old age have always had a pathetic fascination for the finer spirits of the world, when under the influence of materialism, and even afterwards, for nothing lofty or beautiful in poetry, philosophy or art quite escapes the sweetness and mystery of life's vanishings. Even one of the earliest Christians, immersed in the sunshine of the Christian hope, sighed over the spectacle. Life, he said, is but as a vapour which appeared for a little while and then vanished away. But these are the minor keys of the “music of humanity.” The true seer, who can penetrate beyond the illusions, observes that the vanishing values are only the false values; that as veil after veil is withdrawn the eternal splendours, the abiding values, become manifest. We have read somewhere three inscriptions on three arches over the doorway of an Italian church. On one is carved a chaplet of roses with the words, “All that delights is but for a moment”; on another is a cross and the inscription, “All that disturbs is but for a moment.” But on the central arch appears the greatest of the mottoes: “Only that matters which is Eternal.”

THE late Mr. E. Wake Cook, a well-known artist in his day, maintained that there was a close connection between diet and psychic or spiritual development. He mentioned the case of Andrew Jackson Davis, whom he regarded as the world's greatest seer. Run over, when a child, by a timber-wagon, Davis suffered a permanent injury to the stomach, so that he could only take a small quantity of food, and to this he attributed the rapid development of his spiritual gifts. When preparing for his higher clairvoyant sight, he reduced even this small quantity, entirely abstaining from meat. Yet Davis was singularly healthy in body. At eighty his figure was upright, and he was as active and mentally alert as many a much younger man. Well, there is a moral to be drawn from that, although it is not so important now as in older days. People do not nowadays eat so much; less meat is consumed and doubtless there is a corresponding increase of intelligence, more refinement and a keener sensitiveness to the finer forces of life. The comparative poverty to which civilisation is being reduced to-day has, then, some compensating benefits. Naturally a “feast of the soul” will not possess attractions for some. They would not seek it, unless as of old, a mandate went forth to “compel them to come in.” Adversity is a great compelling power.

* * *

THE statement in some well-authenticated cases of automatic writing that the communicating spirit has allowed the introduction of irrelevant matter in order to keep the power going—“to hold the line” so to speak—is worth attention. We have often noticed that in spirit-communication there is something analogous to what electricians call “make and break”—indeed, the thing is often met with in wireless; the sounds grow faint, fade out, and then suddenly resume their full strength. We see it, too, in the case of those little spasms of dimness or momentary extinction which happens to our electric lights now and then. There is a clear analogy here with the “power” at work in psychic communication. In automatic writing we have a subject still much vexed with controversy. But experience shows that much which passes as psychic communication has no deeper origin than the subconscious activities of the automatist. It comes occasionally even in genuine communications. Many times have the unseen communicators repudiated certain parts of a message on the ground that it came from the Medium and not from them. And, as mentioned above, sometimes they have indicated that they were aware of the irrelevant or spurious matter, but permitted its introduction in order to bridge a gap and “keep the power going.”

* * *

The one remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines: Earth's shadows
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, [fly];
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

SHELLEY.

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF NAOMI BACON

MRS Violet Forman of 18, Drayton Gardens, S.W. writes :—

On November 20th, 1930, on the premises of the London Spiritualist Alliance I had a sitting with Miss Naomi Bacon (Mrs. Anderson) which was one of such unusual interest and evidential quality that I would like to describe it here.

At the time of my sitting I was much preoccupied by a certain personal affair concerning my son, and hoped to receive some help and guidance, but in this seance I received no direct answer to that which was uppermost in my mind.

After a very short interval the Medium went under the control of "Sunbeam" who at once asked me why I was wearing white beads and not the green ones that I had worn when she had seen me before.

[It was true I had once met the Medium in private life and was then wearing a green jade necklace; this time I was wearing a pearl one, but as my overcoat and scarf were tightly closed at neck it was impossible for the Medium to see what I had on.]

She then proceeded to describe my mother very accurately from a physical point of view and her personality as well as her passing over. She said, "In life she had always got her own way, so now she still wanted to talk to you first but there are so many who want to communicate with you."

"Sunbeam" then gave me many details of a private nature concerning my family and relations.

Before finishing her talk "Sunbeam" said, "Your mother says she finds life so different here to what she thought it would be like, and she laughs when she thinks of how she loved her pots and pans and how she hated it when she saw them all being dispersed when you left. Brack. Brick. Brick? Brack? How funny! I can't make out what she means."

[My mother died in 1916 and after her death we sold a property called "Bric à Brac" in France and all her china etc. was disposed of and dispersed].

Then she continued, saying, "Harry wants to talk."

This next communicator was described very accurately but to be quite sure of the personality I asked: "Where did you die?"

SUNBEAM: "He says he can't remember only that he left his home and crossed water. He wants to thank you for staying with him at the end and after. He wanted to tell you he was going but could not. He wanted to say he was thirsty and that he saw Gerald was there; he also was glad he was shaved."

[My brother Harry N. died in Italy some years ago. I was with him during his last illness and remained near him after the passing. He was shaved, as he says, after death. I have not been able to identify Gerald.]

He then spoke for a considerable time on private affairs concerning his wife and two sons, showing an accurate knowledge of their affairs. Suddenly "Sunbeam" said, "Oh! there is a very tall man stalking up and down. He says although people thought he was mad because he looked after lunatics he was not. He was very fond of you and regretted having done what he did, but he hated your marriage. However he is trying to make up just now."

[This was an old uncle who was one of the Commissioners in Lunacy, very tall and gaunt, the last person I should ever have thought of as a communicator].

Then there was a silence. The Medium seemed distressed and moaned a good deal. Eventually "Sunbeam" said, "Oh, there is a man who wants to control but he has never done it before. Oh dear! Oh dear! My neck and face feel so odd; it hurts." So I suggested it would

be kind if she put the person through as she might be of help to him. Instantly the Medium seemed to crumple up in her chair and her breathing became very heavy and difficult. It was a distressing sound—then after several attempts a deep male voice spoke in a whisper. "Ich... Ich bin... Ich bin... R... R.H... [giving the name] Gradually the whisper grew in strength and a voice speaking in German gave me many details of his life and death on earth and his present conditions. This lasted for over fifteen minutes. Then another voice which seemed to be speaking with equal difficulty said in German, "I also want the chance of speaking," to which the R voice replied, "No, no, this is my chance. I have still much to say; you can wait!"

I again intervened and suggested this new communicator should be allowed to speak. Then with some reluctance permission was granted and several matters of private, personal and political interest were dealt with by the communicator calling himself J. Once again R took control after asking for prayers to be said for his entire family, "past and living."

During these two last communications the control "Sunbeam" never spoke. Then, as the man's voice faded into a whisper, once more she came back, crying, "Oh! my mouth is full of blood," and out of the Medium's mouth saliva trickled.

[This communicator met his death in tragic circumstances—his throat being shot away].

Then "Sunbeam," evidently much distressed, called upon "Feda" and "Pollyanna" (the well-known controls of Mrs Leonard and Miss McGregor respectively) to come to her assistance. There followed some conversation between them, but of a confused character, and in the middle of it the Medium came to and complained of the taste of blood in her mouth and wondered what was wrong with her head.

With regard to these two last communicators, I have been able to verify them, and also the fact that the Medium does not speak or know German. I think one of the most interesting facts of this very remarkable sitting, which lasted two hours, was, as I mentioned at the beginning, that I had gone with a very definite desire to gain help in a certain direction and I got nothing helpful for myself as I hoped, but only very definite messages from other people who used me as a link.

CHILDREN AND SPIRIT LIFE

Mrs. E. R. RICHARDS sends us the following excerpt from communications received through Mrs. Hester Dowden, being answers to some questions put to a spirit-communicator. They are curiously suggestive.

QUESTION: *What state are children in before they are born?*

ANSWER: They are all there before they go down to the earth; the generations stretch before and behind each of us, but until a child has had its earth-existence it is not conscious of its own soul. It cannot love or hate until it has gone down to earth.

QUESTION: *Can children be born in your world from mere thought here?*

ANSWER: Yes, it happens often, more often than you imagine. But children must go through the earth experience before they recognise their parents, so they take refuge in any family that chances to give them an opportunity, and those children are quite unlike the other members of the family they enter.

External objects present us with appearances; concerning them therefore, we possess opinions rather than knowledge. Ideal reality exists behind appearances. The object perceived is different from the mind which perceives it. We therefore have only a picture of it. Ideal truth is not so perceived.—PLOTINUS.

IMMORTALITY AND EXACT SCIENCE

By CHARLES WICKSTEED ARMSTRONG

SINCE the publication of my first article under the above heading, several letters have appeared in *LIGHT* questioning, and, in one instance, ridiculing the idea that Time is the fourth dimension.

I presume these people are aware that Einstein is responsible for the theory, and that it is held to-day by all leading mathematicians. Perhaps, however, they are not aware that Einstein's theories (which all hang upon his view of the nature of Time) received the most conclusive confirmation known to the science of logic, when Eddington discovered, through direct observation, the curvature of light-rays, some time after its theoretical discovery by Einstein as a consequence of Relativity. It was in exactly the same way that Adam's theories leading to the discovery of the planet Neptune received conclusive confirmation when subsequently that planet was actually seen through the telescope.

Now if Time is a dimension, it is evident that past and future must be directions in that dimension, and that, to an understanding not tied down to a particular viewpoint, all Time is co-existent, since all things in Time form parts of the Time-Space Universe.

When we speak therefore of a "four-dimensional dream" or "four-dimensional imagery," it is not mysticism, nor poetic license but a concept thoughtfully and legitimately deduced from scientific data.

To make the matter clearer, let me give an instance :

I dreamt one night that I heard burglars in the house. I got up (in my dream) and went to search for them. I could not at first find anyone, but suddenly caught sight of a man slipping into my bedroom, and I followed him. I locked the door behind me on entering and took the key. As I failed to find him in the room, I finally got into bed and put the key under my pillow. I then put out the light. Very soon I felt a hand furtively searching under my pillow for the key. I seized the hand and woke. . . . It was my wife's, for she, in her sleep, had quite unconsciously pushed her hand under my pillow! Evidently the whole dream had been instantaneous and had been unconsciously invented to explain the hand under the pillow. Needless to say there was no key there. So also the alarm-clock dreams cited by Hildebrandt and Maury's famous dream of the guillotine.

Why do I call these dreams four-dimensional? Because they present a picture in which all events must have been seen simultaneously to the dreamer, though presented to the waking memory as a succession, as explained in J. W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*. In sleep, it is to be inferred, we are capable of imagery of this sort in which events can be seen like different points of a landscape, all there and in order. The waking self then glances over the picture in memory, beginning at one end and working on to the other, as one would read a story, because it is unable to see all at once as can the sleeping self.

Once firmly established, the fact that we can, in sleep, see a succession of events as one whole, and especially in view of the presentation of such pictures covering the events of a life-time at the moment of death, as testified by those who have been revived after breathing had ceased, it seems most reasonable to suppose that the faculty is normal to the *psyche*, when not under the limiting influence of brain and physical senses. And to me it seems that this is the only reasonable explanation yet offered for the unconscious storing-up of memory pictures throughout life, being moreover in perfect harmony with the fact

that the co-existence of all Time necessitates our eternal existence; at all events within certain limits of the Time-Space Universe, even if not outside those limits.

I should like to take this opportunity to shew, to the best of my ability, how the dimensional view of Time affords us, too, the one really comprehensive explanation of movement, even if this can have only a remote bearing upon the question of immortality; for since some of the readers of *LIGHT* seem inclined to doubt the truth of the generally-accepted scientific view of the nature of Time, this may help to make clearer this important point, without which my whole argument for immortality would fall to the ground.

More than two thousand years ago Zeno propounded to the Athenians the following dilemma :—

"If a body moves it must either do so where it is or where it is not. Now it is evidently impossible it should act where it is not; and it is also impossible for a body to move where it is, for the moment it began to do so it would cease to be there. Therefore movement is impossible."

Many have been the philosophers who, since Zeno's time, have tried to discover the fallacy of his reasoning; but they have never succeeded—perhaps for the simple reason that Zeno was right. Movement, we may find, is indeed impossible, being in truth an illusion proper to our limited three-dimensional powers of perception. Let me explain.

I have said that what we call "present time" is our field of vision in the Time-Space Universe, being a cross-section "moving" uniformly in a past to future direction. Now imagine objects as lines with varying inclinations, and the cross-section revealing to us successively different points in these lines. It is evident that at each new position of the field of view, the lines, of which only one point is visible at a time on the cross-section, will appear to have changed their position, though they may never in reality have moved at all. This is in fact the nature of our delusion of moving objects. Put Time for length—the fourth dimension, that is, for the third—and you have the case explained.

You will say that if movement is impossible, how can our field of view "move" through the Time-Space Universe? What is probably true is that we get an infinite succession of separate and independent views, differing only very slightly each one from that preceding it, just as we do on the kinema screen, where exactly the same illusion of movement is produced. Even this movement therefore of the field of view is probably only a seeming.

In this connection, let it be remembered that physicists have discovered that, in the atom, the revolving electrons frequently change their orbits, not by moving from one orbit to another, but by disappearing from the one to reappear instantaneously in the other. This may be found ultimately to be true of all "movement." And there is nothing really surprising about it, now that we know that "objects" are nothing more nor less than peculiar manifestations of stored-up energy.

Four-dimensional imagery, then, is the power to see and assimilate simultaneously a succession of cross-sectional views. We cannot do that in the kinema, but in ordinary life, and still more so in dream life, we do so, to a certain extent; and in my previous articles I have postulated that this power is developed in the *psyche* in inverse proportion to its dependence on the physical senses, and more especially the brain. Death then would be the occasion for the greatest advance, but not necessarily for any sudden or complete change from three-dimensional to four-dimensional perception.

THE GOOD COUNTESS

AN ELFIN STORY OF CHARLES DICKENS' DAY

THE following picturesque, romantic and (as befits the season) cheerful story is given (in a condensed form) from the number of *All the Year Round* for September 14, 1861—a popular journal directed by the great Charles Dickens. This story and three others were published with the statement: "They are all derived from credible sources." LIGHT has already published one of the four in the issue of December 22nd, 1928. C. J. P.

When my mother was a young girl living in Switzerland, the Count R. of Holstein, coming to Switzerland for his health, took a house at Vevey. He became acquainted with my mother's parents, and very soon the acquaintance ripened into friendship. One day they received a note from the Count saying that he had to leave suddenly; they heard no more of him for some time. Years later, when the family were staying in Hamburg, Count R. invited them to come over and stay at his castle. It was a wild, beautiful district; the castle, a huge pile, was a relic of feudal times, and, like most old places of the sort, was said to be haunted.

Never having heard the story upon which this belief was founded, my grandmother entreated the Count to tell it. After some little hesitation he consented:—

"Some years ago there lived in this castle a Countess whose charity to the poor was unbounded. She was known far and wide as 'The good Countess R.' and everybody loved her. One night she was awakened from her sleep by a voice, and by the faint light of her lamp she saw a tiny man standing at her bed-side. He said: 'Good Countess R., I have come to ask you to be godmother to my child. Will you consent?'

"She said she would, and at his invitation she followed her tiny guide down the stairs of the castle. In the centre of the courtyard there was a large square well, very deep. It stretched underneath the building nobody knew how far. Having reached the side of this well, the little man blindfolded the Countess and, bidding her follow him, descended some unknown stairs. This was for the Countess a strange experience but she resolved to see the adventure to the end, and descended bravely. They reached the bottom, and when her guide removed the bandage she found herself in a room full of little people like him. The christening was performed; the Countess stood godmother, and, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the mother of the baby took a handful of wood shavings and put them into the Countess's apron.

"'You have been very kind, good Countess R. in coming to be godmother to my child, and your goodness shall not go unrewarded. When you rise to-morrow these shavings will have turned into metal. Out of these you must immediately have made two metal fishes. Take great care of them, for so long as they remain in your family everything will prosper with you; but if one of them ever gets lost you will have troubles without end.'

"Having again covered her eyes, the little man led her out of the well and landed her safely in her own courtyard, where he removed the bandage, and she never saw him again. The fishes were made and carefully kept among the archives of the family. Time passed: everything prospered with the House of R.

"The King of Denmark (of which Holstein was then a part) loaded the members of the family with honours and benefits, and gave the Count high office in his household. For many years everything continued to go well with them. Suddenly, to the consternation of the family, one of the fishes disappeared, and all efforts for its recovery failed. From this time everything went wrong. The Count then living had two sons. While out hunting together one killed the other—whether accidentally or not is uncertain. This was the beginning of sorrows. The King hearing what had occurred, thought it necessary to deprive the Count of the office

he held. Other misfortunes followed. The family fell into discredit. Their lands were sold, or forfeited to the Crown. This process went on through two or three generations. To add to all other misfortunes there was always in the family one mad member.

"And now," continued the Count, "comes the strangest part of the mystery. I had never placed much faith in these mysterious little relics; I regarded the story in connection with them as a fable. I should have continued in this belief but for a very extraordinary circumstance. I received a curious wild letter from a Knight in Norway, saying that he was very ill, but could not die without first seeing and conversing with me. I thought the man mad. I had never heard of him and felt he could have no possible business with me. Throwing the letter aside I did not give it another thought. My correspondent wrote again; my agent, who, in my absence, opened and answered my letters, told him I was in Switzerland for my health, and, if he had anything to say, he had better write as I could not possibly travel as far as Norway. This did not satisfy the Knight, who wrote a third time, beseeching me to come to him, as what he had to tell me was of the utmost importance to us both. I took the sudden resolution to travel to him. I reached the village named in the letter. It was on the Northern coast of Norway. I was led up to the Knight's room, a small circular apartment. There, on a bed, lay the old Knight, evidently at the point of death. He tried to rise as I entered, and gave me such a look of gratitude and relief, that it repaid me for my pains. 'I cannot thank you sufficiently, Count R.,' said he, 'for granting my request. Had I been in a state to travel I should have gone to you; but it was impossible and I could not die without seeing you. My business is short though important. Do you know this?' And he drew from under his pillow the long-lost fish. Of course I knew it. He went on, 'How long it has been in this house I do not know, nor by what means it came here; nor, until quite lately, did I know to whom it rightfully belonged. It did not come here in my time nor in my father's time, and who brought it is a mystery. When I fell ill and when my recovery was pronounced impossible, I heard, one night, a voice telling me that I should not die until I had restored the fish to the Count R. of Breitenburg. I did not know you. I had never heard of you; and at first I took no heed of the voice. But it came every night, until at length, in despair, I wrote to you. Then the voice stopped. Your answer came; then, again, I heard the warning that I must not die till you arrived. At last, I heard you were coming, and I have no language to thank you for your kindness. I feel sure I could not have died without seeing you.'

"That night the old man died. I waited to bury him, and then returned home, bringing with me my recovered treasure which was carefully restored to its place. That same year, my eldest brother who had been an inmate of a lunatic asylum for years died, and I became the owner of this place. Last year, to my great surprise, I received a kind letter from the King of Denmark restoring to me the office which my father once held. This year, I have been named Governor to his eldest son, and the King has returned a great part of the confiscated property; so that the sun of prosperity seems to shine once more upon the House of Breitenburg."

BOWES PARK.—A successful bazaar in aid of the building fund of the Bowes Park and Palmers Green Spiritualist Church was held on Nov. 22nd. Mr. Horace Leaf performed the opening ceremony, and the Church benefitted to the extent of some £40, a result which was gratifying in view of the inclement weather, and considering the present financial stringency everywhere. S.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The views and statements of correspondents are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, who occasionally prints, in the interests of free discussion, letters with which he does not agree.]

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MR. STIRLING CAMPBELL

Sir,—My attention has been drawn to an article in your issue of Dec. 13th headed "Fraudulent Mediumship; an Exposure," in which I am accused of fraud at a direct voice (trumpet) seance held on the 4th inst.

When these accusations were made at the close of the seance I indignantly denied them and I deny them now.

Mr. Barbanell says that at the previous seance "there was not one genuine manifestation"; that is difficult to understand as most of the sitters warmly congratulated me and expressed their complete satisfaction, and Mr. Barbanell said he would like to have another sitting.

It is absolutely false to say that when the second seance was suddenly broken up I was holding the trumpet. When the flash lamp was lit the trumpet dashed against my Solar Plexus, and then fell to the ground.

Every experienced psychic researcher knows that if a light is suddenly turned on during a seance the ectoplasmic link between the trumpet and the Medium returns to its source, namely the Solar Plexus of the Medium, drawing the trumpet with it. If that did not happen and the ectoplasmic cord was severed, the Medium might be very seriously injured by the shock. This has often happened, and I myself was in bed for over a week after the outrage committed upon me at the seance in question.

Immediately after the seance Mr. Barbanell suggested that I should be searched. I agreed at once and the men searched me, the ladies being asked to leave the room for the purpose.

Yet Mr. Barbanell has now the conscience to suggest that no search took place as it would be valueless! I was searched and nothing suggesting fraud was found upon me.

It is quite true that Mr. Barbanell seized my hand at a moment when he says it was lit up by the phosphorescence of the trumpet, but that does not prove that there was no illuminated hand of a psychic nature as seen by himself, Mrs. Glynn and Mrs. Ridley during the seance. This hand was seen moving around the circle, whereas I never left my chair.

With regard to the alleged unsatisfactory messages I can say little as during my seance my consciousness is intermittent. I am not conscious all the while. But it is a wonder to me any messages at all were obtained under the confessedly hostile conditions that prevailed.

Also why is it that Mr. Barbanell has not mentioned that before the proceedings commenced I pointed out that it often happened in my seances a voice would speak to some one in one part of the circle when the message was intended for a sitter on the other side, and that sometimes I got stray voices that could not be identified by anyone?

I have been a Medium for the last ten years, during the last two of which I have sat professionally for the direct voice. I have given sittings to hundreds of people who have always been satisfied with my mediumship and have never up to now been accused of fraud of any kind.

Had Mr. Barbanell and his friends desired a seance under test conditions I should have been most happy to have sat with them, and I am now making this challenge to him: I am prepared to hold three test seances under the most rigid conditions. The circle to consist of six experienced sympathetic sitters. Three nominated by Mr. Barbanell and three by myself. The three nominated by Mr. Barbanell must of course not have sat in the seance in question.

I therefore ask that Mr. Barbanell and his friends will get into communication with me, so that these test seances can immediately take place.

J. STIRLING CAMPBELL.

40, Ramsden Road,
Balham, S.W.12.

December 18th, 1930.

* * *

TIME AND THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Sir,—In saying "if people would talk about spirits living in another set of dimensions we could understand what they mean," Capt. Craufurd is undoubtedly touching the spot. To graft an invisible, almost inexplicable, thing like Time on to our familiar three dimensions still leaves us "up in the air." There can be nothing so non-physical as Time, and I am not at all sure that it is a spiritual condition (or, whatever the right word may be) for we are assured that in the next world there is no Time.

What can there be to know about it or what need we know for the short time here if we are going where it does not exist! It is as intangible as a meridian of longitude. Two persons can be in the same room—to one, Time goes on leaden wings and the other can hardly catch it as it flies. The ingenious mechanism of the clock helps us to regulate our lives—and other people's too, very often.

We can hasten or retard our actions but what we call Time is for ever static. I do not see that anything can be predicated of it at all; still less that we can define its boundaries, for if it is to be a dimension we may be allowed to assume that it has the property of one by being extensible or reducible—in short by having a beginning and an end.

E. HARVEY.

* * *

APPRECIATIONS OF "LIGHT."

I should like to take this opportunity of saying how much I appreciate "LIGHT"—M.R., Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States.

Mr. Thomas L. Rix, an old subscriber and one whose memories of Spiritualism go back to the year 1870, writes:—"I think LIGHT is greatly improved and one looks forward to its weekly issue."

Mr. H. Scott (a scientific investigator in New Zealand) writes: "LIGHT is now coming to hand regularly and is a great boon to us."

MISS E. M. STORR, Exmouth, writes:—"I like the present appearance of LIGHT very much; both the paper and the print are so good."

Mrs. Bel McL. Lowry, Florence, Italy, writes: "I want to tell you that the weekly arrival of your journal has helped me to support a great sorrow, and that I am very grateful for its consolation."

FELICIA SCATCHERD MEMORIAL FUND. We beg to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of the following donations:—

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THE LAST WORD

WE are living in a world where the unexpected is constantly happening and where, humanly speaking, a "miracle" may occur at any moment. The whole history of the past teems with cases in which at the critical moment something has turned an apparently certain defeat into a brilliant triumph, redeemed a reputation supposed to have been irretrievably ruined, or vindicated some course of action of which even the most optimistic observer had nothing good to say. These are lessons gathered not so much from "precepts and the study of documents" as from experience. The longer a man lives the less he is likely to be too sure about anything, and if he is a deep student of life, the less will be his faith in the "last word" about any subject. Indeed, we may be said to be always discovering that there is no final judgement about anything at all. The final verdict is always being upset by some later finding of later judges who have had placed before them fresh points and fresh evidence, and so are compelled to reverse the verdict of the previous tribunal, whatever it may have been.

Theology has said its "last word"—many times—so has Science; but it has never been the ultimate word. Just as the case seemed to be complete, and the final judgment had been delivered, some inconvenient fact has obtruded itself or some unwelcome witness has appeared, and those principally concerned were made uncomfortably conscious that the case would either have to be shelved or reconsidered. Human nature being what it is, it is not surprising that the

case was usually shelved, and the re-hearing left to a later generation.

We were led into these reflections through the study of a book by a Rationalistic writer of great ability. It is an indictment of Religion. It questions the existence of any intelligent Creator. It points to the pain and misery, the tragedies and blunders which make up most of the history of mankind. It finds Nature full of defects and apparently destitute of any benevolent design. It finds that man is the only agency that can improve things by an incessant struggle with blind forces which seem to be quite indifferent to his welfare. In short, this is a most unsatisfactory world, and only the intelligence and industry of man can make it any better.

Let us say here that this conclusion shews the author to have stumbled on a great truth, the full importance of which he does not realise. It is not the whole truth of course, for that has not yet fully dawned on a world still very young and still under a delusion about its work being done for it either by gods or providences or miraculous dispensations. But that is by the way.

The Rationalist writer, for whom we have no condemnation—he is so clearly an honest man speaking boldly his honest thought—is clearly of opinion that his book, expressing a conclusion which he shares with many thinkers of his particular school, is the "last word" on the subject. Within its limits his logic is impeccable. To the young student it may appear unanswerable.

But even if at the moment we had no answer to it—which is far from being the case—we should never regard the position as hopeless, if only from the simple observation that no doctrine or philosophy is ever complete, and the whole process of life is a continual enlargement of view, a continual shifting of boundary lines.

The "last word" about Life or anything pertaining to it has never been said and never will. The Universe ignores all our limits and finalities. The dying man says his last words—which are occasionally treasured—but is discovered in thousands of instances to be making further utterances in another state of being, the mere existence of which shatters at a blow innumerable doctrines of all kinds, religious, scientific and philosophical. The result on the emotions of the followers of these doctrines is sometimes almost explosive. Just as they had got everything complete and nicely arranged, the dead man appears and delivers a message that upsets everything! He is accordingly denounced as an illusion, the result of the emotions of those who imagine they have seen and spoken with him. The sceptics become excited and hysterical in the violence of their protest against excitement and hysteria. Just as they had told the world "all about everything" some pestilent person comes along with some heretical message concerning "some other things!"

In short the way of wisdom is to learn that after every "last word" there is always a later word, a greater and a better one, and beyond that something greater and better still. For Life goes ever forward, never stopping and never turning back, bestowing its greatest treasures on those who have faith in it and its Eternal Purpose, who trust it in spite of all temporary clouds of confusion and uncertainty and all counsels of misery and despair. The mere statement that death ends all is a contradiction in terms, for death implies life, and life never dies. If it ever did, then Infinity would become finite and Eternity a period of time. Anything would mean nothing and nothing would mean anything. Progress means always expansion. Let us go on bursting our shells, for every increase of life and vision means increase of hope and happiness, of freedom and of confidence. We are but mortal, however, and like the exhausted athlete we may now and again lie down to rest hoping never to have to work again, and waken refreshed in the morning wondering why we could ever have entertained such an unworthy idea—if indeed we had not completely forgotten it!

NATIVE TELEPATHY IN AFRICA.

THE correspondence columns of *East Africa* have contained recently various letters dealing with Native methods of communication over long distances, in circumstances that suggest some form of telepathy. In the November issue of that valuable journal, Mr. Latham Leslie-Moore, writing from Bukoba, Tanganyika Territory, relates that about two years ago while working on a coffee estate on the Engare Olmutonyi, seven miles west of Arusha, he was approached by a head man, a native of Ufume, named Kimwere bin Mgogo, who reported that Mr. Leslie-Moore's chief (who had been away several days on a hunting expedition) had shot an elephant at nine o'clock that morning. The time then was thirty in the morning.

Mr. Leslie-Moore goes on: "When my chief returned a few days later I learnt that he had shot his elephant at 9 o'clock, and his story exactly bore out what Kimwere had told me. This fact made me determined to find out how the news had got through. At that time we had a lot of Wa-Mbugwe labour, including some ex-K.A.R. *askari*. I was on friendly terms with these *askari*, with whom I used to talk. From them I gradually found out that Kimwere had the gift of foretelling future incidents in his dreams. All those *askari* told me at different times, and separately, the same story, that Kimwere had this gift, that he took no *dawa* (medicine) but just went to sleep after having his evening meal and during his sleep he can get the news. My present boy, Mumba, is one of those ex-*askari*, and he tells me that a lot of the Wa-Mbugwe are gifted in that way. Is this mental telepathy, or have the scientists got another name for it? In this instance I think we can rule out any of the other Native methods of communication, such as drum beats, sounding board rocks, smoke signals, etc., as Mbugwe is about seventy miles west-south-west from Arusha, forty miles of which is uninhabited, waterless bush. The prevailing winds at that altitude are from south-east at about 20 m.p.h. These conditions are adverse to any bush telegraph system being used at the rate of seventy miles in ninety minutes. I think this case proves that the Native of Africa has in certain individuals a method of inter-communication of which we know very little at the moment."

SIDELIGHTS

In the course of his monthly *causerie* (entitled "The Editor's Easy Chair") Mr. Edward S. Martin, writing in *Harper's Magazine* for December, says, "People who think that all Mediums and all traffickers with the invisible are swindlers are apt also to believe that the employment is very profitable. They seem to think that gypsy fortune-tellers roll in money. Oh, no! Communicating with the unseen is an ill-paid trade. Some Mediums of steady habits can live by it very modestly, but the best of them prefer to live mainly by something that is more profitable and less exacting, and to sit for spirits 'on the side.' A valid trance Medium cannot work at that employment all day."

* * *

In *Beyond* (December), "Dr. Lascelles" replies to a question: "Do you agree with cremation? Do the etherics keep near their ashes after cremation, as some keep near their graves?" The answer is "Yes. If people have sufficient thought-force, and believe that their ashes are going to turn back into their physical bodies again, they do. I believe in cremation, from a hygienic point of view, but no one should be cremated under four days of death, except in the case of children up to the age of thirteen. Young children may be cremated two days after death. The Guides taking the spirit over have to release the etheric from the physical body, which takes about four days. You should be sure that the etheric is away and that the spirit has left the body before the body is burned."

* * *

The *Manchester City News* takes a vigorous line in regard to the attempt being made in Parliament to give protection to Mediums and psychic investigators. In the course of an article entitled "A Step Towards Toleration" our contemporary says: "Let the law descend as heavily as it likes upon the charlatan. But to regard all who dare to profess faith and conviction in certain phenomena, and to confuse persons of real gifts with those who pretend to them, is not worthy of the name of justice. Moreover, this is the land of religious freedom. It can scarcely be so if one religious denomination is persecuted in the name of the law. Whether, therefore, we are in sympathy with Spiritualism or not we can hail as a just, sensible, and progressive act this measure which has been introduced into Parliament."

* * *

A contributor to *John o' London's Weekly*, Mr. Oliver I. Turner of "Glenholme," Pinchbeck, Lincs., tells his story in the issue of December 13th: "My mother is one of those persons who are peculiarly susceptible to outside influences, and she has at different times had some remarkable dreams. An instance during the War occurs to me. My brother was one of an Air Force contingent on the ill-fated *Osmanieh*, torpedoed outside Alexandria towards the end of December, 1927. That night my mother, in a dream, saw his ship torpedoed, and then saw him struggling in the water, and later succeed in getting on to a raft. Next morning she told my sisters of the dream. They laughed the matter off, though inwardly somewhat apprehensive. During the day a cable arrived announcing my brother's safe arrival at Alexandria. But the cablegram was followed later by a letter giving details of the sinking of the ship, which fully confirmed the dream. Many years earlier my mother dreamed she was standing on a bridge crossing a local river when she saw a friend whom she knew to be ill beyond recovery, clothed in white, floating slowly down the river in a boat. As she passed under the bridge the friend waved farewell to my mother. So realistic was the dream that my mother was awakened by it and took note of the time. It proved to be the actual time of the death of the friend."

THE WANING OF THE YEAR

THERE are some, mainly people of the poetic type, who have spoken of feeling a sense of pathos and melancholy even in the sunny season of the year—"summer sadness" Richard Le Galienne called it. They felt that something was lacking, even when the hedges were in flower and the air suffused with sunshine and vibrant with the singing of the birds. To restore the balance, such people should find something of beauty in the dark and chilly waste of winter—even in these December days when the "rain-winds moan" and the black boughs creak in the gale. For now the glory has departed. There are times when "blind night seems never gone," when "day is delightless and gray morning grieves." Even on the clearer nights, when the sun goes down in a scarlet haze and the moon hangs like a great ripe fruit in the naked woodlands—even these are nights of but cold and spectral beauty. They give us only cold wraiths of the old splendours. Now and again come rainbow lights that hover fitfully on the icicles and the drifted snow. But they are not the rich lustres that abounded when the life of the year was at its height, when the hawthorn "foamed into flower" and all the mystery of summer seemed to be hid in the heart of a rose. Now when the "back end of the year" is upon us, the veil is drawn, the sanctuary hidden. It is no longer the time to look forth. The pageant of the outer world has departed. There is light and music within doors, but, for the solace of the soul, we go at times to more interior tabernacles. For with the passing of the radiance of earth and sky there may come a feeling of privation and discontent. Chained perhaps by circumstance to one small spot on earth, we cannot follow the summer round the world. And for most of us it is wisely so ordered, for such pampering of the body might mean sore stunting of the soul. But while the skies lower overhead, and the chilly drops patter at the casement, we may withdraw for a brief space from the outer world and bask in the sunshine of the Spirit.

Sometimes we need to be lifted into this more genial clime by some interior power of the soul, howbeit the hours of deeper insight come but rarely. The way of their coming and going is hidden from us at present. But they *do* come, and the frequency of their coming increases amongst us as the years go on and the powers of the inner life become more evolved. "Cosmic consciousness" the experience has been called, but we do not think it is quite that. It seems to be rather some form of extended life and vision that connects us for a brief space with the transcendent world—we may call it in the homely phrase of the seer "the Summerland." And, indeed, a mystic called it "the summer of the soul." For a time the mind glows like a radiant lamp. The outer world recedes, and the life is wrapped in influences gracious and tender beyond words. Anon there come hints and glimpses of something yet unrevealed. The "Great Secret" Oliver Wendell Holmes called it, for he, too, could speak from personal experience. And concerning these moments of exaltation he wrote:—

These hints come sometimes in dreams, sometimes in sudden, startling flashes—second wakings as it were—a waking out of the waking state, which last is very apt to be a half-sleep. I have many times stopped short and held my breath, and felt the blood leaving my cheeks in one of these sudden clairvoyant flashes. Of course, I cannot tell what kind of a secret this is; but I think of it as a disclosure of certain relations of our personal being to time and space, to

the procession of events, and to their First Great Cause. This secret seems to be broken up, as it were, into fragments, so that we find here a word, and there a syllable . . . but it is never written out for most of us as a complete sentence in this life.

For Tennyson it was a state in which death seemed a laughable absurdity; for Longfellow a condition in which earth and heaven were "melting away in love." It moved Blake to rapturous song, and it filled some of the older saints and mystics with such divine transports that their faces became transfigured and they were fairly lifted into the air.

But these are the deeper aspects of the subject. Our thought is more concerned with those forms of mental direction in which by trained habit we can withdraw ourselves at will from external glooms to the gardens of the spirit. As a writer on the "higher psychology" put it:—

You have only to close your eyes and the heather is purple at your feet; the lake lies bathed in sunshine; the wind blows through pine boughs; the gentle air passes over you like a caressing hand.

Here the soul flies on the wings of imagination, conjuring abstractions into what for itself are temporary realities. While submerged in things of sense, the mind can but take a wearisome physical journey, freighted with cares and burdens, from Northern glooms to the orange-groves of the South. But when it can rise out of the bonds of fleshly circumstance, it travels in a flash from a region of cold, grey skies to realms more radiant and ethereal than any earth can show.

Happy they who can thus leave the Dark Decembers for the Ethereal Mays and Flaming Junes of the Spirit. And all can do it if they will, just in so far as they gain an appreciation of the realities lying behind the great illusion that the spiritually blind proclaim as the only Reality. When it has crumbled and faded under their fierce clutch, when it yields no more even a transitory delight, they, too, will turn and, with eyes at last opened to the truth, behold a world made new.

LUCIUS.

SUPERNORMAL FASTING

BY A. L. DRIBBEL

PROFESSOR CHARLES RICHEL publishes in the last number of the *Revue Métapsychique* a very interesting paper about Thérèse Neumann, the Austrian peasant girl, whose wonderful stigmata, sudden cures, ecstasies, and other marvellous phenomena have been the subject of close study by numerous scientists, doctors, priests, and psychic researchers. The Professor deals particularly with Thérèse's fasts, which are often so long, that they would seem impossible if they had not been supported by many similar cases.

Thérèse's fasts began at Christmas 1922. She suffered from an abscess in the throat and neck, and from that time up to Christmas, 1926, she was compelled to abstain from solid food. She took smaller and smaller quantities of liquid. Since Christmas 1926, she has taken every morning only a mouthful of water to aid the swallowing of the consecrated host. From September 1927 to November 1928, she did not even take this small quantity of water. Notwithstanding this, she is not very emaciated. Her weight is normal (fifty-five kilos). She is neither constantly in bed, nor inactive; she works on church ornaments, reads, writes, and receives visitors.

From 13th to 28 July, 1927 Thérèse was submitted to a rigorous control, ordered by the diocesan authorities. Four sworn Sisters of Mercy, placed under the direction of Dr. Seyl de Waldassen, observed her day and night; she did not even take water during this time; water which served to rinse her mouth was measured before and after the rinsing. Fairly large oscillations in weight

were found. At last the weight remained stationary. Dr. Seyl has declared under oath that the observation has been the closest and most precise. He says: "I am absolutely convinced of the reality of Thérèse Neumann's fast, but I can only engage my responsibility for the fortnight she has been under my observation."

Professor Richet has reason to believe in this prolonged fast without loss of weight, as a great number of similar cases have been related, nearly identical, and he himself has had occasion to verify two cases of very long fasts without changes of weight or temperature. He cites numerous cases of long fasts in various countries from the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and expresses surprise that the publication of his own extraordinary observations passed nearly unnoticed, provoking neither criticism nor astonishment.

He experimented with two hysterical women, one a governess, the other one a head sister at the Charité Hospital. Their hysteria was not severe enough to prevent them exercising their professions. One of them, "L," was employed at the Professor's house as governess. She was single, 29 years old; her intelligence remained unimpaired, no trace of paralysis or anæsthesia, nor serious neuralgia. She was scarcely subject to suggestion. Appetite was nil, and she seemed afraid of all food, for shortly after eating she had intolerable stomach pains. At present she is in good health and eats normally. It was thought that she had a non-cancerous ulcer in the stomach. Professor Richet noted exactly what food she took, for she stayed with him and took all her meals at the family table. He himself weighed all the food she took. "L" never went out alone, so it was impossible for her to buy food outside, and in the house all food was kept locked up. Thus he watched her rigorously for fifty-eight days. Professor Richet gives an analysis of all food consumed during that period, which amounted in weight to just over four kilogrammes (or 20.052 calories). During this time "L" lost two kilos in weight (from forty-six to forty-four kilos).

The other person, "M," head sister at the Charité, is a woman of thirty-five, intelligent and active. Pierre Janet had observed her for several years, and is certain that during several months the only nourishment she took was a cup of milk (about 200 grammes) per day; during twenty-eight days she was guarded during daytime and locked in at night. Her weight scarcely varied. She lost in twenty-eight days 606 grammes, representing a maximum of 300 grammes of fat. She took the following amounts of food during these four weeks:—

| | | |
|----------|-----|---------------|
| Milk | - - | 4600 grammes. |
| Beef-tea | - - | 1065 „ |
| Beer | - - | 100 „ |

Professor Richet submits that we are here face to face with singular and paradoxical facts, which normal physiology is absolutely unable to explain.

The case of Thérèse Neumann, although seeming quite extraordinary, does not stand alone. In the annals of science twenty-five to thirty similar observations have been made of women who lived weeks, and even months on a very greatly reduced diet—as little as one-fifth to one-tenth of the normal diet. Notwithstanding this there was no fall in temperature, the muscular movements could take place as usual; the intelligence remained practically unimpaired. Life continued *without slowing down*; but the metabolism slowed down considerably.

But everything is mysterious with these long-fasting hysterics. Feeding is reduced by four-fifths; yet the temperature remains unaltered. There is the great mystery!

Professor Richet concludes that he dare not say that this mystery belongs to the realm of metapsychics, but he admits that in certain aspects it comes near to it. In any case, it is no use passing such facts over in silence; they must be examined coldly, without prejudice and made the subject of methodical and impartial analysis.

RAY'S AND REFLECTIONS

I lately read an article in which the writer said, "If a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, no knowledge at all is fatal." But what Pope wrote was, "A little *learning* is a dangerous thing." There is a good deal of difference between learning and knowledge. Thus, one can read very erudite books on Spiritualism, the learned writers of which know less of what they are writing about than many unlettered spiritualists.

• • •

Entrenched in a massive fortress of Matter, the old-time Sadducee spoke contemptuously of the phantoms and the "filmy stuff" of which the spiritual world appeared (to him) to be entirely constructed. He would need a good deal of brazen assurance to day to take this line, for modern Science has almost "sublimated" matter out of existence. And who could sneer at the symbolism of the mystics when the greatest scientists themselves have to resort to mathematical symbols to describe even the physical world?

* * *

Nearly always I take notes of the few private seances I attend. Lately I came on a forgotten record containing an account of a sitting with Mr. A. V. Peters on 12th July, 1918. It made a powerful impression on my mind as after twelve years I observed its astonishing accuracy, and the complete fulfilment of all the forecasts made by "Moonstone," the control. Most of them are too personal to publish; but here is an instance which shews remarkable prescience. The war was then raging and "Moonstone" observed, "It will finish about the end of October." As we all know the Armistice occurred on the 11th November of that same year.

• • •

Mrs. de Crespigny once observed to a spiritualist orator who was to address a scientific audience, that he might be permitted by his hearers to talk about Heaven if he called it the Fourth Dimension. Clairvoyance, she added, might pass muster if it were referred to as "x-ray sight," a euphemism much favoured by the sensational newspapers. 'Twas ever thus. Well have some of our moralists observed that the public will take any amount of Spiritualism if it is given under some other name. Have we not lived to see psychometry made respectable by the title "pragmatic cryptaesthesia"?

* * *

Many things which in earlier days were looked upon as "the truth once delivered" are found to-day to be fallacies and resolutely discarded. Still, we have to keep a balanced mind, and not be stampeded into rejecting ideas until they have been fully "tried out." There are true things which on the surface do not seem to be true, but in the general sifting and stock-taking which is now in process we must beware of casting out the realities with the shams. We are sometimes told by extremists that existence itself is an illusion, that there is no reality anywhere. Which reminds me of the old philosopher who taught the doctrine of the unreality of everything. He was a collector of ancient pottery, and having been victimised by an unscrupulous dealer, visited the dealer's shop and upbraided him for selling base imitations. The dealer laughed as he replied, "You teach that nothing is real, and I, who accept your doctrine, ask you how, if nothing is real, anything can be spurious?"

D.G.

BOOK NOTES & REVIEWS

"HUMAN SURVIVAL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS," by Helen Alex. Dallas (L.S.A. Publications, Ltd.; 1s. net.)

What Miss Dallas writes is always of value. She has great experience in psychic matters, coupled with a broad, clear vision; add to this a practised command of the English tongue, and we have qualities that make for the production of a satisfactory work on our subject. In the seventy-page handbook (one of a series of shilling booklets sponsored by the London Spiritualist Alliance) she deals first with the fact of survival, then considers what is involved in the acceptance of that fact. It is an exceptionally able book, and will benefit the new enquirer as well as the more advanced investigator. *Human Survival and its Implications* can be warmly recommended.

F.E.C.R.

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"PSYCHIC PHENOMENA," by Helen Dames. (Stockwell; 1s. 6d.)

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I.C.

* * *

"THE PATHWAY OF LIFE AND THE GARDENS," by Stella D'Or. (Stockwell; 3s.)

The major portion of this book consists of symbolic visions in "garden" form, representative of the inner life of various persons known to the writer.

I.C.

* * *

"THE ASTROLOGICAL ASPECTS" by Charles E. O. Carter (L. N. Fowler & Co. 4s. 6d. net.)

Students of the "sublime science" will welcome this thoughtful study. The author claims that in an appreciable percentage of cases the aspects based on the quadrant are less hurtful than has hitherto been believed. The readings he gives are original to a fair extent, and hold much that the advanced student of astrology may ponder over, while the beginner is at once led to realise the necessity for careful balancing of all the factors present.

G.M.

* * *

"STAGES OF HIGHER KNOWLEDGE" by Rudolf Steiner. (Putnams. 5s. net.)

Rudolf Steiner has a considerable following of disciples, for whom he had a special message, and this book conveys an important part of it. It is the concluding volume in the series which includes *The Road to Self Knowledge*, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Initiation and its Results*. It contains much which one cannot but regard as valuable and illuminating doctrine, and which calls for more than a brief notice. It will therefore receive further consideration in a later issue of LIGHT.

LUCIUS.

* * *

"THE GATES OF LIFE," by Beatrice Irwin. A record of progress in the Engineering of Light and Colour. (Riders; 7s. 6d. net.)

Spiritualists will be interested in all Miss Irwin has to say about light and colour in their utilitarian, health restoring, and æsthetic aspects, and will find the two last chapters absorbing. In these the writer deals with the "Gardens of Light and Colour," and the "Communal Dromes of Light" which the civilisation of the future may bring to us. When one recalls the enormous part played by light and colour in the Beyond, one realises that even here we may reach out to beauty beyond our present dreams. The book is written with the authority of long experience and wide achievement, and is well illustrated.

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MR. H. VAN WALT, of the Hague, reports highly successful experiments with the Reflectograph and Communigraph. Being greatly impressed by the description of the invention he and Mrs. van Walt arranged for Mr. Kirby and Mr. Singleton to go to Holland for the purpose of holding a series of sittings. Mr. van Walt tells us that the spiritual life in Holland is very strongly developed and that Dutch investigators are very critical. He says: "The proofs that the messages which came through during the sittings were absolutely genuine were so overwhelming that even the sceptical had to admit that neither the subconsciousness, nor the animistic or dynamic theories could explain the results. All the sitters who came to my house were, with a few exceptions, personal friends and belonged to the best circles in Holland. They included many titled ladies and gentlemen, a commander-in-chief of one of our Colonial armies, distinguished lawyers and well-known authors. . . . Through the Reflectograph and Communigraph we received messages in Dutch. I was privileged to hold for some time the fully materialised hand of my little daughter who passed on some ten years ago; it gradually de-materialised whilst I was holding it. The shape became gradually more vague and it slowly faded into a kind of vapour."

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Crouch End Spiritual Society (National Spiritualist Church), Felix Hall, Felix Avenue, Crouch End, Broadway, N.8. (Near Clock Tower.) Sunday, December 28th, at 7 p.m. MR. A. E. PAYNE Thursday, January 1st. Social at 3 p.m. MR. T. W. ELLA at 8 p.m.

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