

## CHRISTMAS

### The Outlook

IN the days of Solar Worship, before the light of the Galilean Teacher shone in the spiritual firmament, a great festival was held at the time of the Winter Solstice (December 25th) to celebrate the birth of the Sun. Fires were lighted throughout the land, not only as a symbol of the chiefest attribute of the great globe of Fire, but also as an act of sympathetic magic to aid the sun in the labour of a miraculous birth and in its release from the powers of darkness that enchained it in the underworld.

To the ancients the winter and summer solstices were two momentous periods in the great annual journey through the sky, the one marking the setting-forth, the other the return, and in each case fire was the great symbol heralding the event.

The Christmas festival, celebrating as it does another Birth, perpetuates the same great story, but offers in lieu of the Solar emblem the symbol of the little Blessed Child.

It is of course common knowledge that the actual date of the birth of Christ is not known, and that the Christmas Festival was not at first held upon December 25th. As many as 136 different dates have been suggested, and even



so late as 1644 it is apparent that dissension on the point was rife, as the Puritans tried by Act of Parliament to abolish the custom of celebrating Christmas on December 25th, claiming that it was well-known that our Lord was born in September or October.

In the early centuries of Christianity January 6th was the generally accepted date for the Festival, and it was celebrated thereon by the Church until the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century when it was arbitrarily changed to December 25th by the ecclesiastical authorities, so that it synchronised with the great pagan festival held in honour of the Birth of the Sun. The change has been universally adopted except by the Church of Armenia which still keeps the older date of January 6th.

Again and again in the history of the Church we find the transformation of a pagan festival into a Christian holy day, and the reason is not far to seek. In promulgating the teachings and doctrines of a new religion to peoples who clung tenaciously to the traditions of their own cults it was politic to celebrate the great Festivals of the Christian Year at times when corresponding pagan festivals were held. By so doing, the people continued their same worship although at a new altar, feeling perhaps in some dim way that they honoured their gods as aforetime albeit under a different name.



The emblem of the Sun was to the ancients the outer manifestation of the origin and source of all Being, in very truth the Light of the Universe : the festival of its Birth was therefore pre-eminently a fit foundation whereon might be laid that other Festival, of the Birth of Him who is called the Light of the World.

So the Church allied the Life of Christ with the old Solar Myth, holding the great Festivals which commemorated episodes in that Life on dates that coincided with certain momentous periods in the Sun's (apparent) course through the heavens, hallowed already by solar worship.

Very closely can a parallel be drawn. Was not the Son of God born on the morning of December 25th of a pure virgin in Bethlehem, even as the sun was new-born on the morning of December 25th when the sign Virgo was rising upon the horizon? And we remember that no permanent date is fixed for the celebration of Easter, but the great festival commemorating the death and resurrection of Christ varies according to the occurrence of the Spring Equinox. The time when the Sun passes through the Equinox and in so doing forms a majestic Cross upon the heavenly map, determines the date of the commemoration of the crucifixion of the Son of God upon the Cross of Calvary.

It is interesting to note that worshippers of other religions besides Christianity have revered



December 25th as the natal day of their Saviour. Mithra was commonly identified with the "Unconquered Sun," and festivals in honour of his birth were held upon the same great day. Among other instances the remarkable Ritual of the Nativity of the Sun (performed in ancient Syria) may be cited, in which the celebrants remained in certain inner shrines on the eve of December 25th until midnight, when they issued forth, crying "The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!" But space forbids further reference.

. . . . .

When we come to consider the ancient customs associated with the Festival of Christmas, we find that many are still common at the present day, although more frequently than not their origin and meaning are forgotten. Every child has his Christmas joys and helps to perpetuate the old traditions; where is one who has not heard of holly and mistletoe, of Christmas-trees and Christmas pudding, and the Yule Log that blazes on the Christmas hearth?

These customs are cherished rather jealously by us, more so than those associated with any other season of the year, hallowed as they are by long tradition and closely associated with one of the deepest of the mysteries.

The custom of lighting the Yule Log is becoming less common with the growth of cities and



consequent scarcity of wood-firing, but in earlier days on every hearth a new Log was laid at Christmas or Yuletide, cut from a fruit-bearing tree such as an apple, pear or oak. Often a heavy block of oak-wood (pointing to Druidic origin) would be fitted into the floor of the hearth, so that although when the fire burnt the log would glow, it would not be reduced to ashes if well-laid throughout the year. After twelve months had passed and the season of Yuletide approached again, the new Yule Log would replace the old, the remains of the latter being strewn over the fields for twelve successive nights to ensure the fruitfulness of the crops. In Westphalia, however, it was the custom to tie up the Yule Log in the last sheaf cut at harvest.

Dr. Frazer in the *Golden Bough* tells us that in some parts of the Eifel Mountains the Yule Log was called the Christbrand. It was placed on the hearth on Christmas Eve and kept burning until Twelfth Night, when the charred remains were stored in the cornbin to keep away the mice.

The Log was not without its uses as a health-bringer, for at one time it was the custom to powder the charcoal and mix it with water as a cure for consumption, and another rather curious belief was that in the event of a thunderstorm the remains of the log should be replaced on the fire, as while the Yule Log was burning the house could not be struck by lightning.



Often when the Yule Log was brought into the house it would be accompanied by the oldest and youngest members of the household, symbolising of course the old year and the new, and in a more mystical sense the dying of the old man and the birth of the new. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Three glasses of wine—wine being the emblem of the undying spirit—were sometimes poured over the Log "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," and it was the united duty of the household to see that it was kept burning for the twelve following days.

Another old Christmas-tide custom was the election of the *King of the Bean*. This king was chosen by means of a cake which was broken into as many pieces as there were people present, the one finding a bean or coin in his portion being acclaimed the King of the Bean. We recognise here the origin of the custom of putting a silver piece in the Christmas Pudding which brings good fortune to the lucky finder.

Many of the customs have behind them the idea of fertility, appearing pagan rather than Christian in origin. Note, for instance, the shaking of fruit-trees on Christmas morning so that they may bear well the following autumn. Efficacious as this act of magic may have been in the past a modern failure has to be recorded, for last Christmas Day in accord with old tradition a



certain plum tree was shaken in a Surrey garden, the rest of the fruit trees, both plum and apple, being left untouched. Alas, for the simple faith of the children who performed the rite! The other trees were in due time laden with fruit, but the one that had been shaken on the Christmas morning was as barren as the fig tree of old.

It is still the general custom to decorate our houses with boughs of evergreens, holly and mistletoe. In earlier days not every form of evergreen might serve, laurel and bay, rosemary and holly were chief; laurel and bay, the symbols of victory, rosemary, the meaning of which is uncertain, although one writer suggests its import may be the "sweet-smelling savour of sacrifice," and holly from, surely, the "holy tree," whose leaves to the Christian signify the crown of thorns while the scarlet berries are as the drops of Precious Blood.

Mistletoe would seem to be a relic of the old Druid worship, and reminds us also of the Legend of the death of Balder the Beautiful, the Norse prototype of Christ, who was vulnerable only to an arrow made of a branch of mistletoe, and who suffered death thereby at the instigation of Loki, personifying the Evil Powers.

Although it is difficult to attach a Christian meaning to the mistletoe, it was at one time the custom at York Minster to carry a branch of it in procession on Christmas Eve, and to lay it with



much ceremony upon the high altar in the East. Perhaps it symbolised the transmutation of evil into good, so that that which sinned as Adam is perfected in Christ. A hint of this possible interpretation lies behind the old belief that the mistletoe was a cure for every ill, bearing as it did the significant title of *All Heal*.

But perhaps the symbol of greatest beauty that remains with us at the present day is the Christmas-tree.

Here again we find a blend of pagan and Christian symbolism. The tree is a relic of the ancient Tree Worship, of the great mysterious God who dwelt in the sacred groves, the emblem also of fertility and the active principle in life, bearing much the same interpretation as the Maypole. But to-day in Christian countries the tree is decked with gifts, emphasising in a more immediate fashion its blessing of fertility, while the lighted candles on its branches are standing witnesses of the Fire-Worship of the ancients, and memorials also of the Flame of the Spirit that is lighted at Christmas-tide.

The candles in a more individual way may also symbolise the "sweet-smelling sacrifice" of praise and adoration offered to the Blessed Mother and her holy Babe, for even in recent times it was the custom to tie to the topmost branch a figure of the Madonna and the little Child, thus giving to the tree a dual significance.



It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the fruit of which brought bitterness to man through Eve: it is the Tree, also, of Life, whose fruit may only be plucked by the pure of soul in whom the miracle of Christ-birth is performed.

The figure of the Holy Mother is the emblem of the Virgin-soul, thus the symbolism of the tree so crowned points not only to man's beginning but his triumphant end. Eve symbolises the soul at the beginning of her long journey, Mary is equally the soul—but now freed from all traffic with matter and pollution of earth, her face turned heavenly-wise, the pure Virgin of whom the Holy Child is born.

A very beautiful custom still lingers in scattered parts of Ireland.

On Christmas Eve the Yule Log is lighted on the hearth, and a humble meal is laid in readiness in the little cottage kitchen. The latch is lifted and the door set ajar, so that if a Woman and her Child should pass that way in search of shelter they might not be turned empty away.

Some have called it the *Christ Welcome*, and legends time and again are told of the coming of Travellers upon the sacred Eve, and the dews of Peace that they have laid upon the threshold of those who kept watch and slumbered not.

But at this season of the year the mind is not satisfied if it dwell only upon the customs, old-



mically the Great Deep, brooded upon by the Spirit of God at the very dawn of creation.

The guide and instructor of Spirit, of the Christ-Child, in the earlier stages of the journey, is the Mind, symbolised by Joseph who is but the reputed father, for Spirit is the immaculate Child of the Soul, who no longer enmeshed by the web of Matter, lifts her eyes only for the heavenly vision.

She—the soul—Mary the Mother, has not the power of Spirit. It is not she who ascends to the Eternal Father, but is “assumed” thereunto by virtue of her link and bond with Spirit, with her holy Son. Therefore in the Church Doctrine we learn of the ascension of the Son and the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

After the Birth in Bethlehem, Joseph (the Mind) led Mary (the Soul) into Egypt, which to the symbolist personifies throughout the Bible dense physical matter. For it is through her contact with Matter that the Soul gathers experience which later is transmuted into the treasures of Wisdom.

When the little Babe is lying in the manger, it is written that the ox and ass stood by, the ox representing the physical body and the ass the psychic powers, which must both be stilled at the supreme moment when the highest in man has birth.

The three wise men from the East—the place



of wisdom—are the most spiritual elements of a man's nature, and the shining star that guided them in their search, throughout all time has been the symbol of the Man Made Perfect.

It is at Christmas-tide that the tender and beautiful story of the Christ-Birth is brought home to our memory so closely; to some as a literal record, to others as an emblem that interpreted will lift a little of the veil shrouding the Divine Mysteries from the outer understanding.

DOROTHY GRENSIDE.



## THE COMPANY OF SPIRIT

SOME fear to pass companionless, alone,—  
Some seek the busy little paths, well-trodden by  
the feet of men.

Others are loneliest in the city's crowded street  
But walk in radiant company through Nature's  
wilds.

I would be of those  
Who hear the Call Divine in places solitary and  
alone,  
Where stones of wilderness have voice and Spirit  
answers Spirit.

I would pass from the outer stir of life to the  
silence of the hills,  
To dreamy rest of bracken-beds and strength of  
furrowed crags,  
To the power of wind-swept barren peaks,  
Jagged and rough in outline against the painted sky.



Save here and there where snowy veils have draped  
their nudity.

Divinity is brooding in the Wilds.  
Her Voice is calling in the solitary ways,  
Her Cry is carried on the storm-blown sweeps  
and echoed on the hills,—  
Her Peace has blessing,—  
Tender as the touch of scented winds that dry  
the tear-wet heather and the stars of diamond  
dew :  
Her Song is lying in the tireless fall of waters  
That seek an undiscovered rest throughout un-  
counted years.

Spirit has called to Spirit, and Spirit has answered  
the cry. . . .  
I am one with the furrowed crag, with the leap-  
ing dancing water,  
One with the bracken-beds and touch of scented  
winds,  
One with the mountain-peaks and tender, painted  
sky,  
One with the Spirit of all,  
Their Life is mine . . .  
We share a mighty Unity beyond all separate-  
ness,  
Where then is loneliness of heart ?  
Joyously I greet you, O my Comrades of the  
Wild,—  
In Solitude I find companionship of Spirit.

O. E. S.





## WILLIAM MORRIS

LIKE a golden thread woven into a silken scarf, the sentence "Art made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and user" runs through the teaching of William Morris. All things used of man have quality of form or colour, and always would he have these forms beautiful, and these colours fitting, so that the eyes, most sensitive and most important of the receptive human organs, shall never be offended or the brain disturbed by things not of joy, but of joylessness. But even the importance of the beauty of homely things to their user is secondary in that word of his to the elementary demand for joy in the making. "To give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *use*, that is the one great office of decoration"; he has said, "to give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *make*, that is the other use of it." And that this pleasure is immediately obtainable if only the maker will spend some of his spirit in the making of even the simplest and least intricate article, he holds to be above the realm of doubt and distortion, wherein all are now chained, in spite of the effort of an outstanding character here and there to escape from the trammels.

He is prepared to accept a second place in the preaching of this gospel, granting in his modesty the primary position to his friend, John Ruskin, but while Ruskin has perhaps said more upon the subject, his "most eloquent words," sincere though they were, did not come so near to the



heart of the matter as did those not less eloquent, but more precise and comprehensive words of Morris. Indeed he should not have placed himself next to Ruskin, but beside him, in demanding the increase of beauty in life as the real healing of the times, when all the tendency was to uglification, shameful prudery and destruction.

"Time was when the mystery and wonder of handicraft were well acknowledged by the world, when imagination and fancy mingled with all things made by man; and in those days all handicraftsmen were *artists*, as we should now call them."

And again :

"Once men sat under grinding tyrannies, amidst violence and fear so great that nowadays we wonder how they lived through twenty-four hours of it, till we remember that then, as now, their daily labour was the main part of their lives, and that that daily labour was sweetened by the daily creation of art; and shall we, who are delivered from the evils they bore, live drearier lives than they did?"

Though the method of those men's lives seem terrible to us, the healing power of the daily creation of art was so great that the monuments of their work have been left to us, and we gaze upon them, shamed by their beauty and by the contrast of our modern way of life.

The shame of this modern way of life is that it is a thing apart from beauty, whose face it has disregarded, and who is looked at sidelong as one apart, not touching life devoted to living. How false is such an idea, how that it is only by a straight glance into the eyes of living beauty, that



human life can increase and fructify in satisfying measure to contentment and joy, Morris has said in words not indefinite :

“That the beauty of life is a thing of no moment, I suppose few people would venture to assert, and yet most civilised people act as if it were of none, and in so doing are wronging both themselves, and those that are to come after them ; for that beauty which is what is meant by *art*, using the word in its widest sense, is, I contend, no mere accident to human life, which people can take or leave as they choose, but a positive necessity of life, if we are to live as nature meant us to ; that is, unless we are content to be less than men.”

This change which has led us into living in conditions wherein we are likely thus “to become less than men” Morris traces just as Ruskin does, to the influence of that time of glory and efflorescence, artificial as perhaps it was, when men hailed the New Birth, having discovered once more the glory that was Greece. They turned away from the puny things which they had done—how man lacks confidence in the product of his own hand—to worship at the shrine of Greece, and they allowed themselves after a time to neglect their own original work for a travesty of that art, which was once so glowingly alive in the city states of the Hellespont, forgetting that that also had started in a spark, had flamed up a fiery furnace, and had consumed itself. Truly it had left its lessons, but they were not copybook lessons, and no man should be content with such. Thus it came about, that while in the growing civilisation of Mediæval Europe :



"all works of craftsmanship were once beautiful, unwittingly or not, they are now divided into two kinds, works of art and non-works of art : now nothing made by man's hands can be indifferent ; it must be either beautiful and elevating, or ugly and degrading, and those things that are without art are so aggressively ; they wound it by their existence, and they are now so much in the majority that the works of art we are obliged to set ourselves to seek for, whereas the other things are the ordinary companions of our everyday life, so that if those who cultivate art intellectually were inclined never so much to wrap themselves in their special gifts and their high cultivation, and so live happily apart from other men, and despising them, they could not do so : and I am glad of it."

But even as he was deploring the shame and degradation out of which a few choice spirits were trying to raise art, out of the mire of indifference as a thing of no account in a money-making world, whereas it is of the greatest account in a wealthy world, Morris discerned a ray of hope in the beginning of the education movement, although the conditions of life militate so largely against any real education.

"But," he says, "that education does not end when people leave school is now a mere commonplace ; and how then can you educate men who lead the life of machines, who only think for the few hours during which they are not at work, who in short, spend almost their whole lives in doing work which is not proper for developing them body and mind in some worthy way."

That out of that slough of despond modern civilisation must arise is to Morris' mind "the meaning of what we call National Education,"



which we have begun, and which is doubtless already bearing its fruits, and will bear greater, when all people are educated, not according to the money which they or their parents possess, but according to the capacity of their minds."

National Education in its limited form has already borne certain fruits, perhaps not those "rare and refreshing" but more of the dead sea variety. Still the hope is not vain, and unlimited education cannot be other than helpful to the ideal which Morris perceived. Men must change, not that last change of life only, but as in the demand for beauty, for fitting things in life, which is now so insistent a clamour, reaction though it may be from the deathly circumstance of war, which it will overcome. Mere acquisition of money can do nothing, but the desire for Spiritual content, resultant from the negation thereof in this late war, will have its way and that desire, arising as it does not from those intellectually interested in art, who are content to live in the ugliness of an industrial Mammon-worshipping world, but from the whole human race, cannot but precede that desired day of "Art made by the people and for the people—a joy to the maker and user."

G. E. FUSSELL.



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But which looks out over the wide Earth and draws to itself all men with deep unearthly love.—EDWARD CARPENTER.



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## GOD'S FOOL

MEN scorned him for his simple, foolish ways,  
From first to last through dreary days  
Heaped laughter and contempt on all he did :  
Yet, in his heart the while, lay hid  
From sight of mocking eyes  
The Secret of the Wise. . . . .  
He knew that down each ugly, dusty street  
Walked One with piercèd Feet.  
His eyes beheld the dawning of a smile  
That stayed awhile  
On faces furrow-lined with care  
As, one by one, men learnt to share  
The burdens of their toil.  
Others might spoil  
The rich oblation of their bodies' pain,  
Shrink from the Grail of Sacrifice to gain  
A moment's pleasure ;  
His only measure  
Reached to the viewless heights above  
Where, hand in hand, he walked with Love.  
But ever in his heart was found  
Room for the toiling world around.  
He shared the sweat of men, the pain  
Of women scarred his heart again.  
For him creation burgeoned forth in song  
And children played through golden days and long.  
The curtains of a world as yet concealed  
That, sought in love, will stand at last revealed  
Stirred gently at his passing by ;  
Breathed to the whisper of a sigh  
That told his name, of men misunderstood  
"The Fool of God" that knoweth all things  
good.

H. L. HUBBARD.

## SCOTTISH FOLKLORE

BELIEF is a queer thing. The resourcelessness and poverty of mind cannot be exemplified better than by the admission which men sometimes make, that contradictory beliefs can be rested by sensible folk quite easily on precisely the same set of facts or assumptions. Civilisation—let alone culture—does not alter this. No doubt the postulates change. The heir of the ages prides himself in dismissing from serious consideration witches, totems and omens, but still there remain very few to-day who have not a fresh crop of notions that a savage would reject with scorn, and the road to the occultist and the fortune-teller—let alone the faith-healer—is still well-worn.

In order to illustrate this point of view, I have selected the folklore of a district of Scotland which embraces Aberdeenshire. Every county of Scotland has customs of its own ; but the broad lines of division run between Celt and Lowland, between South and North, with the Tay as march-water. Accordingly, because the old world still lives in its bones to-day to a remarkable degree, I put forward for consideration a select body of the opinions and customs which within the last sixty years has been prevalent between Deveron and Don, in the north-east shoulder of Scotland. The race which dwells in that part is barren of imagination, rough of speech, but cunning and wise. It is given up almost wholly to the culture of land that is uncomely by nature and thrawn in use. The seaboard abounds in



small fishing hamlets, and the fishermen are as strange in their wisdom and ways as their landward neighbours.

These men of the sea will not have their true names made public nor their portrait taken. They feel uneasy if any part of their clothing goes astray. The reason of this is the belief well known to many peoples that it is possible to work evil on one by the use of his name, his likeness, or some possession of his. Accordingly fishermen all have T-names and by these they are generally known and addressed.

When at sea the fishermen will have no allusion made to kirk or minister. Ministers proverbially bring ill-luck. So do all sacred things.

It is offensive to point at fishing-boats at sea, or to count them on the water. If pointed at, the whole hand is used. Any allusion to a pig among fishermen is resented: dogs and salmon are also taboo, the salmon especially having an ill repute. Certain names, such as Ross, must never be mentioned. Once a fishing crew traced a bad fishing to the fact that they had lived unwittingly in the house of a man called Ross. If a minister were to read the parable of the Gaderene Swine to a fishing congregation, the fishermen present would all mutter "cold iron." Some of these superstitions are just remnants of belief in the *Evil Eye*. Certain inhabitants of fishing villages are believed to be carriers of evil, and often live a long life without coming to know of their sinister reputation, so secretive are their victims!

The belief in fairies is very common. They are known popularly as the "gude neighbours."



You may look for them bustling in frolicsome activity about the house when the gloaming is near, and before the lamp is lit. They love the spinning-frame, as children love it; and woe to the gude-wife who goes out in the dusk leaving the driving band upon her wheel.

Fairies have an inveterate love of human milk, and to steal it no device is neglected. They even change a human for a fairy child. Neither mother nor child is safe until each is "sained" (i.e. kirked or christened). At birth certain precautions used to be taken to ensure freedom from this evil. A pair of trousers hung at the foot of the nuptial bed was useful: so were candles, the Bible, and cheese and bread.

A child taken to fairyland ran the risk of being sent as tribute to the Evil One, since the fairy world subsisted apparently on the basis of paying teind (i.e. tithes) of its number to hell every seventh year.

Other uncanny beings are well known in the bucolic world, e.g. the water kelpie, which appears as a sleek black horse to the stranded traveller, beguiling him to his doom. Also there is the Red Etin, a monster that roars. The Scotch witch is an extremely unedifying being, believed to be hairy in person. Her powers are expended chiefly in noisome tricks on unoffending men and beasts; are derived from compacts with the devil, arranged at unseasonable hours, and with loathsome and ridiculous ceremonies. Burns' "Tam o' Shanter," has made the whole subject of Scotch witchcraft classical.

The Scotch wizard occupies a far more cultured



position. Indeed such men as Thomas the Rhymer and Michael Scot, enjoyed an international reputation, the latter in particular, as Sir Walter Scott depicts him, having been in association with occult agencies throughout civilization.

It is not easy to say what were the powers of the wizard as depicted in folklore, or whence he derived them. He was supposed to have command over the elements and without exception his person cast no shadow.

Almost as vague and formless is the belief in ghosts. Few places having the repute of being haunted exist in the north-east. A vengeful or wicked ghost is unknown. But of course there are stories of ghosts that come to receive and carry away a murderer, and there are uncanny stories of how a dead man may be questioned as to the cause of his sudden demise. The ballad of "Young Bengie," which tells how "at the deid hour o' the night the corpse began to thraw," contains narrative of such a quest. It is settled by folklore that a dead man may speak, if the door of the room where he lies is left ajar, and the hour of midnight is imminent.

On the other hand the lore regarding plant and animal is extraordinarily developed. The mole, the cat, the rat, the hare and the pig are all beasts of evil omen. On the other hand the dog, the horse, the sheep and the dove have an excellent character. The crow is supposed to be an agent of black art. Bees are not supposed to thrive with one whose life is unchaste. The cock is thought to be able to see evil spirits. If it



crows on its roost before midnight, misfortune is near. When it becomes seven years old the cock may lay an egg which will produce a deadly serpent, called a "cockatrix." No one has ever seen or heard of a cockatrix in nature, but the belief is quite fixed nevertheless. At a sale hens are never sold, for to do so would be looking for trouble. They are always given away.

If one desired to raise an Evil Power, a very good method was to go to a Druidical circle at the dead of night, and walking three times round it *widdershins* (i.e. against the sun), to repeat the Lord's Prayer backwards or some equally potent incantation. These stones have still extraordinary veneration. As they stand they are a hindrance to the plough, but no farmer would meddle with them. My father (a minister) once met a man carting one of them as building material, and solemnly warned him that he would come to evil. As the man unloaded the stone it fell and broke his leg. It stands to-day in its age-long seat.

The North-East attaches great faith to omens. Three dull heavy knocks heard at intervals betoken the coming of death. A drip of water falling slowly and with a hollow sound from an unknown source is known as the "deith-drap." In the same sense is reckoned the sound of something bulky being laid at the door of the house. It is the fore-coming of the coffin, always laid at that door, before it is carried within. Phantom funerals are wonderfully common. A murmur of voices outside the house is the forerunner of the funeral company. An unusually good crop to a farmer would be his last—his "fey crap." To



discover whether a sick person would live or die, various omens were watched for—the behaviour of the dog for instance. A dog does not approach one stricken to death. If the candle in burning threw up an unmelted gutter, that betokened the end. It was the “coffin spehl.”

The bucolic mind is not sensitive. It discusses his chances in the presence of a sick person. They were discussing who should make his coffin when the sick man woke up and said with vehemence: “If Sandy maks’ ma coffin, deil a fit (foot) will I put in it.”

Death and burial were attended with peculiar customs. Although I write in the past tense many of these still survive. At one time the corpse was never left unattended from the time it was stryked (i.e. laid out) until it was lifted for burial. It was customary for the family and the neighbours to sit up all night with it. Prayer and praise and whiskey were administered periodically in copious doses.

At the moment of death all doors and windows were thrown wide open. Everything in the house of a perishable nature was struck through with a piece of iron. All milk was poured out. The clock was stopped. All reflecting surfaces were covered with white cloths. Salt was laid on the breast of the corpse. Two candles were placed alight beside the coffin. If either was overturned the future state of the deceased became a subject of grave misgiving.

After the body was kisted (i.e. coffined)—itself a very solemn rite, relieved to some extent by hospitable comforts (pipes, whiskey, cheese and



cakes)—the whole neighbourhood repaired “to see the corpse.” It was the duty of a near relative to show it. As each approached, he put his or her hand on some part of the body, and made some conventional remark such as, “He’s sair altered”; “He’s like himself”; or “He was a gude friend to me” or “She’ll be sair missed by mony.” Not to go “to see the corpse” was a most unneighbourly act, and very risky to him who stayed away.

Before the coffin was closed a piece of the winding-sheet was often cut off, as well as a lock of hair. The former might be worn on a Communion Sunday. Its retention was thought to bring good luck. The hair was put in a brooch.

On the night after burial, it was not uncommon to place bread and water in the apartment where the dead had lain. The spirit was thought to come back, and having partaken, to go forever to its rest.

The exact meaning of many of these ceremonies is not easy to guess. The spirit was of course supposed to hover near until after the burial, but it is thought that precautions were not required against it, if that of a well-living person. But two things fell to be guarded against: either the coming of evil spirits, against whose power both the body and the soul of the deceased were little protected, or the chance that the disembodied spirit itself was in alliance with the power of Evil. The covering of mirrors, it would seem, had to do with a fear that you might see by reflection what was invisible otherwise: and the desertion of a corpse, while “lying,” was thought to entail the



risk that evil powers might gain power over it, and thereby be enabled to injure the living: terrifying or attacking them in horrible ways. Nothing but prayer, the reading of scripture, the singing of psalms, and (perhaps) the free use of hard spirit had power to keep the Evil away.

Tuesday and Thursday are customary days for a marriage. Prior to the actual ceremony many things must be observed. The bride wears nothing that had been in use before. Her bridal dress must not be fitted on. If it does not fit when actually put on, it must not be cut or altered, but adjusted as best possible.

Two men called *the sens* were at one time sent by the bridegroom to demand the bride at her house. Guns were fired as they approached. When they arrived at the door this conversation ensued.

"Does Margaret Ross" (the bride) "bide here?"

"Aye. What do ye want wi' her?"

"We want her for Sandie Tomson" (the bridegroom).

"But ye winna get her."

"But we'll tak her."

"Will ye come in an' hae a dram, till we see about it?"

And so *the sens* entered and took possession of the bride.

If the marriage does not take place in church (and this is unusual), it is performed at the bride's house. There a country marriage party amid music and fire-arms marches to the home of the bridegroom. The road to kirk and market must



be followed. By-roads are taboo. A sieve containing bread and cheese used to be held over the bride as she entered the bridal house. She is still led to the hearth and given the tongs, with which she makes up the fire. She then sweeps it with a broom. The crook (on which the kettle hangs), if it still exists, ought to be swung round her head in the name of the Trinity. In a farmhouse she would then be led to the giral (meal-chest) and her hand pressed into the meal. A long afternoon and evening of feasting and dancing then ensues. Late at night the bride is put to bed from which she distributes whiskey, bread and cheese to the bystanders. This being done she throws her stocking over her left shoulder among the company. Whoever holds it ultimately will be married first. The revellers then retire.

These ceremonies illustrate the tradition of early marriage by force, and still more strongly the theory that marriage is a union, by which two lives and their fortunes become inextricably joined.

The North-East has much lore of dreams and visions. A dream of fresh fish shows the coming of a child. A dream of blood betokens an accident, probably fatal. Butter or fruit dreamt of is lucky. A white horse tells of a letter—water spells disease—swine or eggs, annoyance—the loss of a tooth, the loss of a friend.

The unlucky occupies much attention. It is (or was) unlucky to report a theft, or to receive back stolen property. It is unlucky for a servant newly arrived to do anything, until she has fetched water. To turn back from a business mission is



bad. All stirring of food should be done from left to right. To serve bannocks (i.e. cakes baked on a girdle) with the wrong side up was not only very ominous, but insulting to a guest.

It is thought that the deaf and dumb have the gift of divination. They are at times called on to indicate the lot of a missing person or the issue of a doubtful love affair. Possibly they have the gift to some extent on the principle that the fewer the senses, the more lucid a person may be.

The common folk have many methods of assuaging disease and pain, besides sending for a doctor. Money and distance may make him almost unattainable. Rickets, for instance, was supposed to be curable by a blacksmith. An epileptic might be cured by wearing the shirt of a person who had died, but the shirt must not have been washed. There were and are wise men and women whose skill is much in request. Charms are sometimes used. A posthumous child is supposed to cure almost any disease by simply looking at the affected part. Certain families and certain articles have a traditional virtue. There exist healing wells—in some of which it was or is customary to throw some small article, such as a pin or button, the property of the pilgrim, who at the same time bathed the sore in some of the well water. To remove such articles was to incur the disease of the person who left it.

The lore which I have gathered together in this article may be of assistance to the student of the occult—who neither throws it all away as fudge, nor swallows it all as a new volume of truth.



Historically, folklore is the survival of a tradition which has outlived many types of civilisation. They are gone: but it will live, until science ultimately grinds it under foot. It is noteworthy in particular that the tide of Christianity has hardly touched it. The Church has often attempted to stamp out details of it. Supine and elusive, it yet may see the end of churches, and remain unaltered in its essentials.

It is not a religion. The gods of Valhalla have passed away; but it remains. It worships nothing. It is negative, more skilled in avoiding evil, than in creating good. It reminds one of the metaphysics of the Etruscans, whose only gods were the *lares* and *penates*, but who believed that nature contained agencies that influenced the fortunes of men.

When one reviews folklore in its different forms, certain divisions fall to be made. Belief creates a number of realities, true or fictitious. The division which follows may not be complete, but (roughly) it covers the field.

(1) Customs of the folk.—Remove not the ancient landmarks. Country people adhere to what their “forbears” did, and keep their precepts. This accounts in itself for the ceremonies so familiar at baptism, marriage, and death. In the North-East, whiskey at one time conserved and “sloekened” the tedium of them. It is now too expensive. “I dinna ken, was it a marriage or a burial?” said one very fou—and belated—husband; “but it was a gran’ ploy.”

(2) The belief in conscious agencies having powers and arts not given to man. (a) Such in



the flesh are wizards, witches, necromancers, persons endowed with foresight, second sight, etc. etc. All these gifted persons folklore believes to hold their art from the Evil One. In the unseen are fairies, water kelpies, ghosts, and the nameless beings that dwell about Druidical stones, churchyards, places where a murder has happened, etc. etc.

(3) The idea that the future may be revealed by dreams, divination and omens rightly read.

(4) And the notion that there is luck in things possessed and done; whether with intention or inadvertently—ignorance being no ward against ill-luck.

As regards inveterate custom, it is possible to argue that the tenacity of the Scotch mind, like that of the Dutch, is due to its reverence for what the wisdom of old has sent down. Of course a miserable and slavish observance of social habits, such as infests the Hebrides, can only debase. On the other hand nothing new in art or practice passes "unhanselled" by the restless intellect of the North-East. Custom is an attitude merely, a reverence that does not usurp the daily round. Its precepts are the laws of a free people, its righteousness and its reward.

Nevertheless it remains to inquire why the North-East, like the children of Israel, builds its civilisation on matters so strange, and so foreign to culture and science. Is man a child whose wisdom is a plaything, an unreality, a superstition?

Science has two ways of interpreting the real. It discovers and enunciates facts and laws, but in its inspired moments it is driven to admit



that what it knows is a mere drop in the ocean of the unknown. To put it in another way, we have an extensive knowledge of the mechanical arrangements of the real. Chemistry, for instance, is replete with the lore of the loves and hates of the elements—lore as remarkable as fiction. But the true source of cause—the why and how of reality, we do not know.

On the other hand metaphysics starts with much gladness from the principle that the real is rational, and that all that is is so by inherent right and reason. It is, however, rarely seen by the metaphysician himself, that what he means by reason is a rule supplied by consciousness, which may be true in the realm of the conscious, but of which the realm of nature appears to have no certain grasp.

We assume, by the light of reason, that nature does nothing which we (if we knew all) would not admit to be both right and reasonable. But then we have no guiding thread or principle: and it is moderately obvious that what in the ultimate is right and reason (if nature is moved by these ideas at all) is not necessarily right and reason for finite thinking.

Folklore is impressed by two ideas: (1) that there are capricious agencies in nature that may be tempted by our actions or omissions, and (2) that these agencies, possessed though they are of free will, are not necessarily either personal, or even sentient.

That there are agencies endowed with free caprice seems strange, until we reflect that it is by no means certain that the only creatures



endowed with the privilege of foolish and unrestrained action are beings in the body. At the same time there does not seem any good reason why these agencies should resent an allusion to kirks or to salmon in a fishing-boat, or the presence of a lodger in room 13. It may, however, be retorted that human likes and dislikes are often just as arbitrary and irrational.

What seems to matter may not be external agencies of a jealous order—whether they do exist or not—but the attitude of mind itself to the supposed need for conformity, the supposed danger of slack dealing with the shibboleths of nature and social living. And by mind I am far from meaning merely the conscious mind. I mean that whole complex of sentience, conscious and unconscious, of which personality and body are reflections. Flexible as it is, there is a point at which it turns in despair upon the very roots of its own being. Conformity to principles of which we do not appreciate the importance, runs in the west of its existence: and failure in loyalty thereto seems to set up a disease from which in a single constituted life there is no remedy.

I have already hinted that the conforming soul is of more importance than the customs to which it seeks to conform. But the soul's own standpoint appreciably alters, as it attains to more worthy objects of belief. Not only so, but its health and its sense of security improve. He who bows to unworthy, unsavoury or irrational beliefs, lives in a state of fear and doubt, which is no freeman's portion. Not only so, but his



days become, by reason of his beliefs, short, mean, brutish and poor : and that whether the evil he seeks to escape be irrational agencies without, or irreason within. There is little doubt that dogma and science alike have failed to appreciate the sense of the passage which prays for deliverance from evil. Man may be his own Frankenstein.

I wish it were better known that mind, in the greater sense, can also destroy the devils which false belief materialises. There are passages in Holy Writ whose sober truth has seemed even to believers to be optimism, that never got beyond the mystery in which it was spun. No master of the art of faith but knows them all from Psalm xci. to that passage which enjoins the disciple to take no heed of the way, and bids him know (however faint the soul that pursues) that all things work together for good to him who loves God. And for God, it is possible to substitute any of the many forms in which the truth becomes reality.

Rupert Brooke—the Lycidas of this century—sums the matter up in his sonnet on safety. With the Taoist you can find that secure way in the perpetual miracle of nature, with the Buddhist in the wheel of rebirth as well as in the Way by which man frees himself from it, or with the Christian in the Word made Flesh, that takes all from the disciple to bestow it again increased one hundred-fold. All man's groping after things, that may make and unmake the destiny he is pursuing, is due to failure to realise that the way by which he has come and the way he must go have surely been compassed by greater wisdom than chance.



I do not say that any man alone can achieve his own secure haven. No man can gain heaven by his own excellences ; though he may find the hidden way in spite of them. Nevertheless must he build within (and for better or worse) the material influences that later will govern his life without. The earthquake and the still small voice are both engines of the mind.

Still is there a place beyond the reach of all material power. For as man learns that the rock which crushes him as well as that beside which he abides in safety are both of himself, so at last he discovers that it is possible for him to stand beyond them both—to dematerialise the forces that hinder and that help. To understand this is to be free. As Holy Writ has it : “ And when they shall say to you, Seek them that have familiar spirits—wizards that peep and that mutter : should not a people seek unto their God—the living, for the dead—unto the Law and to the Testimony ? Since speaking so, they have no morning in them.”

WILLIAM INGRAM, M.A., LL.B., D.Sc.



Your armies are true thoughts, righteous acts are your warriors ; these will save you when kings and princes are counted as men and equals.

Every soul hath an empire, every spirit is a priest before God ; to be a servant of the people to their highest good is the call that may not be refused.—PSALMS OF THE WEST,



## PREVISION IN DREAMS

CONTROVERSY is rife as to the true interpretation of dreams. I do not intend to embark upon an exhaustive inquiry, but the following three instances of prevision seem worthy of being placed on record. The dreamers are unknown to each other and are not even residents of the same city, but the principal figure of their dream is in each case the same, i.e. a woman who was a stranger to them at the time, but whom they recognised when they met her at a later date.

Taking the dreams in chronological order, the first occurred about two years ago. A speaker was leaving the hall at the conclusion of a lecture, when one of the audience spoke to her. He described a vivid dream in which a woman appeared to him as though luminous and shining, and asked him his greatest wish. Because of her "light" he was ashamed to tell her, and mentioned a secondary one, whereupon she left him without a word. Throughout the following day her face haunted him. The following evening, by chance as it seemed, his eye caught sight of an advertisement of a lecture, and having nothing better to do, he decided to go to it. To his amazement as he entered the hall he found that the lecturer was the woman of his dream. To make assurance doubly sure he changed his seat for one close to the platform. A feeling almost of fear came over him—voice, appearance, manner, all were identical.

Six months later the same lecturer was speaking in an outlying suburb. A woman came to her



afterwards in some agitation and related the following peculiar occurrence. A few nights previously she had experienced a kind of "waking dream." A woman, unknown to her, had floated through the room "as if flying without wings," and disappeared before her astonished gaze through the floor into the room below, which was occupied by a very dear friend, a Miss West, who at the time was in great trouble. After a short interval the dreamer was still more astounded to see the woman reappearing through the floor, holding her friend by the hand. Together they floated up to the ceiling and disappeared, apparently into the open air, the room being at the top of the house.

Miss Browne (the dreamer) and Miss West attended a lecture a few days later. When the lecturer appeared Miss Browne was amazed to find that she was the woman who had floated through the room to "fetch" her friend.

. . . . .

Again, some months later a stranger wrote giving the experience of a friend of hers who had stayed a few nights in a seaside town. She awoke in the night and was surprised (although not afraid) to see an unknown face looking kindly but seriously at her out of the darkness from the right-hand side of the bed. A ray of light from the face fell aslant and lit up the brass rail at the foot of the bed. The windows, which were heavily curtained, faced her, so that if the ray of light had come through them it would have fallen on the outside, not the inside, of the rail.



While she was looking at the face it vanished, and there was again darkness.

Shortly afterwards she went to stay with the writer of the letter, who took her to a lecture. The moment the lecturer appeared the girl whispered excitedly, "There is the *face* I saw in the hotel bedroom! How very strange!"

After the lecture they waited in order to get a closer view of the speaker, and the girl declared there was no possibility of mistake.

It will be interesting if readers of *Vision* will offer an explanation of these three instances of prevision, which although alike in nature occurred at different times in three separate places.

MARION POWER.



## THE WATER LILY

Snow white, as down of swan, with golden heart ;  
Set as a gem amidst the em'rald leaves :  
Kissed by the limpid stream, thou need'st no art  
Of culture ;—thine the beauty God conceives.

Thy form is peerless, none dare thee approach,  
Save gorgeous dragonflies, in richest dress ;  
They servient to thy shrine,—with carp and roach,—  
As guardians of the stream thou dost possess.

EDWARD HALL.



It is not things, but the opinions about the things, that trouble mankind. Thus Death is nothing terrible; if it were so, it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the opinion we have about Death, that it is terrible, *that* is wherein the terror lieth.—EPICTETUS.



## THE LOGICAL BASIS OF MYSTICISM

MYSTICISM is no hysterical delusion ; its validity rests upon the solid basis of human experience, upon the *corroborative* tendencies and evidences of the human mind ; aye, upon the intuitive authority to which the mystics of all ages have so joyously, if somewhat secretly, attested. Or, as one writer splendidly puts it, upon the "identity of response." Such identity is the test of all knowledge, for it represents the collective assent to the individual probities of the human intellect, to the individual searchings and revelations of the human soul.

Were there only one mystic we might well be justified of a grave suspicion, and although, as we know, "many are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the mystics," such few might equally be suspect if it could be proved they were all hysterics. But on the first count, though comparatively few in number, they are yet numerous enough to represent fully a collective testimony, and, to quote another writer, "no one can defy the collective opinion of mankind and remain quite normal." Regarding the second count, if we should care to confuse Mysticism with hysteria, let us remember that all mystics are not hysterical. Men of genius are often neurasthenics, but all neurotics are not endowed with genius, very few, indeed, and therefore we must bring a little logic to our aid, and conclude thereby that the Mystics, essentially, and as a body, are by no means hysterical, and that though hysteria may

and often does accompany the mystical vision, the teaching is not necessarily invalidated.

The credentials of Mysticism are the credentials of Science, the credentials of Art, of Poetry, of Philosophy, of any and every accepted department through which the mind and soul of man energises, either splendidly practical or sublimely poetic, but ever in consecration to human need and advancement, the proof of which, in the last resort, can only rest upon the validity of human acceptance of facts of collective experience. And however grand it may be that any individual should be grounded upon his own personal authority and conviction, yet there is that something within us which ever cries out for a corroboration of the individual testimony.

The authority of Mysticism, then, like all other good things ministering to our life, is implicit in the very fabric of our social well-being, bound up, as it were, in the instinctive Brotherhood of Man, or as here preferred, verified on the basis of collective acceptance. And thus granting the collective testimony to the mystic experience, it can only logically follow that one might just as well disbelieve in Music, in Poetry, or in Science, as disbelieve in Mysticism.

The condition best conducive—*undeniably* conducive, we might say—to a ready belief is, very naturally, the *responsive* one. To respond to Music, to Art, to Love, or to Poetry, to any or all of these things, is to be carried far from doubts, misgivings or sterile unbeliefs.

And in like manner and of supreme degree, one is only a mystic by such readiness of lofty response



to the trumpet call of the Infinite. To those, therefore, who should impugn its authority because lacking in this response, although such attitude be distinctly and logically untenable, some clemency, nevertheless, may be extended. But—and here is the point of emphasis—he who should be ever so unresponsive to the classics of Music, to Poetry, to Painting, rarely, if ever, thinks of calling *these* things into question: all alike are equally—and rightly so—taken for granted, as something, perhaps, supremely inevitable. Why then, above all things, should the challenge be reserved for the mystic? Why, above all things, should Mysticism, which rests upon the same inalienable basis of proved experience and acceptance, be so singled out for attack?

It must all revolve upon this simple proposition: that even if natively we be alien to any particular thing such, in itself, cannot constitute legitimate reason why we should logically deny the authenticity thereof.

Thus Mysticism stands upon a basis very definitely and logically parallel with Science and with every other branch of study whereby the Life of man is daily enacted and gloriously enlarged. To deny its place in the great scheme of human advancement, either material or spiritual, is to deny the very foundations whereby all Arts, all Sciences, all Knowledges, are built up and enthroned. For Science can have no right to exist apart from the established credibilities. Rightly understood, is Mysticism anything less? Nay, Mysticism, if we may venture to say so, is more

scientific than Science. Science, as we specifically understand her, can only progress by the relations of cause and effect as materially evidenced by the five senses. Mysticism, on the other hand, whilst assimilating all there is of scientific content, yet magnificently transcends it, being fused with every element, both moral and reasonable, both emotional and intuitive, that can enter into the sanctities of Consciousness. For not only does it rest upon the testimony of intellectual certitudes (so far, of course, as human intelligence is capable of certitude) but in the deeper realm of feeling, in all that partakes of the emotional sphere, Mysticism holds a capacity to soar to all the altitudes of artistic and lyrical expression, whilst equally and more profoundly in the domain of Religion, Mysticism answers above and beyond every other phase of human experience to the deepest depths and the most exalted heights. Mysticism, in short, is not only ultra-scientific, it is incomparably metaphysical, it is ineffably religious. It is both the knowledge of knowing and the knowledge of feeling. It is eminently and superbly reasonable, it is richly intuitive and divinely intelligible.

But to say that Mysticism is this or that, is by the process of feeble definition to clip her wings. She cannot be harnessed to words nor proved by phrases. She is all these things and more. Hers is the vision of Unity, hers the vision of the Blessed Trinity, whose divine attributes are Love, Truth and Beauty, hers the vision of The Great Whole.

By all means prove her if you can. In all cases



she will stand the testings of logic and the scrutinies of science. But ever also she must remain the Undefinable, the Incommunicable, the Untranslatable.

JOHN HOWARD.



## DECEMBER

THE Old Year, weary 'neath the heavy load  
Of sin and grief and shame he scarce could bear,  
Stumbled unseeing down the hopeless road  
That led him on to Death and to Despair.

So lonely was he and so dark the night,  
And ne'er a friend to catch his dying breath. . . .  
The slow days fled and, as they took their flight,  
Each drew him nearer to the Gates of Death.

A great fear shook him as the starlight waned,  
And heavy snowflakes drifted where he trod :  
" What can I show save holy shrines profaned ?  
How dare I meet the awful gaze of God ? "

The savage night-wind whistled through the  
wood,  
Fluttered his garment, tattered and defiled. . . .  
Slowly the Great Gates opened, and there stood,  
With outstretched arms, the smiling Christmas  
Child.

LUCY MALLESON.

## THE DAY'S RULE:

### A MYSTIC'S CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

READERS are invited to assist in the compilation of this monthly calendar of quotations which is intended to serve as a daily rule for the direction of thought and meditation. See *Vision Prize Competition* at the end of this number.

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dec. | Exultant adoration give                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1.   | The Alone, through whom all beings live,<br>The Alone, in whom all dying die,<br>Whose means the end shall justify.<br>THOMAS HARDY.                                                                 |
| 2.   | Only we feel Him ; and in aching dreams,<br>Swift intuitions, pangs of keen delight,<br>The sudden vision of His glory seems<br>To sear our souls, dividing the dull night.<br>J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS, |
| 3.   | Let me while so I can,<br>In this life's span,<br>Stretch to the Only Fair,<br>And teach my homing soul to breathe its native<br>air.<br>EVELYN UNDERHILL.                                           |
| 4.   | The Divine is myself within the heart, smaller<br>than a grain of rice. . . . He also is myself within<br>the heart, greater than earth and heaven.<br>UPANISHAD.                                    |
| 5.   | It is necessary that the soul, when purified, should<br>associate with its Generator.<br>PORPHYRY.                                                                                                   |



6. Let us then investigate a means for the discovery of Wisdom, as the ancients declare to be right and profitable, and believe that he spoke well and summarily who said, that "the first step in philosophy is to set the mind a-going."

MARY ATWOOD.

7. Dwell not altogether in the *practice*, says the adept, for that is not the way to *improve it*; be sure to add *reason* to thy experience, and to employ thy *mind* as well as thy *hands*.

THOMAS VAUGHAN.

8. Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:  
And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

PROVERBS 24.

9. For the beauty of Spirit is the highest beauty when it energises intellectually, without error and purely; and it knows things not as discovered by human labour, but as they are unfolded by the Divine Will.

ARISTOTLE.

10. Learn with reverence, with searching thought, and with service; then the Wise Ones, who know the Truth, will appear and teach you the Wisdom.

EASTERN SCRIPTURE.

11. High above all dogmas that divide, all bigotries that blind, all bitterness that beclouds, will be written the simple words of the one eternal religion,—the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the golden rule, and the hope of a life everlasting.

FORT NEWTON.

12. Knowledge by suffering entereth  
And Life is perfected by Death.  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.
13. The living is always a resurrection of the dead.  
LAFCADIO HEARN.
14. Death is the veil which those who live call life ;  
They sleep and it is lifted.  
SHELLEY.
15. And like the hand that ends a dream  
Death with might of his sunbeam,  
Touches the flesh and the soul awakes. R. BROWNING.
16. There is a great serenity in the thought of death,  
when it is known to be the Gate of Life.  
FIONA MACLEOD.
17. Only because of having died, does one enter into  
life.  
BUDDHIST PROVERB.
18. How sweet it is to live, what joy to see the sun.  
HENRY MORE.
19. For the Touch of Thyself growing continually out  
of everything, more actual, starlike, perfect ;  
And for all experience ;  
Joy, joy, and thanks forever. CARPENTER.
20. Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, its fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.  
WORDSWORTH.
21. I will not leave you comfortless. JOHN 14. 18.



22. By generosity of heart all other virtues are increased and all the powers of the soul are adorned.  
RUYSBROECK.
23. O Saviour of all things, Saviour of Light, I praise thee.  
GNÔSIS OF THE LIGHT.
24. Sing to the Lord  
All spirits of all flesh, sing ;  
For He hath not abhorred  
Our low estate nor scorn'd our offering ;  
Shout to our King.  
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.
25. Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.  
ISAIAH 60. 1.
26. As fire turns all that it touches into itself, so the birth of the Son of God in the soul turns us into God.  
ECKHART.
27. Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a Heaven for ?  
ROBERT BROWNING.
28. We attain the highest as men shoot with the bow.  
He who hits the mark becomes one with it, as the arrow becomes one with the target.  
UPANISHAD.
29. Some spirit in me doth move  
Through ways of light untrod,  
Till, with excessive love,  
I drown and am in God.  
ARTHUR SYMONDS.
30. What are the Heavens, the earth, nay every creature,  
but hieroglyphics and emblems of His glory ?  
STEPHEN GRAHAM.
31. . . . Remembering that when the winter is striven through there is another year, whose wind is meek, and whose sun fulfilleth all.  
ROSSETTI.

## EX LIBRIS

### A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF VISION

SPIRITISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE FAITH. By the Rev. T. Hardy. (S.P.C.K., 3s.)

This book will no doubt appeal to the orthodox as it is written entirely from their point of view, but it cannot hope to make any converts among the Spiritualists. If the book be meant to serve this purpose it should have been written from more knowledge and with a wiser restraint: Mr. Hardy quotes certain extravagant utterances of obscure Spiritualistic pamphlets which convey as real an impression of true Spiritualism as a crude Salvation Army tract represents a reasoned exposition of Christianity.

Of his sincerity we are not for a moment in doubt, but it seems a pity that he insists upon calling the Spiritualists by the name of Spiritists, apparently considering it a more derogatory term. This is scarcely a wise way to approach the Spiritualists if he wishes to convert them.

Mr. Hardy's view of the Church's teaching concerning the after-death state is vague and unconvincing. He says that in man the complete personality consists of the union of soul and body, and that at death as man is separated from his body he is an incomplete personality which can only be made complete again at the Resurrection, and he assumes that this may be the reason for the meanness and vulgarity so often chronicled in connection with Spiritistic intercourse. Further, he says that the absence of a belief in a physical resurrection would render the Christian doctrine of personality inconsistent, and "a denial of that belief would seem hopelessly to invalidate the Christian exposition of human nature."

The more advanced thinkers among the clergy at



the present time have, we believe, given up the idea of a physical resurrection, and if a book is to be written to counteract Spiritualism it can only hope for success if written from a modern point of view. Such insistence upon the need of a physical resurrection will strike the average Spiritualist as resulting from a very materialistic conception.

We admit that there is much in Spiritualism that is open to criticism, and Mr. Hardy's book would have served a useful purpose had he addressed himself more definitely to the unorthodox and avoided the temptation of preaching to the converted. The faith of the author in his own belief is the book's chief asset, and however much we disagree with Mr. Hardy over his conclusions we can appreciate his earnestness.

H. R. G.

SPIRITUALISM AND SIR OLIVER LODGE. By Charles A. Mercier. (Watts and Co., 2s. 6d.)

This book is quite extraordinarily clever. Very shrewdly and humorously does Dr. Mercier (frank disbeliever in the "super-normal") expose the weaknesses of the evidence in *The Survival of Man* and in *Raymond*, and bit by bit destroy the imposing edifice they erect, until we feel, at first, that even Sir Oliver Lodge's simple self-assurance must be abashed.

But, on second thought, is Dr. Mercier's position so much securer than Sir Oliver's? How sound is his reasoning? When, for instance, he says, "There has never been a time, there has never been a tribe, in which the pursuit of the occult has not had its votaries." Surely this is at least as much argument for things super-physical as against them? And again, when he says that he has made a study of witchcraft and finds there more conclusive evidence for its reality than any Sir Oliver can bring forward in favour of mediumship, does this strengthen his case? We think not.

Dr. Mercier appears to put all phenomena down to conjuring—the use of a code or some other method—and, if all the examples in Sir Oliver Lodge's books are thus explicable, surely all evidence for such happenings cannot be put aside so easily? The literature of Spiritualism is wide, and there are many books much sounder and more scientific than those the author takes so much trouble to confute. Has he studied all these? If not his opinion on this subject is of no worth.

But there is a valuable side to the book. The warnings as to the dangers attendant on Spiritualism are much needed, and the advice never to believe in the supernatural until all natural explanations are proved impossible is also very timely.

Besides this, the book has the merit of being very good reading.

J. C. B.

IN THE NAME OF TIME. By Michael Field. (The Poetry Bookshop, 4s. net.)

The interest and action of this play centre round one figure—that of Carloman, a Frankish nobleman of the early Middle Ages, who being called, as he deems, by God to a monastic life, renounces all he had previously held dear, leaves his beautiful young wife, Geneviva, and his only child in the care of his younger brother, and in a state of exalted fanaticism becomes a novice in a distant convent.

Marcomir, a poet and his friend, goes also, no “white-souled wayfarer,” as Geneviva says in a bitter speech of farewell to Carloman,—but as a penitent, seeking “by lonely fasting and continual prayers,” to forget Geneviva, for whom he has conceived a guilty passion, and to purify his heart.

Carloman, a “knight free-born,” full of youth and zest for life, chafes at the discipline and suppression of the monastery,—and finally, a sick, broken man, escapes with Marcomir, and returns to his palace, only to find



his child dead, his golden-haired wife a courtesan, and his brother, in whose charge he had left both, in possession of the throne of France. For his rebellion against the Church, Carloman is doomed by Zacharias, the Pope, to perpetual confinement in a prison cell; and here in the presence of Marcomir and Boniface, an old Archbishop, he dies. In his last wandering, half-unconscious words the full tragedy of his life is revealed; when he who earlier in the play had said to his erring friend:

“ Oh, do not put your trust in Time;  
Put on at once *forever*, leap to God.”

murmurs:

I for myself  
Drink deep to life here in my prison cell.  
*Fellowship, pleasure,  
These are the treasure—*  
So I believe, so in the name of Time. . . .”

The play is unequal,—but there is that in it which holds the reader, and makes him feel that Carloman is no mere stage puppet, but a living, suffering man. Geneviva is very skilfully drawn, and the same might be said of Boniface.

V. C. B.

THE ETERNAL QUESTION. By Allen Clarke. (Messrs. Dent and Sons, 7s. 6d.)

MR. ALLEN CLARKE, the Lancashire novelist, gives in this record of his psychical experiences the impression of a serious conviction and of much sincerity of purpose, but it is to be regretted that he has included so much rather trivial and quite unevidential matter, relating to dreams and premonitions which are common to most people, and also a rather undue proportion of quotations from his own verses and diaries which are of little interest, and tend to confuse the main issues.

That such convictions are useful, even when dependent upon isolated and individual experiences, has been

pointed out by Sir Oliver Lodge, and for the reason that evidence must be cumulative to be of value; and although in the investigation of all psychic-physical or mental phenomena nothing should be too credulously or irrelevantly attributed to spirit agency which is capable of explanation by subconscious or sensitive activities alone, the converse is equally true, namely, that possibility or probability of the assistance or revelation of spiritual power must not be disregarded in the presence of manifestations which cannot be definitely proved to be of normal origin.

Mr. Clarke has reached his present conviction after long and devoted study, and after many years of scepticism.

M. P.

THE ROAD TO THE SUN. By "An Officer of the Grand Fleet." (C. W. Daniel, Ltd., 2s.)

The author of these essays is an ardent believer in the Fourth Dimension, whatever he may understand by this. It would appear that he merely postulates the realisation of the world as a spiritual system, and man as a spiritual being. To rebel against the material order and the official religions is to do no more and no less.

The author of the present work, though we may feel repelled by his cold and mathematically formulated New Jerusalem, takes his place on the side of all followers of a mystical philosophy.

M. P.

SOME PRACTICAL HINTS for those investigating the Phenomena of Spiritualism. By W. J. Crawford, D.Sc. (John Watkins, 6d.)

This little pamphlet contains several helpful suggestions, and will be useful to those unacquainted with the best means of conducting Spiritualistic investigation, but Dr. Crawford is such an authority on the subject that a longer work would have been welcome.



## VISION COMPETITIONS

### RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS FOR OCTOBER

1. The prize of HALF A GUINEA for the best poem entitled "December" is awarded to Miss Lucy Malleson, 25 Auriol Road, W. 14, whose contribution is published in this number.

The following competitors, whose names are mentioned in order of merit, submitted work reaching a certain standard :—

S. E. Dunkley (Exeter), Lady Elphinstone Dalrymple (Finchampstead), U. Malleson (W. 14), "D." (Wimbledon), E. P. Prentice (Sutton), Dita Ronquette (S.W. 11), J. Palmer (Crewe), B. Jones (Margate), M. Mackintosh (Henley), Joyce Eveleigh (Folkestone), Mary Winter Were (Beckenham), D. Gardiner (Blandford), S. Hoyer (N.W. 3), "Sorel" (Birmingham).

Several competitors submitted verses this month with other titles, not having read the conditions of the competition carefully enough. Of these the following are commended in order of merit :—

C. Anderson (Devon), W. Fenwick (Hull), M. Ridout (Redhill), E. Seymour (N.W. 3).

### CRITICISMS

"D."—The theme of your poem is excellent, and you have succeeded in expressing it in a metre that harmonises well, but in every verse your last line drops into commonplace. In the third verse especially, the line reading "In his rays, much more precious than gold," runs awkwardly, and entirely spoils a verse which otherwise betrays good workmanship. The poem, however, shows real promise and is a great improvement on other work submitted by you.

LADY ELPHINSTONE DALRYMPLE.—Several of the verses in your poem are tenderly and charmingly expressed, and the simplicity of the metre you have chosen heightens the effect produced. Unfortunately the first verse does not reach the standard of the rest, the second line is not good poetry and needs to be entirely re-written. The fourth verse is the happiest: you have succeeded in painting a real pen-picture of the "dim green ways," and the "Uplands steeped in a golden mist." The last verse is a little obvious, and might be deleted altogether without detriment to the poem.

2. The prize of one year's subscription to *Vision* for the best set of quotations is awarded to J. A. Palmer, 272 Nantwich Road, Crewe.

Three consolation prizes of copies of *The Mystic Arsenal* have been awarded to Miss M. V. Dunlop, Fairholme, Dormansland, Surrey; A. M. Stephens, 1 Buildwins Road, Ironbridge, Salop; and Miss G. M. Robinson, 4 Trafalgar Road, Birkdale, Southport.

3. The prize of books to the value of HALF A GUINEA selected from those advertised in this issue, for the best passage from a contemporary writer on the Immortality of the Soul with special reference to the after life is awarded to Miss L. Malleeson, 25 Auriol Road, W. 14, for the following beautiful extract from "Joy in God," by the Bishop of London.

"Five minutes after Death I believe we shall be the same as five minutes before, with one more incident, one more change in our existence. Death is only an incident in life; it is not the end of life; therefore those whom we have loved are the same. 'Behold and see that it is I Myself,' said Jesus Christ. They must then still love us, they must be praying for us.

"Surely we shall know our loved ones in Paradise, because they will be the same as on earth; a growth in grace in the sunny land of Paradise is what we may look



forward to for those we love. It would be simply the most unnatural thing in the world for the mother who had prayed for her son all her life to cease to remember him before God because he had passed into the other world. There can be no sense of anything wrong in remembering our dear ones before God for the simple reason that they are not dead, they are more alive than they ever were before."



## VISION PRIZE COMPETITIONS

1. A prize of HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best mystical poem. A statement to the effect that the poem is original and has not appeared before in print must be enclosed. (Criticisms of poems will be given if a reading fee of 2s. 6d. for the purpose is enclosed.)

2. A copy of *Vision* will be sent post free for twelve months to the sender of the best set of quotations (either prose or verse) of not more than four lines from a mystical writer suitable for inclusion in a Mystic's Calendar, and three copies of *The Mystic Arsenal* will be awarded the senders of the next three best quotations.

### RULES FOR COMPETITION

Entries must be forwarded not later than the 30th of each month to the Editors of *Vision*, etc. The envelope should be marked "Prize." Only one side of the paper must be used, and the imprint from the cover (i.e. "Printed by W. Brendon & Son, etc.") must be enclosed with each entry. No entry can be returned, and the Editors reserves the right to make use of any of the entries submitted for competition. In all cases the Editors' decision must be regarded as final.