

Light

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THE BLACK MAN'S MAGIC HIS PSYCHIC KNOWLEDGE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

By H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

WE have been hearing a good deal lately about the mind and psychic habits of primitive man, with an acceptable sense of our own superiority.

It is true that the "savage" has no use for democracy; that he still lives up to his own religion—when we haven't worried him with ours; and that in war he paints his face instead of wearing that supreme achievement of civilization, a gas mask.

But if in political affairs we have a right to patronise, surely in psychic matters our condescension is overdone?

What chance, by comparison with him, have we of psychic development?

Our minds are in a ceaseless surge of distraction from the newspaper's world-problems in the morning to our own hectic evasions of boredom at night; with a live dread of any silent or unoccupied moment.

The mind of the "savage" is almost empty of pre-occupation, and his distractions are translations into human energy of those secret impulses of the earth of which he alone seems to be aware.

He lives with his psychic self because he has very little else to live with, and he can do things with it about which we are only just beginning to dream.

Take telepathy, for instance. Quite fashionable to-day as a counterblast to survival, but, even with the scientists not much more than a drawing room diversion, about which they make amusing guesses.

Its mechanism, of which they know nothing, is used by the savage as casually as we use the telephone.

During the Boer war my native boys brought me, scores of times, information as to the enemy's movements which, as a free lance, I was able to verify; though what

are supposed to be the native channels of communication were not available.

Commander Attilio Gatti in his latest, most interesting volume* gives, from his wide African experience, notable instances of this faculty.

He narrates how, while talking one morning with the hospital doctor at Broken Hill, a native orderly brought the news that a white man, a prospector, had been badly mauled by a leopard at Kabenda, an hour and a half earlier, and was being brought in by his boys.

Kabenda, on the Kafue River, was two hundred miles away, only to be reached by a rough track, but the doctor at once, on the native's telepathic communication, despatched an ambulance and nurses.

"Of course," he explained, "not even my twenty years of Africa have taught me how in the devil they can transmit news in this way. But Karimo gave me this information with a face that means he is sure of it."

And so it was; though the receiver of the message was, as a hospital orderly, in the heart of a town, apparently isolated from the source of news.

Gatti gives an even more striking example. "In July, 1924, I remember," he writes, "when one night inspecting my camp of Ascaris just outside Mogadiscio, I overheard some words that my Somali orderly exchanged with other Ascaris near the fire:—"Yesterday the great king of the Engrisch has made a present to the great king of Italy."

"Being curious, I questioned him, but only after much insistence did I wring from him the explanation that the present consisted of 'Refuge Bay and much, much desert back of it and round it and thousands and thousands of Somalis who live in it.'"

He also, by complicated measurements, gave the area

to be conceded at 32,000 square miles; and, when the Commander told him not to spread such silly gossip, informed him politely, and with the most correct and disciplined attitude, that everybody already knew it. Gatti thereupon questioned the Chief Secretary to the Governor, who laughed at him, and explained that for six years diplomatic discussions on the subject of Colonial compensation had been going on in London and Rome, and not even the Governor himself had any idea for how many months or years the discussions would continue.

Yet a few weeks later the news was published that Kisimayu and its territory had been turned over to Italy; and the date of the signing of the accord was the very day before Commander Gatti's orderly had received the news in full detail; so exact was his information, that his estimate of the territory was only 1,000 square miles out.

This sort of thing makes our telepathic adventures look rather foolish; and as if our speculation about it might be illuminated by studying the method of the simple primitive.

WITCH DOCTOR AND THE GOATS

The Commander describes other apparently psychic faculties of the primitive:—and relates an amusing instance of his divining skill. One morning he was awakened to hear that the cook, his assistant, and the two tent boys were prostrated with some mysterious disease.

"In the hut which they shared, my four boys had every appearance of approaching death, the eyes and lips tumefied, the forehead covered with a dank sweat, the hands cold and stiff."

Every effort failed to rouse them, and, despite doses of castor oil, quinine and aspirin, they lay for twenty-four hours in the same condition, and seemed, indeed, to grow steadily worse.

An old man, with a white goatee and necklace of monkey tails, a reputed witch doctor, who had a few days before made enquiries as to some stolen animals, arrived, saluted gravely and said:—"I came to see those in the hands of the evil spirits."

After a sort of dance before the hut, he entered it, tossed three pinches of powder in the air, stared fixedly at each boy in turn, and then, extracting a long black hair from an antelope horn in his necklace, stroked lightly with it the nearest boy's forehead. The boy lay still as death.

"But at the first touch of the hair on the next boy's forehead, a strange sound broke the silence of the hut—the bleating of a little goat. . . . Four times the witch doctor repeated his slow stroke, and each time the bleating was repeated with the inhuman precision of a mechanical toy."

The same treatment produced a like result from the cook, but the fourth boy did not respond to it.

The doctor made some manipulations over the bodies of the two boys who had not bleated, and, leaving the hut, waited a few yards away with his eyes fixed on the entrance.

Presently the two boys emerged, with no trace of their recent illness, and slinking past the doctor into the bush, returned each with a little black goat in his arms.

These goats, the doctor explained, were "twins sacred to the great god Monze"; they had been stolen by the two boys who had bleated; the other two had no part in the theft, but knew of the hiding. They were at once completely recovered. "Those two," said the doctor, nodding in the direction of the hut, "for them another

sun will pass before their suffering ceases, that the future will find them not forgetful."

And so it was. "They lay in a state of unconsciousness, moaning occasionally, the terrific swelling of lips and eyes unabated. Then, exactly twenty-four hours after the witch-doctor had left the camp, the boys suddenly revived, and . . . in a perfectly normal physical state . . . hastened to join the other boys in their work of packing up."

Well, there it is; by no means surprising to those of us who have seen like powers employed; perhaps incredible to others, and by most dubbed Black Magic. But why black?

Need we join our Catholic brethren in declaring everything psychic we don't understand to be of the Devil?—a more or less hypothetical person, devised as a receptacle for our own shortcomings.

Commander Gatti, from his long sojourn in Africa, learnt to breathe this atmosphere of the marvellous without being upset by its sulphurous fumes.

He gives many instances of clairvoyant prevision; one prediction, maturing in three months, being conveyed by a fluttering pennant and a viper that climbed the flag-pole to it.

But it was the Pythoness Tuadekili, an old friend of his, who gave the most amazing reading of distant and future events.

That story is alas! too long to tell, too complete to be spoilt by a paraphrase. The three white observers were privileged to see the whole ghastly affair, in a sort of psychic television, pass through the woman's mind as it was happening, or, in two days, was going to happen, twenty miles away, even to the effect of the *inzimbiti* seeds in making a decent-minded savage kill and eat the woman he loved.

Well, that is just good clairvoyance within the compass of our understanding, if prevision be a thing we can be said to understand; though we must leave the magic of the seeds outside it; a magic, doubtless, to be labelled "black." But black or white, that magic is proof that we don't yet understand everything.

THE BLACK MAN'S WORLD

W. B. Seabrook is another wanderer who has achieved a sympathetic penetration of the black man's world, which extends beyond ours in so many directions.

He conformed to the black man's ritual, accepted the rulings of his fetish, had for his teacher and companion a charming young sorceress, and was named Mogo-Dieman, "the black-man-who-has-a-white-face." "Shut up," said one of his sponsors to a quarrelsome greybeard. "He is older and blacker than you."

As an observer he would satisfy the most scientific, since he occasionally declines to believe the evidence of his own eyes. He calls a certain class of occurrences "disturbing things," and he dislikes mental disturbance.

"To me," he says, "they present an insoluble dilemma, because on the one hand I do not believe in miracles, or that magic can produce physical materialised phenomena of any sort whatever; and, on the other hand, I am convinced that in the face of certain phenomena no hypothesis of charlatan trickery is any good either." He had seen two baby children tossed to and fro between a couple of gorilla-like men armed with swords, and finally "each man, holding his sword stiffly upward with his left hand, tossed a child high in the air with his right, then caught it

(Continued on page 290)

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HAUNTED HOUSES

SEQUEL TO SIR E. BENNETT'S BROADCAST ADDRESS

"**MORE** About Haunted Houses" was the title of an intensely interesting lecture delivered at the L.S.A., South Kensington, on Thursday last week, by SIR ERNEST BENNETT, M.P., Assistant Postmaster-General. Early in March, in his broadcast address on "Ghosts and Haunted Houses," Sir Ernest appealed to his invisible audience to send him fresh evidence of well-authenticated apparitions and haunted houses. He received over 1,100 letters.

"The old evidence collected by the S.P.R. and analysed in *Phantoms of the Living*," he said, "is good enough for me. But for the present generation, fresh proofs are wanted. Obviously the old source of supply cannot have dried up, and I am glad to say that I have been provided with a good deal of fresh working material. The explanation which I prefer to all others is the simple one that a vast number of well-authenticated apparitions are the result of suggestions from the dead.

"In my broadcast address," he continued, "I omitted, through lack of time, to speak of poltergeist-ridden houses. I was particularly baffled by a case near Ham, a village in Berkshire, where I was left alone in the room with a deformed little girl of eleven. She sat on one side of the hearth; on the rug in front of it crouched a kitten; my hat lay near me on the table, some 5-6 feet from the child. Objects moved about that room in the strangest fashion. My hat would be suddenly whisked off: I never saw it begin to move—I only saw it in progress through the air. Mischievous children are often the agents in these poltergeist cases, but if these phenomena were normally produced by that small girl, she must have been an exceedingly clever child!"

EFFECT OF THE NEW EVIDENCE

Sir Ernest said the cumulative effect of the new evidence he had received was very great. He mentioned a few striking instances of "collective cases," i.e., apparitions seen by two or more persons simultaneously.

Cases of dying children are particularly impressive: "almost they persuaded" Professor Richet to believe in the Spiritist solution. Curious, too, are the apparitions of animals—mostly cats and dogs—beloved of man. In one case two ladies together distinctly saw the apparition of a beloved Pomeranian pet they had recently buried frisking about their feet.

DR. FIELDING-OULD, who took the chair, declared that in his opinion we were all of us haunted, though we were mostly unconscious of the fact. He lived for some time in Japan, and for five years after that every Medium he went to described a small Japanese man beside him. A Medium once told his brother: "I am interested in your children. I will go and see them." Some days later his little boy asked him: "Father, who was that funny man who came to see me in bed last night? He looked at me and poked me." When, through the same Medium, the father asked the spirit whether he had seen the boy, he replied: "Indeed I did. I tried to tickle him too, but he did not seem to like it."

SIR LAWRENCE JONES, BART. related an experience in an old country-house. He and his wife were disturbed by loud noises coming from a locked spare-room two floors above their heads. They heard footsteps, rattling of fire-irons, and the pulling open of drawers and cupboards, as if some one was trying to get the room ready for occupation. Next morning, Sir Lawrence crept upstairs to the room: there was no trace of any disturbance; the room was dismantled, done up in dustsheets, the fire-irons wrapped up in paper, not a sign to account for the *tapage* of the night before.

Another story of which Sir Lawrence had direct know-

edge concerned some Irish people living in London. Coming home late one night from the theatre, they were met, on opening the front-door, by a strong smell of burning, and felt sure the place must be on fire. Finding nothing wrong, however, they roused the neighbours on either side, convinced that there must be a fire somewhere—greatly to the annoyance of the neighbours when nothing was found. Next morning they had a telegram from Ireland: "Our house burnt down last night." The fire had been at its height at the time they returned from the theatre.

DR. NANDOR FODOR gave an account of an experience at Maidenhead two years ago. Kept awake by a terrific thunderstorm, he heard at about 1 o'clock in the morning, in the deep silence that so often follows a storm, the loud swish of oars on the river outside. It seemed so incredible that anyone should be on the river just then, that he got up and went out on to the balcony to look. The noise ceased, and there was nothing to be seen. At that moment his wife woke up and said she had had such a vivid dream of two boats going by on the river, and gave a detailed description of the boats and their occupants. The dream was inspired, perhaps, by the swish of the oars; but how did a phantom boat simultaneously affect a sleeping woman and a wide-awake man?

THE GHOST AND THE ELASTIC

The last story, told by LADY HARRIS, described the remarkable experience of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Muriel Harris, of Park Grove, Withyam, Sussex. For a long time this lady used to see in and around her house the apparition of a harmless-looking old gentleman with a long flowing beard, who appeared to be forever restlessly searching for something. The village people told her that a Mr. Hutchinson used to live in that house, and that his beard was so long that he used to turn it up and put an elastic band round it. "So my sister-in-law decided to try an experiment. She procured an elastic band, hung it up on the tallboy, and watched. The ghost of the old gentleman came as usual, paced up and down looking here and there, saw the elastic, pounced upon it—and instantly vanished. Neither he nor the elastic were ever seen again; it too had vanished."

When it was suggested that anyone in the room who had seen similar apparitions should hold up their hands, a considerable percentage of the audience responded to the call.

We are asked to state that all arrangements for the British delegation to the International Spiritualist Congress at Barcelona (September 1st to 8th this year) are in the hands of the Spiritualists' National Union. Inquiries should be addressed to Mr. F. T. Harris, General Secretary, S.N.U., 64a, Bridge Street, Deansgate, Manchester 3.

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REINCARNATION DENIED

DEFINITE EXPRESSIONS BY "IMPERATOR" AND "ARNEL"

By GEORGE BRASHEARS, LL.B., California

WITH regard to the vexing and highly-controversial question of Reincarnation, the writer wishes to point out the spirit teachings of the exalted spirit "Imperator" to Stainton Moses and of "Arnel" to G. Vale Owen, viewing these as the highest and most helpful that have been thus far received from the Spirit spheres.

In answer to the question "Do you teach a General Judgment?" Imperator said to Stainton Moses (*Spirit Teachings*, pp. 227-28):

No. The judgment is complete when the spirit gravitates to the home which it has made for itself. There can be no error. It is placed by the eternal law of fitness. That judgment is complete, *until the spirit is fitted to pass to a higher sphere, when the same process is repeated, and so on until the purgatorial spheres of work are done with, and the soul passes within the inner heaven of contemplation.* . . . In each stage of probation the spirit builds up a character by its constant acts, which fits it for a certain position. To that position it goes of necessity, without what you mean as judgment."

Question.—"Is each entry into a new sphere or state marked by a change analogous to death?"

Answer.—"Analogous, in that there is a gradual sublimation or refinement of the spirit-body, until by degrees all gross elements are purged away. The higher the sphere the more refined and etherial the body. The change is not so material as that which you call death, for there is no corporeal envelope to lay aside, but it is analogous to it in that it is a process of development, the entry of the spirit into a higher state of existence."

It will be seen from the above, that Imperator states that progress after physical death is not by Reincarnation in the flesh again, but by a gradual refinement of the spirit-body as the soul progresses upward through the spheres of work. The foregoing is the general rule which applies to all except the few high spirits, such as Jesus of Nazareth, who are special incarnations made with a special mission to earth.

The spirit Arnel told Vale Owen (*The Battalions of Heaven*, pp. 36-7):

"Reincarnation would imply a re-entry into flesh of the same nature and substance as they had previously worn. If this be so, and has of you acceptance, then the term 're-incarnation' would not be competent to express their becoming conditioned to the material and outer manifestation of other planets than earth. For, although on some planets, flesh is very like that of your earth bodies, yet no two planets produce precisely the same material for habitation upon their surface, and on some worlds it is much dissimilar. . . .

"No; they visited those far worlds, both of this Solar group and also of other groups as they did this earth, and as I do now. I come back to earth to reinforce my powers here, and I go to other planets, now and again, in like manner, seeking after greater knowledge of God, His wisdom in the creation and guiding of worlds. *But I do not take upon me their material condition. That would but hinder me. I get at their inner life and the real state of them, the better from the inner, that is, the spiritual side.* From my standpoint in the spirit, I can learn more of what is going on in that world than I could do were I to go out upon its surface incarnate, and with my senses engrossed by reason of their obligation to operate through a machine so much heavier and denser than the body of that etherial substance which, in comparison, clothes the spirit lightly."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the teaching of the spirit Arnel as to Reincarnation agrees with that of the spirit Imperator, both being in the negative.

TALKING ANIMALS

MADAME BORDERIEUX, Editor of the *Psychica* (Paris) makes some interesting comments on an article published in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Tierpsychologie*, describing how several Professors tested the powers of "Kurwenal," a wonderful Dachshund belonging to Madame Borderieux's friend, the Baroness von Freytag. Dr. Siegmund-Schultze of the Berlin University asked the dog, "Hast thou any fear of death?" to which the reply was, "I have no fear of death." Asked what was his conception of the universe, the dog answered, "Mine is identical with yours."

Dr. Verwegen of the Bonn University enquired whether Kurwenal would return to the earth after death, and was told that "the dead never return."

Occurrences like this, says Madame Borderieux, are definite proof of supernormal powers. She wrote to the investigating Professors begging them to state how they accounted for what they saw; but they refused to commit themselves. Madame herself a little while ago lost a small dog who had been her constant companion for thirteen years, of which she writes: "There were days when I, too, could have obtained from Zou replies similar to those given by my friend's dog. Zou seemed as it were attached to my psychic being. At times it was as though he drew a current from me. I would feel that we were in unison; as though his personality was a prolongation of my own."

It is, unfortunately, not explained by what process the dog "talks."

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THE ROPE TRICK

BY ONE WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN IT

THE Occult Committee of the Magic Circle, as announced in *LIGHT* last week, arrived at the conclusion that the Indian rope trick is a myth and that there is no first-hand testimony of anyone ever having seen it. The last conclusion is not correct. There is first-hand testimony quoted in *Borderland* (Vol. iii. 1897, p. 186). It was given "to a highly distinguished officer in India" and he sent it to "a well-known member of the S.P.R." He in turn submitted the letter to W. T. Stead, as the witness concerned was Mr. Jacob of Simla, a diamond merchant of fabulous wealth of whose occult powers some staggering accounts had been published a year before in *Borderland*.

To the "distinguished officer" Mr. Jacob declared that he had seen the rope trick done before the Nizam of Hyderabad in the open air, where only the Nizam was seated, all the court around him. "The rope was thrown up and remained—the end, about thirty feet up, being hidden; two boys went up and disappeared, presently their limbs were thrown down. The performers said, 'Oh, we will burn these,' and made a hot fire on which they threw them. A little girl, their sister, cried out, 'If my brothers are burned, I will perform suttee,' and rushed into the flames; the whole of them were consumed in a few minutes. Then one of the boys walked in from behind the crowd and asked for his brother; he called, and a voice answered from far up above, then the brother came down the rope, and both looked for their sister who answered, and then came out from under the Nizam's chair. These are descriptions of these manifestations as nearly as I can give them in brief, from an eye-witness (according to his own account.)"

According to Mr. Jacob (who would be now 83 years old if alive) the rope trick is demonstrated by the worshippers of Vishnu in Madras. It is not done by hypnotism but by "covering." He explained: "You could understand that an eagle might be trained to support you in the air while you seemed to walk on water, but that would be visible. In the same way the rope is supported, and when the boy goes up he is shrouded in a mist of the same colour as the air, and so rendered invisible—that is 'covering.'"

The Occult Circle would hardly be satisfied with this explanation. For, even if psychic power could make the upward coiling rope fast and the boy vanish in an air-coloured mist, the chopped-off limbs and the auto-da-fe remain unexplained. Mr. Jacob's credentials are rendered dubious by the great Hyderabad Diamond Scandal which distinctly evidenced a compatibility between a shady business deal and the possession of the highest occult powers. In 1894, Mr. Jacob sold a diamond to the Nizam for 43 Lakhs (4,300,000 rupees). After some days the Nizam discovered that the diamond was spurious. He at once telegraphed to the police at Simla. The police surrounded Mr. Jacob's house and satisfied themselves that Mr. Jacob was in his room. Yet, unaccountably, a few minutes later, there came a telegram from Hyderabad that Mr. Jacob was there and had settled the affair personally with the Nizam by offering the purchase money or the genuine diamond. The Nizam chose the diamond. Later, however, he regretted his choice and the transaction came up before the High Court of Calcutta. Finally, it was settled by Mr. Jacob returning half of the purchase money and the Nizam keeping the diamond. N.F.

CHELTENHAM MAN SAYS HE CAN DO IT

Mr. L. Bofezs, a 36 year old Cheltenham insurance agent who has never been abroad, says he has studied the rope-trick for sixteen years and can do it about ten times out of twelve. Its performance, he says, requires a great deal of preparation as he has to use a very expensive chemical. Mr. Bofezs says he will not take up the Magic Circle's offer of £500 as he feels the trick is worth much more.

LUMINOUS APPEARANCES

IN the *Sunday Referee* (April 29th) there appeared the following letter from the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, Vicar of Weston:

"I can give the reason for the light seen hovering over the body of the dying woman—narrated in your last issue by Dr. Jackson—we having frequently seen similar phenomena.

"The luminous ball entering the window and hovering near the woman was the partly materialised spirit (or spiritual body) of some spirit visiting the dying woman and ready to receive her spirit when that was released by death.

"We have often seen these luminous appearances, and have actually seen them resolve themselves into human forms and again dissolve into balls and pillars of light and so vanish away.

"At the death of my wife's mother some years ago her emerging spirit, or spiritual body, was seen hovering over the body of the dying woman for fully twenty minutes by three persons, and in a good light. In this case not only was the column of light seen over the body, but a splendid halo of light surrounded the head of the dying woman."

INVENTION DUE TO A DREAM

PROFESSOR C. V. BOYS astonished a gathering of experts at the Imperial College of Science, South Kensington (says the *Daily Mail*, April 5th) when he said he had seen in a dream a new instrument for measuring the value of gas used for public consumption and had since created it.

Professor Boys said: "On May 4 last year I had a dream in which I saw and realised the working of something which filled me with excitement. I rose at six o'clock next morning, rushed round to my laboratories in Victoria Street, and in a few minutes I had started to put my dream into concrete form." Pointing to a machine which was working by his side, he said: "That was the result of my vision after months of work."

Professor Boys added that the instrument was designed to last for ever, was foolproof, and costs little to run and little to make. Also, it required only one gallon of water per year as against 300,000 gallons for the old type of apparatus.

M.S.A. ARMISTICE SERVICE

Armistice Day (November 11th) this year falls on a Sunday; and as the Royal Albert Hall has been booked for that day by the British Legion, the Marylebone Association's Annual Service of Re-union and Remembrance will be held in the Queen's Hall.

Mr. George Craze, President of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, addressed a congregation of nearly two thousand at the Queen's Hall, London, last Sunday evening. The message of Spiritualism was his theme, and his able exposition held the close attention of his hearers. Mr. Craze added to the interest of all by his apposite answers to several questions which he had recently received from correspondents.

NEWSPAPERS AND FORTUNE-TELLING

Lecturing on "Mediumship or Fortune-Telling," at Edinburgh Psychic College, Heriot Row, on Friday last week, Miss Jacqueline said it was interesting to note that it did not appear to be an offence to forecast what was to happen in the future with regard to a horse or a dog; at least, certain columns in our newspapers gave that impression. In this connection, the Medium who told Saul where to find his father's asses would have been quite safe from our law.

REV. F. SPURR'S TESTIMONY

HEARD HIS "DEAD" SON TALK AND SING IN HIS OWN HOME

REV. FREDERIC C. SPURR, of Hamstead Road Baptist Church, Birmingham, bears personal testimony to the value of spirit-communication as proof of Survival in his book, *The Life Hereafter* (Messrs. Allinson and Co., London, 2/6 net). The basis of this book, Mr. Spurr explains, was a series of lectures delivered in 1913 in Melbourne, Australia; but its contents have been twice re-written "in the light of many things learned since the original lectures were delivered." Chief amongst these "many things" was the experience which he describes as follows:

"On July 14th, 1923, I lost, by the tragic accident of drowning, my youngest son, a beautiful and brilliant boy of eight years, the loss of whom was the greatest blow of my life. At the hour of the occurrence I was at home, and he was with his grandparents, one hundred and twenty miles away. I had parted from him that very morning, and he never looked bonnier nor more wonderful. The thought of losing him never entered my mind. A little before five o'clock that afternoon he fell into seven feet of water and was drowned. *At that very moment* I became acutely conscious of the boy and turned round to touch him and to speak to him, so real was his presence. It was quite a shock to find he was not there. *Not until the next day* was I aware of the exact hour of his death.

"What else could it be than that the boy's spirit, suddenly torn from its tabernacle of flesh, was seeking his father and trying to make him understand what had happened?"

"Since that time we have had overwhelming evidence (unsought by us) that the boy lives on the other side of the veil. Messages have reached us from various sources and in the most surprising ways, containing such irrefutable evidence that it is he himself who sent them, that to deny their truth would be madness. Such details as the clothing he used to wear—and in particular one Indian suit which I mailed to him from the Mohawk Trail in Massachusetts—the names of his boy friends at school (names we did not know but which were verified later); the private name he had for his sister; the name of his grandfather's chauffeur; the details of his passing over; the reiteration of the characteristic sentences which marked his speech; references to a favourite watch and a favourite dog; the explanation of a little trick he played with the keys of the house and which we never guessed while he was with us—these are some of the things which have been given to us at various times since God took him.

"The most amazing thing of all was when, in our own drawing-room, with a dozen friends present, *his unmistakable voice was heard, singing quite distinctly* a verse of his favourite hymn, which had never been sung outside our own home and which not one of our friends had ever heard or knew to be his favourite hymn. It is not an English hymn and does not appear in any English book. We can only humbly thank God that this evidence has been granted to us. Whatever it may mean for others, it is absolute proof to us that death has not separated our boy from us.

"I bear this testimony," Mr. Spurr writes, "fully aware that it will anger some and amuse others. Exactly the same treatment was accorded to the disciples when they affirmed that their Lord had appeared to them after His death upon the Cross."

Mr. Spurr protests against the investigation of psychical phenomena "being raised to the rank of a religion," and claims that "what truth it (Spiritualism) contains belongs to Christianity and must be recovered for it."

The story of Mr. Spurr's psychic experiences, now retold, was first published anonymously in 1924 in a book entitled *The Heart of a Father*, which attracted much attention,

MR. OATEN'S STORIES

MR. ERNEST OATEN, President of the Spiritualists' International Federation, speaking at the evening service of the Spiritualist Community at the Grottrian Hall, London, on Sunday, told two stories illustrative of his theme that religion, to be real and effective, must be based on personal knowledge of and contact with the spirit-world.

The first was of a north of England clergyman, a Doctor of Divinity, who, when his wife died, realised that he had no sure belief in a future life, but that, on the contrary, his fear was that death was the end and that he would never meet his wife again. This clergyman could repeat all the creeds and expound theology, but his religion was of the head and not of the heart. Mr. Oaten invited him to attend a series of sittings for evidence of survival, and after the third sitting he announced joyfully that he was certain that his wife survived and was waiting for him, because he had talked to her for twenty minutes and she had repeated correctly a conversation that had passed between them a few hours before her death.

The second story dealt with an experience of his own. His father had been lying paralysed in Bristol and he (Mr. Oaten) was speaking in Sheffield. In the middle of his address his eyes filled with tears and his voice broke, so that he could not speak. "It was the only time I was ever unable to talk," he added. He left the platform, opened his inner sense and saw his father who said "I'm free." "He did not say 'I'm dead,'" Mr. Oaten added. He was not dead, he was "free," and very seldom had a week passed since then that they had not spoken together.

On Friday night last week, Mr. Oaten lectured on "Psychic Photography" at the London Spiritual Mission, Pembroke Place, and drew special attention to a series of lantern slides showing photographs taken by Dr. Baraduc, of auric emanations, in which the impressions on the plate varied according to the emotions of the sitters. A photograph taken of the space immediately above the heads of a group of praying people showed an upright column of luminous and active rays, whilst anger on the part of sitters produced an entirely different impression.

"POWER" ON MEDIUMSHIP

SPEAKING through Mrs. Meurig Morris at the Service at the Æolian Hall, London, on April 29th, "Power" had much to say of the evolution of consciousness and more particularly the growth of mind and the influence of this on mediumship. The evolution of the mental faculties which is slowly proceeding, has now reached the point, he said, when the Lesser Mysteries can be comprehended by the normal man. If, in conjunction with this, the etheric centres can be awakened, then other types of beings come into view and can be known. In the Mystery Schools of the past, those changes in the microcosmic structure were induced by a system of study, experience, and practice, but the candidate for initiation had to live the life, which in itself tended to establish the certainty that he was a being of a spiritual nature. Not all could find the missing link in consciousness 'twixt man and God. They had their limitations beyond which they could not go.

In this, "Power" saw a resemblance to the inner conditions of Mediums. They, too, by the very nature of their microcosmic structure, have their limitations, and also the kind of work in which they can excel. All types of mediumship are to be valued and none should be disparaged. All Mediums should strive to understand the nature of their work more fully, and by the purification of their super-physical provinces, by building constructive thought and feeling values, fit themselves for better work. The lower the type of entity which controls, the greater is the need for purity of life on the part of the Medium. Schools for the study of everything appertaining to mediumship are very necessary, for there is so much to learn.

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).

TRANSFIGURATION

Sir,—My wife and I and a lady friend were having a late cup of tea in my study at about 10.30 on Friday, April 27th. My friend was seated on the hearth-rug and I opposite in my arm chair, and the electric light was on.

Quite suddenly my friend, who is not normally clairvoyant, saw me enveloped in a cloud of purple, so that only my eyes were visible. Then after a few moments she saw a face forming over my own and at once exclaimed "Mr. Crofton!" whose features were most plainly visible. In a little while this face gave place to that of Mr. Crofton's brother-in-law, a clergyman, whose characteristic features were clearly marked. This gentleman passed over six years, and Mr. Crofton four years ago. Then the clergyman disappeared and Mr. Crofton returned, only to give place again to a Mr. Bowling Trevanion, an uncle, with again strongly marked features, who died some ten years since. Then Mr. Crofton returned again, and by the side of him was a cylinder of oxygen, with a long tube and tap, and the mask for administration of oxygen was being placed over my face, when my friend exclaimed "I don't think I want to see any more."

These figures were all superimposed over my own features. I was not conscious of any of it but merely kept quite still so as not to interfere in any way.

Mr. Crofton's wife, so far as we know, was at that time at death's door in a nursing home. H. ERNEST HUNT.

* * *

SCIENTIST AND LEVITATED TABLE

Sir,—I showed a sceptical scientific friend the part of Mr. Oaten's broadcast referring to the table floating in the air. He was quite unconvinced; said it was contrary to the law of gravitation, and asked why there was no reference to such things in the text-books of physics. This I could not answer. He said that, if the Spiritualists could make such things happen at will, they ought to bring the matter to the notice of the Royal Institution; and that that body would not, and could not, refuse to investigate the matter and issue a definite verdict, which would be accepted as authoritative by the scientists of the world. The matter, with due explanation, would then be inserted in the textbooks of Physics of every civilised country. My friend would not admit for a moment that the unsupported statement of any Spiritualistic Medium or even of the editor of a Spiritualistic journal could be expected to carry any weight where it absolutely contradicted the every-day experience of humanity of all times, and the scientific Laws of Physics as studied from the days of Newton. I mildly said I thought the Society for Psychical Research looked into such things, but he only asked: "Who are the Society for Psychical Research?", and seemed amazed at the suggestion that the statements of such a body could be considered while the Royal Institution was available. C.F.

* * *

HIGHER TEACHINGS OF SPIRITUALISM

Sir,—There must be thousands like myself who are geographically exiled from hearing the higher teachings of Spiritualism, and perforce have to listen week after week in our own neighbourhoods to Leaders or Mediums who are well-meaning but most inadequately equipped with instruction. We dwell in the wilderness, and hunger for the manna which falls in London and other big centres!

Would it be possible for some central body to form a circulating library of the verbatim reports of addresses and lectures given in trance by "Power," "Moontrail," the "Professor," "Red Cloud," etc., and all the other real teachers. (Zodiac's weekly addresses are reported in

The Greater World, and so are already available). Then the less fortunately equipped Churches could borrow these addresses and the Leader could read them out at the Sunday services. The "flock" would certainly be better fed than at present is possible, and doubtless too, the Leader or Medium's own gifts would improve and develop with the opportunity of such regular instruction.

(Miss) W. ADAIR ROBERTS.

* * *

VOICE THAT SAVED A PRISONER'S LIFE

Sir,—I have just been reading "Seership Among Quakers; Message of an 'Inner Voice' that saved a prisoner's life," by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, in the April 6th issue of LIGHT, and beg to state that the wonderful experience of a voice saying, "Go to Launceston," etc., occurred to my great-grandfather, a Presbyterian Minister, Dr. Alexander Waugh, and not to a Quaker.

He was on a visit to Cornwall, and went out at 11 o'clock at night and sat on the rocks, watching the waves in the moonlight; and while there, a fisherman came up and sat by him, and they had a long talk. At length my great-grandfather heard the clock strike 12-13, and he turned to his companion and asked him what the clock had struck, and the man said, "thirteen." So they both heard it. They then parted.

Shortly after this, Dr. Waugh heard a voice say: "Go to Launceston," but as he was not intending going to that place, he took no notice, thinking it mere fancy. But he heard it again, and a third time. So he felt it must be obeyed, and he went to Launceston; and, by proving an alibi for the man as related, saved his life.

(Mrs.) DOROTHY STEPHENS.

13, Campden Hill Road, London.

USEFUL ADVICE FROM BEYOND

Writing in the *Leicester Daily Mercury* (April 27) a correspondent says that in a company of some twenty people he heard a clergyman's widow tell the following story:

"I have good reason," said she, "for my conviction of a real communication with our loved ones beyond the veil. At my husband's death he left his money chiefly invested in the Hatry companies. (These companies were then in high repute). It was a short period after his death that he communicated with me, instructing me to sell out at once. My solicitor remonstrated with me. 'You must not think,' said he, 'of parting with such profitable investments.' Determined to carry out my husband's wishes I replied to his remonstrances 'If you are not, as my solicitor, prepared to carry out my wishes, I will go at once to a solicitor who will.' He sold. The crash came, and I was saved. Have I not cause for my firm belief?"

MR. GUY P. J. L'ESTRANGE

The "Psychic Corner," conducted by Mr. P. J. L'Estrange, which has been an interesting feature in the *Yarmouth Independent* for the past thirteen months, is being discontinued and its place is to be taken by "Psychic Gossip," written by an anonymous contributor.

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As We See It

REV. F. C. SPURR'S TESTIMONY

REV. FREDERIC C. SPURR, of Birmingham, a Baptist minister of much more than local repute, finds himself in a curious—and perhaps uncomfortable—position. By means of psychic phenomena, generally known as "Spiritualistic" (including, it would appear, a wonderful demonstration of singing by the "direct voice" in his drawing-room), he has been completely convinced that his son, who was drowned in 1923 at the age of eight, still "lives on the other side of the veil," and that he can and does communicate in such a way as to prove his identity.

In his book, *The Life Hereafter* (from which we quote on page 286), Mr. Spurr manfully bears testimony to what he has seen and heard, though he says he is "fully aware that it will anger some and amuse others," presumably his colleagues and religious associates.

Yet, having received this wonderful assurance through means made available to him and to others by Spiritualism, Mr. Spurr does not thank Spiritualists for their help, but, on the contrary, dissociates himself from them rather scornfully, and declares that "what truth it (Spiritualism) contains belongs to Christianity and must be recovered for it."

Mr. Spurr, if his conscience permits him, may refuse to accept the label of "Spiritualist," although (like some others who take a similar course) he seems to have qualified for it very fully. He may also, with complete assurance, assert that the fact of survival as demonstrated by spirit-return is an essential of Christianity, and that it is "one of the finest pieces of continuous evidence that it possesses," for so it is. But when he asserts that the truth contained in Spiritualism belongs *exclusively* to Christianity (for that we suppose to be his meaning), he makes a claim which Spiritualists cannot admit and which he will find it impossible to substantiate.

What Spiritualism proves—as he himself has found—is that human survival and the possibility of evidential communication are *natural facts*; that, as natural facts they are common to all men, whatever their belief, and underlie all religions; and that they may therefore with equal right be claimed—as in actual practice they are—by Jews, Moslems and Hindoos as well as by Christians.

What Mr. Spurr should understand is that he can be a Spiritualist and make full acceptance and use of the psychic evidences of Survival *without ceasing to be a Christian*. This, in fact, is what the testimony contained in his book shows has happened in his own case; and it may be hoped that many of his Baptist brethren will be wise enough to benefit by his experience.

"VOICES" IN DAYLIGHT

INTERESTING EXPERIENCES DISCLOSED BY READERS

A NUMBER of readers have written in response to our request for details of Voices heard in daylight and in the open air.

Mrs. Florence Hodgkin, of Old Southcote Lodge, Reading, writes:

"Some time ago I was sitting with Mrs. Barkel at the British College of Psychic Science, London, in a large upper back room. As there was a screen within which Mrs. Barkel could sit to cut off the light from the big window, this was left uncovered. Just as White-Hawk withdrew, a clear voice, which seemed to come from the corner of the ceiling over the door, called out: 'Lady—would you like me to go with your little girl across the water to-morrow and take care of her?' (One of my children was going to school in Paris the next day, but nothing had been said of this during the sitting.)

"I questioned the Voice, and found out she was called Hilda. She gave me her age, details of her parents and her home address. I then asked if I should go and tell her Mummie all about her. She assured me sadly this would be useless. A gentleman had already gone 'all that way in his motor-car'; that her Mummie had gone to the church at the end of thier road and told the clergyman what the gentleman had said, but the clergyman had told her Mummie it was all from the Devil, and she must not believe a word of it.

"I then asked about her Daddy—had he been told about it? In an even more despondent tone the child explained that, when he was ill recently, she had sat on the bed with him and they had talked together, and he *knew* she was there. But as soon as he was well, he said it was merely the fever.

"She was obviously a very temperamental child with a most expressive voice, for I soon comforted her, and she cried gaily: 'I saw you have your picture taken. I've had mine taken there too. Do, please, go and get it out of the bottom of the box. You'll be able to know the right one, because my curls are falling all round the lady's face. Do go and fetch it,' she urged. I promised to do so, and after I had thanked her for her next day's escort, she went.

"All this time Mrs. Barkel remained in trance, but as soon as Hilda left, she stirred and returned, whereupon I told her what had taken place. She thought I had been specially favoured, said the child had attached herself to (I think) her sister, and they were expecting great things, as Hilda seemed so clever.

"As soon as I could get to town again, I went to Miss Stead's to look for Hilda's photograph, only to find I had been forestalled: Mrs. Barkel had been the day before, and every child's photograph—of which there are scores—had been shown to her; but she had just scanned them and cast them aside. They were giving up the search when, at 'the very bottom of the box,' was lying one that Mrs. Barkel instantly recognised as Hilda, whom she had often seen clairvoyantly."

Mrs. M. Thurlow Lamb, of 24, Hawkshead Street, Southport, Lancs., writes:

"Many years ago I asked my Father (now passed on) if he believed in ghosts. He replied, 'I have never seen one, but I have heard one speak.' He went on to explain that as a young man his great-uncle had promised to use his influence to help my Father in his career. This promise had not been carried out. On a Sunday morning, when alone in the garden, after his uncle had passed over, my father, was thinking about these matters, and wondering why the old man had not kept his promise. Suddenly, he heard his uncle's voice speaking to him, apparently about one foot away, and giving full reasons why he had not been able to keep his promise to him, so that my father was quite satisfied with the spirit's explanation."

HOW TO INVESTIGATE MEDIUMSHIP

By HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.

THE importance of the experimental method in scientific investigation is too obvious to be denied. Science is, indeed, largely a body of knowledge which has been tested by experiment, although a good deal of it is necessarily based upon observation. It is, for instance, impossible to test the solar system in the same way that chemicals can be tested, yet astronomy has always been one of the most reliable of the sciences. A good deal may, therefore, be said for observation as against deliberate experimentation.

It should not be forgotten that science has made most progress when dealing with inanimate objects. Science has confessedly never been very much at home when dealing with living organisms; still greater difficulties have been presented by life itself, with the result that psychology is the youngest of the sciences, supposing it to deserve that name.

It is an interesting fact that scientists have deliberately avoided attempting to investigate psychology with the scientific method, notwithstanding that the mind has always been with man, and, even from the materialistic standpoint, deserves to be regarded as the essential feature of any individual. A dead man deserves only to be buried, but a living one is a potential ratepayer, to say the least.

Over one hundred and fifty years have passed since psychology was definitely approached in a scientific way. During the last eighty years or so it has assumed tremendous importance, and many of the most highly trained and capable scientists have made it their special field of enquiry. The result is infinite confusion, the authorities often differing on fundamentals. This is attributable to the complexity of the subject. It has been discovered that the more the plumbline of science is dropped into the abyss of the human mind, the deeper it seems to be; and just as an increase in the power of the telescope reveals new galaxies of stars in the heavens, so further investigation of the human mind reveals new faculties and powers, and possible methods by which the old ones function.

Among these new faculties and powers are those called supernormal. These are so real that the most antagonistic of scientific experimenters to the theory of survival have been obliged to admit that they require further serious examination before their real nature can be discovered.

One of the gravest hindrances to a comprehension of these faculties is the attitude of the scientific mind, which is unusually obsessed with the idea that quantity is superior to quality. In consequence, they treat Mediums in the way that they treat material objects. The very suggestion that the humanities are, in such an investigation, superior to mechanics is regarded as foolish.

The outcome is well known. Mediums who have ventured to pass through the so-called laboratories of scientific investigators have, in the majority of cases, had their reputations assailed. It would be foolish and unjust to accuse their investigators of dishonesty. Indeed, it is impossible to read many of their careful reports and not agree that, if what they have said is true, the Mediums deserved the castigations their characters received. Yet there can be no doubt that many of these Mediums did possess supernormal powers. The fault must therefore, lie either in the methods adopted by the investigators, or in their inability successfully to undertake the investigation. Mediums have always realised that their powers do not successfully respond to the experimental scientific method.

Might it not, therefore, be better if the scientist adopted another method? Mere observation would not suffice, but personal experimenting would—that is, the experimenters should undertake to develop their own supernormal powers. There are, of course, a number of objections to this, the chief one being that it would occupy a great deal of time without producing any results, owing to the

lack of supernormal powers. Even if they did possess such power, the task would be almost a whole time one for several years.

This, however, would place it on a common footing with other scientific acquirements. It takes seven years at least to make a qualified doctor, and almost every other special branch of science requires as long a probationary period. There would then arise the question as to whether such an undertaking would be remunerative, for scientists as a rule aim at making a living by their qualifications. Perhaps in time even this may become a profitable task, and then I have no doubt that mediumship will come into its own.

MR. LEAF'S OWN EXPERIENCE

My own experience in this regard may be interesting. As soon as I had reason to believe that such faculties as clairvoyance and clairaudience might exist, I undertook to investigate them by trying to develop them myself. The task was tedious and often terribly disappointing, but in the end I obtained indubitable proof that such faculties do exist.

I then undertook to investigate in a similar manner physical phenomena. To this I devoted three years, sitting twice daily alone, or nearly nineteen hundred times. During the investigation, I often experienced long periods when nothing unusual occurred, but I emerged from the experiment with absolute proof of the reality of supernormal physical phenomena, including materialisations.

Of materialisations I experienced fourteen examples only, but they were so definite that they left no room for doubt. I saw them, felt them and handled them. To make matters more interesting, on one occasion I had materialised the head and hand of a relative of mine living four hundred miles away, and, owing to something she told me during the materialisation, I was able to establish the undoubted fact that it was she who had thus mysteriously appeared.

It was impossible to have such experiences and not discover a number of other interesting facts. Among them was one which at the time I did not suspect—namely, that the spirit-operators did not always know what they could do, nor even, I suspect, what they were doing. They were aware of aiming at producing certain results, but seemed to be in a condition which made it impossible for them always to know exactly what was happening to me.

I discovered also that there existed a process of experimenting and instruction on the other side, as if there were students learning under qualified teachers how to develop this form of mediumship, and that they were not only intensely interested in the experiments, but sometimes excited and astonished at the results.

The drawback of thus acting alone was that I could not always keep a proper account of what was happening to me. Had I had a suitable companion, I could have analysed and explained what was occurring to me, both physically and psychologically. It is now too late, however, although I have the main features of the experiences indelibly impressed on my mind.

SHELLEY ON PSYCHIC HEALING

Shelley was a believer in psychic healing. He writes in a poem "The Magnetic Lady to Her Patient":

"Sleep on—sleep on—forget thy pain,
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain,
My pity on thy heart, poor friend—
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life; and like a sign
Seal thee from thine hour of woe,
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine."

THE BLACK MAN'S MAGIC

(Continued from page 282)

full upon the point, impaling it like a butterfly on a pin. No blood flowed, but the two children were there, held aloft, pierced through and through, impaled upon swords."

This was not a circus performance; it was a piece of most serious ritual, before an awed and deeply moved crowd; and only grudgingly permitted after months of his initiation into other mysteries.

"There is real magic," the Chief had said, when refusing his previous request to witness the ceremony, "but it is very dangerous. The recovery does not always take place."

And what is magic? I have known a Lascar, who severed his femoral artery falling from the rigging of a P. & O. vessel, stop instantly the flow of blood, and Commander Gatti describes an almost incredible operation at Ghardaia, when a boy's body was ripped open from the abdomen to the throat, and the boy restored after a few moments to health, with but a faint scar of the wound remaining; and, nearer home, there is Miss Somerville's description of the "blood healer's" curing of the wounded horse.

That was, perhaps, Mr. Seabrook's most "disturbing" experience, though by no means the only one he distrusted. Not that he disparaged witchcraft.

"I do not believe," he says, "that witchcraft can crack a skull or make a wall fall down. But witchcraft can destroy a man, and can destroy a house by means more subtle, though just as deadly."

He went through a most unpleasant ordeal, in a divination ceremony, which included the drinking of a poisonous brew; he asked for advice about a journey from his guide's grandfather's arm—"dried, hard and black as ebony," he found nothing surprising in the retention of the late Chief's house, undisturbed, so that his ghost might continue to feel comfortably at home in it, despite the fact of his having been poisoned in the interest of the tribe; nor did the sacrificial expenditure of blood seem to him more revolting than that once prescribed for the Chosen People.

It was his deference to the black man's ideas, helped by his intimate association with Wamba, the sorceress, which induced Nago-Ba, the famous witch-doctor, to expound the faith of his people.

"It was a hard task," explains the author, "and it led far afield, for I was trying to get at something basic."

"Nago-Ba was patient, but it was slow and difficult; and out of it, as we talked late that night, and again for a whole morning, there began to emerge a system of metaphysics as idealistic and perhaps as pure, but also just as complicated as anything ever formulated by Plato and the Greeks, or by the Christian saints and mystic theologians. For Nago-Ba here, strange as it may sound, with his wooden idols, iron *grigris*, and devil masks, believed that the material world was nothing, and that the only ultimate reality was a spiritual reality.

"Furthermore, his conception of the nature of matter, which he and his forbears had held from immemorial jangle time, was so startlingly parallel with our own newest revolutionary scientific conclusions, that one almost asks whether civilized metaphysical science hasn't been simply moving in a circle. . . . And, crazy as it may sound to the casual layman, the concepts held to-day by advanced science in our greatest universities concerning the ultimate nature of a stone, of life, of vital energy, of time and spatial dimensions are closer to the concepts of the black African witch-doctor than to those of our own scientific leaders of twenty years ago."

I wish there were space here to quote him in full, but this description of Nago-Ba's faith cannot be omitted.

"He believes that everything that lives—man, beast, insect, tree, and plant—has not only its kinetic vital quality, its life-spark, but a soul quality as well, which is

independent of both the body and the vital spark, and hence immortal.

"He believes also that every object which we call inanimate, such as a mountain or a stone, likewise a river or a ploughed field, though lacking any vital spark, is also endowed with this sentient soul quality. His doctrine becomes, therefore, an all-embracing animism.

"The soul is the essence and real nature of each thing that exists. The vital spark which a man, beast, or tree has, and a stone has not, is mechanical, soulless, and impersonal. It is like an electric current, a non-sentient blind agent, and the embodied soul's chief busy occupation is guiding it, so that it in turn will operate the mechanism of the body. The soul directing this current makes the body move and talk, but the body is in reality only a mechanical doll. The *man* himself is neither the mechanical body nor the mechanical current, but an immortal spirit.

"When the spark burns out, the mechanical doll is junk, and the soul goes free, a disembodied sentient personality. . . which, freed from its own busy mechanical-doll job, has not only more power, but also more time to occupy itself with the affairs of others, for helping or harming.

"Thus simply is derived the Cult of the Dead, side by side with the nature-worship cult, which all animist primitives practise."

"BLACK-WHITENESS"

Explaining elsewhere how easily the native mind could accept his "black-whiteness," the author says:—"To them no outward materialised shape is ever definite, fixed, or real. Their mysticism teaches that all outward material forms are apt to be deceptive, frequently clothing a wholly dissimilar spiritual essence. A seeming man may be a tree walking; a stone may contain the soul of one's grandfather; a child may be a serpent. Any given incarnation (materialised bodily appearance) is a transitory incident, and material forms are continually in flux."

Wamba, that roguish sorceress, added some illuminating comments on Free Will and Fate.

"She believes," says the author, "that nothing is an accident, . . . and that all possible future events exist in embryo. That sounded like the purest fatalism; but it is not. For she believes also that the future, if foreseen, may be to some degree controlled. And the real purpose of Fetish consultation and divination is to decipher and to control the future. . . . She believes that Fate, though written, projects itself into the future, not as a straight line, but fan-shaped, in myriad alternate paths multiplying to infinity."

We have a choice of the paths; but cannot evade what lies on the path we have chosen.

Well, there are some of the Black Man's achievements and ideas, and whatever may be the Christian's reaction to them, the philosopher must regard them with an extreme respect.

Black Mist. Attilio Gatti. London. Hutchinson. 1934. 18/-.

Jungle Ways. W. B. Seabrook. London. G. G. Harrap. 1931. 10/6.

LORDS OF KARMA

In an afternoon tea-talk at the L.S.A. on Wednesday last week (May 2nd), Mrs. Marjorie Livingston spoke on the Seven Lords of Karma. They correspond, she explained, to the seven planets, but are neither personalities nor a blind force. We must not invest them with human characteristics; they hold the appointed leases of incarnation; they protect but do not compel. We are none of us forced into incarnation: we come if we wish to come, for experience. In the discarnate state we shall recognise the importance of our undertaking. Every horoscope has certain bad aspects; these we can overcome by determination, thus discharging our karmic debts. Free-will is greater than the force of destiny; and we have a tremendous karmic responsibility for the influences which we exert on the lives of others.

THINK IT THROUGH WITH ME

By REV. W. R. WOOD

PROBLEM CO-TERMINOUS WITH HUMANITY

THE word "co-terminous" is a bit formidable for a Westerner; but in the early days when the pioneer trails and, a little later, the pioneer railways, were pushing out beyond "The Peg" across the prairies, we were used to speaking of "terminuses." The "terminus" was the finish of the trail, the end of the steel, or, more colloquially "the jumping-off place." And very early in my study of what humanity has had to say about psychic experience, I learned that if one is to set bounds to that experience he will have to follow humanity to its "jumping-off place"—that is, to its utmost "a quo" and "ad quem" limits of race and place and time.

I learned that while not every one has had such experiences, there are abundant evidences of their having been shared by every people and nation from the earliest periods of which records have been preserved. Very presumably there has never been a wholly impenetrable barrier between here and "the otherwhere." The problem is co-terminous with humanity.

It is a matter of common knowledge that stories of the appearance of spirits or "ghosts" are to be found in many literatures, both ancient and modern; and, as students have noted, the general types, even of the most ancient, usually conform to those current in our own time. Pliny the Younger, writing in the first century of our era has three stories—one of a premonitory vision, one of a haunted house, and one of a "poltergeist." An Egyptian papyrus at Leyden contains a letter in which the writer complains of the persistent annoyance caused him by his deceased wife. Porphyry describes seances at which spirits manifested and conveyed messages. The case of Cræsus as told by Heroditus and the case of the "daimon" of Socrates are well known. The mystic rites of ancient Egypt and the oracles of ancient Greece are historically famous. Sir William Barrett, speaking of "crystal-gazing," testifies that: "We find it in ancient as well as in modern Egypt, in Assyria, Persia and India, in Siberia, China and Japan, among the North American Indians, the Maories of New Zealand and various African tribes."

Naturally, the objection arises in regard to most of these and other similar records, that the evidence is far from being exact or conclusive. Admitting that freely, it must still be recognised that we give general credence to these records so far as they refer to matters other than

psychic. Prairie logic would scarcely permit us to discredit one particular phase of these ancient records while accepting all the rest. The fact that wherever we find records of human life, we find also records of experiences that are super-normal inevitably create a presumption of at least some degree of reality in the experiences recorded.

Coming to later centuries with more extensive and satisfactory records, we find fairly complete narratives of such as the following: an epidemic of trance-speaking, convulsions and ecstatic conditions among the Ursuline nuns at Loudun in 1632-1634; an outbreak of inspirational phenomena among the peasants of the Cevennes in 1707; long years of unique spiritual illumination of the Swedish savant Emanuel Swedenborg; striking experiences in the home of the Wesleys at Epworth; varied developments of hypnotic power through Mesmer, 1734 to 1815; remarkable communications through Andrew Jackson Davis following the year 1843. For most of these, the records are ample and of a character which attests at least in general the occurrence of extraordinary and super-normal experience. To attempt to explain them all away would be for any reasonable mind a task quite beyond the range of possibility.

But we must add to these the enormous volume of material dealing with the experiences of hundreds of people since the "forties" of last century, material in many cases trebly guaranteed: first, by the educated intelligence and unimpeachable character of the participants; second, by constant effort in the pursuit of investigations, scientifically to exclude every element of error and fraud; and third, by the preservations of accurate and painstaking records of the observed phenomena. Delving into these as opportunity offered—opportunity seriously circumscribed by the conditions of my prairie location—I found myself increasingly convinced of the reality of an extensive area of human experience here awaiting investigation. At the same time I was increasingly attracted to the view that the nature and extent of the general evidence offers, even to a novice, the hope that it may not be impossible to reach intelligent interpretation of some of the phenomena presented. In other words, I felt, as our prairie people would say, that there is "something to this." And so I said "I must look farther into these problems."

[Next week Mr. Wood will show that "the Bible does not oppose *Psychical Research*."] _____

LIGHT has become engrossingly interesting. I hope it is being appreciated by the public.—Horace Leaf, F.R.G.S.

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May 15th—Clairvoyance: MRS. HIRST.

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Thursdays at 8.15 p.m. Members free. Guests of Members 1/-. Non-Members 2/-

May 17th REV. C. DRAXTON THOMAS on "An Amazing Experiment." A remarkable incident in recent researches of the lecturer, showing how convincing messages from their deceased child were transmitted to distant strangers. Lantern Illustrations.

SYLLABUS ON APPLICATION

"CONDITIONS"

"WHENEVER things go wrong in a seance, it is generally put down to bad conditions," said Mr. W. H. Evans, at the free public Meeting on Tuesday evening last. It is a word of great convenience, but exceedingly vague in meaning, at least, as often used by Spiritualists. What is meant by "conditions"? No one seems to know what are the essential conditions for successful seance work, for it does happen at times that everything seems favourable, the Medium is thoroughly at home, the sitters in a genial mood, the atmospheric conditions all that one can desire, and a feeling of harmony prevails; yet nothing happens, there is no phenomena, either of a physical or psychological kind. Why? The reason seems fairly obvious if we do not rule out the spirits and realise that psychic phenomena are due to their operation. If they, for reasons which to them are no doubt wise, decide that no approach is desirable, nothing happens. On the other hand, it may be that a great deal does happen on the inner planes of which we know nothing, for it may be observed that a blank seance is often followed by one that is fruitful in results. In these matters it is patience that we need most. Given that, we shall find our results accumulating.

Much depends upon the manner of our approach. It is not alone the Medium who is responsible for what are called "conditions," but the sitters also. They are a very important factor in the success or failure of seance work, especially if any be of an absorbent nature. There are some people who soak up psychic energy so rapidly that there is very little left for the spirits to use, even for ordinary control. Only practice can reveal this kind of sitter, but one may know them by the feeling of lassitude they produce amongst those who associate with them. Given the right kind of sitters and the right type of Medium, one may reasonably expect results.

Expectancy, however, should not be too keen. For some reason over-anxiety to obtain results often frustrates the efforts of those on the other side. We are dealing with forces very much finer than ordinary physical ones—they are mental in character, at least, it seems so, for intensity of thought has a very decided influence upon

them, which is why over-eagerness for results blocks the line and acts as an inhibiting factor. The open mind is best; expect nothing definite but be alert to note and observe whatever happens. One can be critical but one should be sympathetic. Antagonism acts in the same manner as anxiety to prevent results. Mediums are very sensitive, and they feel the mental atmosphere of sitters most acutely. Hence any suspicion, or antagonistic thought is sensed, and tends to make the Medium's aura contract and become rigid, thus causing the flow of psychic force to cease.

NEW L.S.A. COUNTRY BRANCH

Another Country Branch of the L.S.A. was opened by Miss Phillimore, the Secretary, on Saturday last (May 5th), at Hoylake. The Area Representative is Mrs. Finlay Dun, the Briar Patch, Stanley Road, Hoylake, Cheshire, who is willing to meet or to correspond with people living in the neighbourhood who are interested. Country Branches of the L.S.A. provide many advantages for their members.

MRS. EILEEN GARRETT

After a most successful and fruitful tour in the United States, Mrs. Garrett is returning to London and will be able to give sittings to clients on or about June 16th. During her stay in the States, Mrs. Garrett has worked on strictly scientific lines with Dr. Rhine of the Duke University and Dr. Thomas of Detroit. Experiments have been successful in telepathy, clairvoyance and trance mediumship, and certain additions to the knowledge of these faculties have been made.

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Wednesday, May 16th, at 8.15 p.m. .. Mr. H. A. HANKEY
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SUNDAY, MAY 13th, 1934

11 a.m.—Mrs. St. Clair Stobart.

Clairvoyant: Mr. Thomas Wyatt

6.30 p.m.—Rev. C. Drayton Thomas.

Clairvoyant: Mr. Glover Botham.

Sunday, May 20th, at 11 a.m. .. Dr. H. P. SHASTRI

Clairvoyante: Miss Lily Thomas

Sunday, May 20th, at 6.30 p.m. .. Mr. SHAW DESMOND

Clairvoyante: Mrs. Helen Spiers.

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Monday, May 14th—Speaker: MR. DAVID BEDBROOK

Clairvoyant: Mr. Thomas Wyatt

Wednesday, May 16th—Speaker: MR. G. H. LETHEM

Clairvoyante: Mrs. Stella Hughes

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Monday. WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

2.30—4 p.m.—Mrs. Livingstone, by appointment.

2.30 p.m. Mrs. Bird's Ladies' Healing Circle. For appointments write to Mrs. Moysey (Hon. Secretary).

3—4 p.m.—Mrs. St. Clair Stobart welcomes inquirers.

6.30 p.m.—Open Meeting in the Grotrian Hall.

7 p.m. Mrs. Bird's Ladies' Healing Circle. For appointments write to Miss Robertson (Hon. Secretary).

8 p.m.—Mr. Hendry's class for development of the healing faculty. (Recommencing May 28th).

Tuesday. 2 p.m.—Mrs. Gray's Private Healing Treatment. For particulars write to Mrs. Gray.

Wednesday. 12.30—1.30 p.m.—Open meeting in Grotrian Hall.

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Thursday. 7 p.m.—Mrs. Bird's Mixed Healing Circle. For appointments, write to Miss Michell (Hon. Secretary).

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May 16th 2.30—Mrs. Cannock.

6.30—Mrs. Rose Livingstone.

23rd 2.30—Miss Derbyshire.

6.30—Mr. Thomas Wyatt.

Monday, May 14th, at 8.30 p.m.

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