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"To myself I seem to have been as a child playing on the sea-shore while the immense ocean of Truth lay unexplored before me."—ISAAC NEWTON.

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# PREFACE.

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**I**N issuing the first volume of BORDERLAND I have to express the satisfaction with which I look back upon the result of this experiment in periodical literature. Borderland is a region which has hitherto been more productive in spectres than in subscribers, and I fully expected that any organ devoted to its investigation would be published at a loss. So far from this being the case, the magazine has paid its expenses from the first number, and it is at this moment one of the most widely-circulated quarterlies in the world. The publication of the first six numbers as the first volume of BORDERLAND will, I hope, tend still further to extend its range of influence, and to increase the number of its regular students.

From the point of view of the chronicler of the general psychic movement, there is much ground for congratulation. The past eighteen months have brought into clear relief the trend which previously had been much less manifest in the direction of a spiritual, as opposed to a material, explanation of psychic phenomena. There are many signs and tokens in many and various directions of this gradual advance towards a reasoned conviction in the reality of the existence around us of Living Personalities tenanted the invisible world from which, in some fashion, they influence at some times the children of men. The Society for Psychical Research must now be regarded as standing almost on the verge of a frank adherence to the spiritistic hypothesis which a few years ago its leading members would have described as almost unworthy of consideration. The publication of the Report of Professor Sidgwick's Committee on the Census of Hallucinations is an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace which is working in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Psychical Research. If future progress is as steady and as rapid as that of the last year or two, it will be difficult to convince any one, when the Twentieth Century dawns, that he or she, or any sane citizen, ever seriously doubted the existence of Borderland and the inhabitants thereof.

In reviewing the work which we have been able to do in this magazine in the independent exploration of Borderland, there is much reason to thank God and take courage. We have, it is true, not done many of the things which, considering the exceptional, if not unique, opportunities that we have had for prosecuting our investigations, we might have hoped to do, but we have done a good deal to pave the way for a general advance all along the line. The chief service which we have been able to render has been to convince a wide circle of subscribers, and a still wider circle of readers, that psychic phenomena are worthy of more serious consideration than they have yet received. We have also, I hope, done something to impress upon the public some sense of the spirit in which the subject should be investigated. Heretofore,

every phenomenon in the occult world has been left to be swallowed credulously by the superstitious, or to be rejected wholesale by the sceptics. What we have sought to do has been to secure that all psychic phenomena shall be treated with sympathetic common sense. We shall, I trust, insist far more effectively upon the importance of evidence when we have convinced the witnesses that we are so urgent, not from an *a priori* disbelief in the possibility that they are speaking the truth, but because we know that such phenomena really happen sometimes, and we are, therefore, most anxious to have each alleged phenomenon fully attested by the first-hand evidence of witnesses of good character and intelligence.

The demonstration of the objective reality of phenomena usually dismissed as subjective has been advanced one step by the valuable series of experiments in crystal vision conducted by my colleague and assistant, Miss X., at the suggestion of Mr. Dixey, the optician, of Bond Street. In other departments we have made progress, but it has rather been to the satisfying of our own judgment as to what may be expected in the near future than to the actual attainment of our desired ends. But we have helped to clear the ground, and confidently anticipate that before the second volume appears much of what now appears to us to be probable, will have been actually accomplished. "I count all things but loss," wrote the Apostle to the Church at Philippi, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after. . . . There are things I do, forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark. . . . Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

It would be difficult in all the literature of nineteen centuries to find a passage which more faithfully expresses the spirit in which the editors and students of BORDERLAND confront the new year.

W. T. STEAD.

October, 1894.

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