

JANUARY 1915

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THE OCCULT REVIEW

EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

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AND
VISIONS
OF THE WAR
By THE EDITOR

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By Irene E. Toye Warner

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E. M. M.

THE UNKNOWN GUEST. By Maurice Maeterlinck. Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. London : Methuen & Co., Ltd. Price 5s. net.

THE Editor dealt with the Free-will and Time parts of this book in the December issue of the OCCULT REVIEW. It remains, therefore, to review the psychical part.

M. Maeterlinck writes of phantasms, psychometry, and the subliminal self—which last-named is our "unknown guest"—and is always bright and interesting. To readers of this magazine, however, he probably has little to offer that is new, in these chapters, for his cases are mostly quoted from the S.P.R. *Proceedings*. But his chapter on the Elberfeld Horses strikes a different note ; for he investigated them himself, travelling to Elberfeld specially for the purpose. In our present state of mind, it is natural that we should view the German owner of these animals with extreme distrust. Probably M. Maeterlinck himself now feels a certain regret that he gave Herr Krall such an unqualified certificate of honesty. But certainly there seemed no evidence of fraud, nor has any been discovered by the psychologists who have pilgrimaged to Elberfeld from all over Europe. The horses extract the square roots of numbers written on the blackboard, indicating the answer by hoof-scrapes : and they do it with marvellous speed, beginning to scrape almost as soon as the last figure is written. M. Maeterlinck thinks they have subliminals which get at the answer intuitively, as with mathematical prodigies, who do not consciously calculate. And he thinks that, with proper development, horses might make very good mediums—might see and report the future, for instance. This makes us ponder as to whether there may not have been something more than has hitherto been suspected about the sacred cats of ancient Egypt. Cats are perhaps better "psychics" than horses ; we remember that Algernon Blackwood's Dr. Silence took his cat to the haunted house to act as seer. But of course Dr. Silence "isn't evidence." Still, those Egyptian cats . . . they may have been mediums—trained seers into occult realms. And the North American totem-animals may originally have attained their sanctity similarly. The whole thing is very suggestive, and experiments ought certainly to be made in this direction. It stands to reason that there must be psychic potentialities in the huge animal kingdom, which we have hitherto hardly guessed at. M. Maeterlinck has done good service by drawing our attention to this unexplored territory. Incidentally it may be remarked that he blunders rather badly in classing astrology with clairvoyance (p. 48). The explanation no doubt is that he knows nothing about the former. Indeed this is obvious, for he humorously alludes to the terror with which mathematics always inspired him, and astrology is purely mathematical.

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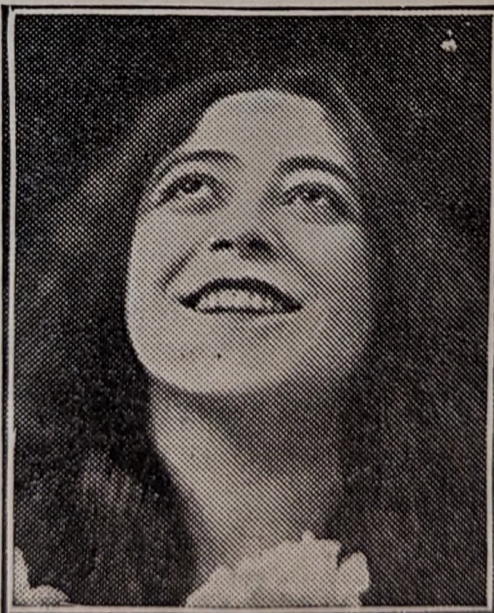
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