

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.'—Paul.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In a few days, we shall have sailed into another year. In many respects it will be, it must be, a very eventful year. Great events are impending, perhaps great trials that will need all the wisdom, courage and patience of the elect spirits in this country. But our faith in the Infinite Vision and Goodness is all-sustaining. There has been and there will be, no accident, no room for chance. 'All is provided for.' Concerning that, then, and for ourselves and for each other, let us uplift, on New Year's Day, the welcome of that bright spirit, Caroline Mason:—

Good-day, new world! Like him of Genoa,
We glad adventurers kneel and kiss the strand
Of our emprise—this new-discovered land
Of time—and cry, 'Good-day, new world! good-day!'

Onward, brave hearts! keep doubt and fear at bay!
These ambushed ills which lurk on every hand
Are but allies to lead us into grand
Possession of ourselves, and of the way.

Oh year, new year! World yet untried and strange!
For him who thus adventures, all good things
You hold in store; for he it is who brings
Hope to the front, and courage: him, no change
Shall harm or weaken, nor shall any chance
Rob him of his divine inheritance.

A paper, called 'The Christian,' has been dwelling upon 'a Spiritualist's confession' (Mrs. Piper's, we presume): whereupon a certain Thomas Hogben, of 'Welcome Mission,' Portsmouth, writes, lamenting 'the awful inroads that Spiritualism is making in the country.' He informs 'The Christian' that he has been on a mission to the Potteries, which he had not visited for seven years, and that he is 'grieved to find that it has made sad havoc' there. What the good man means is that he is losing and we are gaining. We excuse his phrasing; and are in fact sorry for his distress. If he will only come a little nearer he will perhaps be less unhappy about us. Portsmouth is a long way off, but if he will favour us with a visit we will send him a special invitation to our next *Conversazione*. He protests that spirit-communion is a 'sin.' But if he will come, we promise him the sight of one of the happiest, sanest, and nicest gatherings of 'sinners' in England.

There is no better way to measure our advance than to look back, say a few centuries, to see how good men behaved then. We lately came across a useful landmark, connected with the burning of Servetus at the instigation or with the connivance of Calvin. It is not perhaps generally known

that the moderate and comparatively refined Melancthon backed up Calvin in his implacable destruction of a theological opponent. Here is an extract from a letter sent by Melancthon to Calvin:—

Honoured man and most beloved brother, I have read your letter, in which you excellently confute the horrible blasphemy of Servetus, and I thank the Son of God who has been the umpire and director of your conflict. The church of Christ will also both now and in all future times, own its gratitude to you. I am wholly of your opinion, and declare also that your magistrates, the entire proceedings having been conducted according to law, acted quite justly in condemning the blasphemer to death.

The fact is that Servetus was not in any sense a 'blasphemer.' He was simply what we should now call a Unitarian or a Christian rationalist.

A similar landmark may be found in the persecution and destruction of 'witches' at about the same period. Any way we do not drown our psychics now. It is a consolation to know that the poor old lumbering world is creaking on in the right direction.

'The Book Lover's' young man has been interviewing Dean Hole, who was very nice to him and told him no end of stories. Here is one:—

It was about the child of a famous painter, who was accustomed at times to give way to paroxysms of the most violent rage. On one such occasion he kicked and spat at his father. Afterwards, when apologising for his behaviour, he said: 'Father, the devil told me to kick you; the spitting was my own idea.'

We hardly know why, but that story did not make us laugh or smile: for immediately there rose up before us the mental vision of thousands of 'children of a larger growth,' who seem to be 'tempted of the devil,' and who play his tune with many variations of their own.

There is a truth in the old 'superstition' about satanic influence. The men of an earlier day perhaps over-personified the spirit of evil, but that spirit of evil is undoubtedly a factor to be reckoned with. It probably works as a kind of poison in conscience, heart and brain, and leaves us to our own inventions as to how we shall manifest it. There are multitudes who might apologise very much in the terms of the painter's unpleasant but truthful child.

We have received from 'The Scottish New Church Evidence Society' 'A Collection of Helpful Sayings,' arranged by Revs. J. J. Woodford and C. A. Hall, and entitled 'A Cheering Message for the bereaved.' It is a pleasantly produced tract of sixteen pages.

As a Swedenborgian publication, the 'Sayings,' in addition to Bible extracts, are entirely from the writings of Swedenborg or leading New Church teachers, notably, of course, the Rev. Chauncey Giles. The tract can be had from Rev. C. A. Hall, Coniston, Meikleriggs, Paisley.

'King Helge-Aslog,' by F. I. Winbolt (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co.), is so good that we pay it the compliment of saying that it ought to be better. But the

subjects and the form are adventurously high,—a tragedy and a serious drama, in blank verse. The book, just over 100 pages, is very pleasantly produced;—simple workmanship, but original and good.

We have been asked to notice No. I. of 'Poems for the age': 'The last flame of Hell,' by J. B. M. Barnes, B.A. (London: John Heywood.) Candidly, while approving the sentiment, we do not like what is called the 'poem'; but we know we are hard to please in relation to poetry. It is like fish or playing the fiddle:—in order to be enjoyed it must be very, very good.

To be perfectly fair, we will not select a passage but quote the first few lines we notice on opening the little booklet. 'The last flame' is supposed to be speaking:—

But what am I that I should teach,
Can Hell's last flicker think to preach?—
Then one more spurt afore I die—
I crack great words altho' a lie
I am from first to last indeed
For I am nought but dying creed.
O man, vain priest, where art thou now?—
With Mammon's goods I thee endow,
But when I'm gone with fabled de'il
On old Hell's ghost wilt then find weal?

That is not exactly the fish that tempts or the fiddle-playing that charms.

Just because good Spiritualists are not afraid of death, they are free from the worry that kills; and so, though quite willing to go, they somehow contrive to stay. Here is a delightful little poem (good for the close of another year) which, though not exactly written for a nice old Spiritualist, exactly fits at least one well known to us:—

We cannot help laughing—we find it so queer—
Recalling the time when we had an idea
That to live to be eighty meant almost the same
As being too old to remember your name;

To keep in a corner as blind as a bat,
To knit woollen stockings or play with the cat,
To sit in an armchair and doze half the day,
Or grumble and growl in the stupidest way;

To make a great fuss at the least breath of air,
To have no new dresses or crimps in your hair;
Drink very weak tea and soak all your toast,
Be toothless and wrinkled, and deaf as a post.

These singular notions are queer to recall;
And isn't it funny to think of them all
When we look at this lady whose age is fourscore
Looking young enough yet to live eighty years more?

We all have learned better, and thank her that she
Has shown us how young an old lady can be;
Here's love and good wishes to one we have seen
Who says she is eighty and seems like eighteen!

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the Regent Saloon, St. James's Hall (entrance from Regent-street), on the evening of Thursday, January 9th, 1902, when

MR. ROBERT KING

Will give an Address on

'THE "RATIONALE" OF MEDIUMSHIP.'

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the proceedings will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each.

One or more members of the Council of the Alliance will be in attendance at the rooms, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., every Wednesday, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., and will be pleased to meet any friends who may wish for an interview,

REINCARNATION.

Reincarnation is a subject about which your readers may weigh their own and each other's ideas on. Nevertheless, I should like to draw the attention to some considerations which it seems neither of them bears constantly in mind, a factor that detracts somewhat from the value of their opinions for they do not appear always to remember that reincarnation is an Eastern conception, which cannot be judged by Western methods and standards. In our generations we Westerners have been educated in the theory of 'one man, one life,' until we may be said now to have almost hereditary predisposition in its favour: at the same time, thanks to the decay of old-fashioned ideas about the future life have become rather dubious. And so, while on the whole faithful to our opinions, we Westerners sometimes like to flirt with Eastern ideas: and especially is this the case with regard to the doctrine of Reincarnation, which we regard as if it were a matter of fact, that had its origin at the beginning, but as if it were a matter of preference still to be decided, and to be decided chiefly on philosophical grounds. 'I cannot bear the idea!' settles the question of Reincarnation for a good many people!

To the West, Reincarnation is a novelty, an idea which does not fit into our systems either of religion or philosophy. As conceived by us, it stands isolated and detached, and therefore deprived of the support of doctrines into which it naturally dovetails: and we regard it as us like a word out of a sentence, or a wheel out of a machine, the use or value of which, when taken out of context, we cannot properly estimate. Our most serious objection in favour of Reincarnation is that it is necessary for the perfecting of man; our most serious argument against it is that a benevolent God would not send us back to this vale of tears. But, unfortunately, these are not legitimate arguments at all, for if we believe in the government of the Universe we are bound to recognize whatever is actually happening—whether it be reincarnation, or one earth life only—must demonstrate the wisdom and goodness of God, and is necessarily the best for us.

To the Hindu or Buddhist, on the other hand, reincarnation seems a self-evident fact: for it is, with us, an integral part of a perfectly consistent explanation of the Universe, that for ages his forefathers have accepted without suspecting the existence of any other alternative that has now become, as it were, a part of his mental equipment, a philosophy which has the completest possible support in Evolution for its central conception: which for thousands of years has recognised cyclic motion, with alternating periods of activity and repose, as a universal principle in Nature: which includes in 'Nature' both the visible and the invisible universes: and which regards the interaction of spirit and matter, and the supremacy of spirit, as facts as real, and as invariable, as we regard gravitation. Reincarnation, we are often told, is a result of Karma, or the doctrine that every good, or evil, thought, word, and action bears in itself, the seed of its law, its own appropriate and inevitable consequences, an aggregate of which natural consequences, in some way, and wonderful way, brings evolution about, and leads to perfection. But that conjunction of Reincarnation and Karma is not all that is required, for the two are inseparable from the doctrine of Maya, and, indeed, from all the rest of the great system of philosophy which includes the theory of Emanation, or the deific nature of the Universe, for its basis: and which has for its end human perfection, any more than mineral per-

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vegetable perfection, but divine perfection—the gradual perfecting of the imperishable monad or Ego, in and through states of consciousness as different from that of man, and as superior to it, as human consciousness is different from, and superior to, the consciousness of the mineral or the plant.

Reincarnation, we must remember, belongs properly to a cosmic system in which Heaven and Hell, which are regarded by us as ultimate goals, are merely appropriate Mayavic dreams occurring during the period of repose that follows the period of activity, and completes a single life in the earth sphere: and we must also remember that to escape from the endless round of karma-created births and deaths in our present human stage of development, to a higher and happier kind of existence, as the Ego has already escaped from the lower stages, is the object of the believer in the real theory of Reincarnation: and this the believer in Reincarnation does not think he can accomplish by becoming a perfect man, any more than a horse could attain to the human stage of consciousness by becoming a perfect horse. The perfecting of human nature is already provided for, he thinks, in the accumulation of experience and the development of reason: but the attainment of a higher nature than the human does not depend upon anything that experience and reason can teach, but can be known only by being revealed to us by beings who have already become more than men: and whose revelations in this respect form the subject matter of the Hindu and Buddhist Holy Books.

Taken in conjunction only with the doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation is little more than a device by which an Omnipotent Power, called the 'Law of Karma,' carries out in other lives on earth a system of rewards and punishments founded upon our current and very imperfect conception of justice: and that is the form which Reincarnation takes with the ignorant and superstitious among the Hindus and Buddhists, for it harmonises with their belief in Gods and Goddesses, the 'instruments of Karma,' who take care that the Ego reincarnates *in order* to reap the deserts of his conduct; and who 'adjust effects to causes' to bring that harvest about. And that is also the distorted form in which Reincarnation is likely to present itself to us, by whom 'the reign of Law' is still but half accepted, unless we are careful to remember that the 'Scheme of Salvation' of the Religious philosophy of the East is entirely different from our own.

'LUX.'

AGAINST TELEPATHY.

In the December issue of 'Mind' the Editor deals with the alleged 'Confession' of Mrs. Piper, which, as the readers of 'LIGHT' know, Mrs. Piper repudiates; and he makes a strong point against the telepathic theory. He claims that it 'cannot be made to apply in the remotest degree to physical phenomena, and wholly ignores the important faculty of *prevision*, which in certain forms of mediumship has been repeatedly illustrated in the accurate prophesying of future events,' and he cites the following personal experiences which 'embrace both the above-named features—so studiously ignored by the inventors of "hypotheses" that do not explain.'

'In an impartial investigation of all phases of this subject covering about ten years, the writer devoted much time to psychography, or independent slate-writing. On our first and only visit to a well-known slate-writing sensitive—we met as absolute strangers—we selected one of a score of small slates, cleansed it thoroughly on both sides, and placed it on a table with no hands but our own upon it. The medium was apparently a wholly passive factor; he did not touch either the slate or the "sitter" at any time during the séance, and the slate was not out of our sight for an instant. We expressed a *desire* to hear from certain deceased relatives, if such a thing were possible but not one of them responded. On lifting the slate, however, we found a message on the under side, written in seven different colours, and signed with the name of an almost-forgotten friend. It

referred to business affairs so private and personal that we declined to allow the medium to read it; moreover, it contained a prophecy that seemed preposterous to us at the time but was fulfilled to the letter three months later.

'We afterward smashed the slate, which we had preserved, to satisfy a sceptical friend who had seen Hermann's tricks with "false bottom" and other "trick" slates. Does not this argue that genuine communications are sometimes received, and that those on a higher plane of vibration—untrammelled by the corporeal form, but not necessarily more advanced mentally, morally, or spiritually—have perceptive powers that those on the mortal plane are yet unable to express? The medium in this case was not entranced, and the room was brilliantly lighted. It would seem that telepathy, in this instance at least, must be discarded as an explanation, for the crucial point of the "test" lay in its *intrinsic* evidence.

'Among those whose opportunities for the observance and study of psychic phenomena are restricted, there is a growing tendency to overwork the "sub-conscious mind" or "telepathic" hypothesis in the attempt to account for supernormal manifestations. Indeed, the chief obstacle to the wider acceptance of the spiritistic theory is its very simplicity: the ordinary mind is allured only by the complex, the involved, the subtle, and the abstruse. Yet the world's greatest inventions are the *simplest*, in both design and operation; and the same may be said of Truth, of whatever phase.'

'A SÉANCE OF ANCIENT TIMES.'

In reading Thomas Hodgkin's 'Italy and Her Invaders,' I came across an account of a spiritualist séance of ancient times which I thought would prove of interest to your readers, especially those who have lately been discussing planchette.

It is stated that Valens, the Eastern Roman Emperor, A.D. 364-378, being jealous of a highly-educated, modest, self-controlled young man of noble family named Theodorus, 'some persons of rank and influence at Antioch met together, probably under cover of night, to consult the diviners as to the name of the future Emperor. A little tripod (like a Delphic cauldron), made of laurel wood and consecrated with mysterious songs and choral dances, was set in the middle of the house, which had been purified by the burning of Arabian spices. The tripod was placed upon a round dish made of diverse metals, and with the letters of the alphabet marked upon its circumference. Thereafter entered a person clad in linen, and with linen socks upon his feet, bearing in his hand branches of an auspicious tree, who, after again singing a magic song, leaned over the sacred tripod and shook up and down a flaxen thread, very fine, to which a ring was attached. As the ring danced up and down it touched the letters of the metal dish, and thus words and sentences, and even hexameter verses, like those uttered by the priests of Apollo at Miletus, were delivered to the bystanders. The question was put: "Who shall succeed the present Emperor?" The ring spelt out the letters Θ Ε Ο Δ (Theod), and without waiting for more all the bystanders agreed that the high-born and accomplished Theodorus would be the future Emperor.'

Theodorus and many other leading men whose names commenced with the four letters were executed, and Theodosius succeeded to the purple upon the death of Valens, his name being, of course, the name that was meant. The authorities for the story are the ancient writers Ammianus, Marcellinus and Zosimus.

One thing to be noted in this account is the importance which the ancients attributed to details which we moderns seem to ignore entirely. Has anyone ever experimented along these lines? And the jumping at the whole word from the first few letters is an experience familiar to all who have used the slow method of the alphabet in obtaining similar communications. What an interesting book it would make if some classical scholar were to collect all the accounts of spiritualistic phenomena of which ancient writers are so full.

A. K. VENNING.

Los Angeles,
Cal., U.S.A.

THE ROOMS OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, 110, St. Martin's-lane, will be closed to visitors on Thursday, the 20th inst., and the two following days.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28th, 1901.

Light,

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PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. E. W. Wallis and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.'

SCRIPTION RATES.—'LIGHT' may be had free by post on the following terms:—Twelve months, 10s. 10d.; six months, 5s. 5d. Payments to be made in advance. To United States, 2dol. 70c. To France, 13 francs 86 centimes.

'LIGHT' may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and through all Newsagents and Booksellers.

APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library, should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

GOD THE BEAUTIFUL.

It has been a chill and sullen day. All day long a polluted haze has been slowly rolling in from our modern Babylon, and now, blending with the dusk, it seems making up its mind to settle down for the night as a sulky fog. We have just taken our last look at our lately pretty garden, now our *Ichabod*, for the glory has indeed departed, and little remains beyond the *débris* of decayed roses and sringas, and the long brown stalks of the wild flowers on the bank. No wonder the heathen of the old world—who could sigh and shiver as well as we—believed that the beautiful God had been defeated, and that the demon powers had prevailed to capture His celestial sun!

'The Beautiful God.' That reminds us of the lovely little book we were reading this morning—pleasant to touch and sight, with its pretty white and gold, and consoling to the heart, sorrowful because of its dead roses and its fading human flowers. Is it not just a little like a mockery—this dainty book—'God the Beautiful: An artist's creed'? * 'It is all very well for the artists and the poets to play at Heaven upon earth, and to paint and sing as though the roses never died,' one says. Nay, but the poets do not sing like that; and the artists—well, the artists know the other side of the pattern they portray.

But the artist who is said to have written this book was under no delusions, and had no garland of roses. He was young and lonely, a stranger in a strange land, dying of consumption in a little inn in dingy Leith: and yet, as he lay there, slowly fading, there came out of his soul—so it is said—these roses of the heart, these day-dawns of the spirit, these haloes and heavens of faith and hope and love.

Well, light the lamp, draw the curtains, shut out the fogs of Babylon, and let us solace ourselves with this artist's hopes and dreams—dying alone, but for the faded aspirations of his youth.

The little book is all about Poetry, Music, and Art: 'Poetry as manifesting in language the Beautiful,' 'The Fine Arts as Creations of Beauty,' 'Music as a vehicle of Beauty,' 'Life, a discipline to evolve Spiritual Beauty,' 'Love, the Offspring of Beauty,' the personal, social, and national aspects of 'The Religion of Beauty,' 'The Divine Immanence as a God of Beauty,' 'Immortality, the Realisation of all Beauty.' On these lofty themes we will try to give a summary of the fine thoughts that breathe through this book, using, as far as possible, the writer's own language.

*By E. P. B. London: Philip Welby.

The poets are the seers of the race. They reveal to humanity the spiritual and the eternal, and universalise the inward and the spiritual life. The end of true Poetry is the elevation of the soul, that it may bring itself more into conformity with the great primal harmonies, regarding the present only as a prelude to a higher life. The whole realm of existence is thus seen to be divine thoughts expressed in beautiful forms and rhythmic measures, exactly like the basis upon which poetry and music are created. The spirit of all true Art is love and admiration. To see the Soul—that is the culminating glory of the artist. So Art is the true interpreter of history, religion, and common life. The Artist does not look upon the world as a piece of dead mechanism, but, as it is in reality, the expression, not yet perfect, of an all-pervading life of beauty and perfection. Indeed, Life itself, rightly understood and worked out, is a very high form of Art, when, in the inner world of the soul's life, there are aspirations and strivings for beautiful ideals. That may be the purest and noblest of all forms of Art.

So with Music, which belongs to the sphere of the emotions. The true Musician emotionally, even if not intellectually, responds to the universal longings and hopes of human kind. The Cosmos is embodied Music; everything, from the atom to the highest forms of life, being united by the universal medium of Harmony. God, who strung the great harp of existence, with all its wonderful chords, and attuned them one to the other, is the supreme Composer, but the end is not yet. What melody will result when all the possibilities are achieved! Perfect Music then is, or might be, the highest mode of the soul's affirmation that the Cosmos, as a whole, is working for the absolutely beautiful and perfect.

The discipline of Life has for its end the evolving of Spiritual Beauty. A lofty purpose underlies the pressure, the seeming confusion and the struggles of this stage of being. Earth is the place where character is formed, or where personal experiments are made: but this is a progressive work, and it takes time for souls, as well as for seeds and trees, to come to perfection. The battle of life, however sharp, tends to the growth of character, if waged in a right spirit and for love's sake. The main object is not to win victories and accumulate gains, but to see farther, to feel deeper, to strike from the universe richer harmonies, and to grasp the fine truth that, after all, we are only at the beginning and on pilgrimage.

Here is the culmination. The very thing that seemed to end all really perfects all. Death strikes for Life a deeper note. It is not the destruction but, rather, the illimitable expansion of the personality, a fuller realisation of life. It takes the temporary, but leaves the imperishable. The Life here and the Life beyond become parts of one progressive existence, not so much separated by the river of death as united by the bridge of the ideal. Invisible kingdoms encompass us where God finds expression in Life's harmony in its varied processes, all interdependent, and all dependent upon the laws of Love and Beauty. God is the God of Evolution, and Death is necessary for the working out of His perfect plan. It is not a decay of force; it is a mode of force. It does not diminish the sum of the world's energy, but increases it or provides it with larger uses. Beyond the veil, when the process is complete, we shall all find fulfilments, not dooms. We shall not be dragged before a dreaded despot, for judgment, but shall enter upon the new life, freed from earth's trammels. We shall be drawn, by an irresistible affinity and attraction, towards the Centre, for love's service, for love's sympathy, for love's delights, all summed up in the union with the loving heart of conquering Love, the Beautiful God.

NORTHUMBRIAN HEALERS.

II.

MR. WILLIAM DAVIDSON.

The medium and herbalist who forms the subject of this sketch follows pretty closely on the heels of Mr. Moss in point of popularity and business. Although he does not at first present to the psychologist all the pronounced phases of abnormality which are shown by Mr. Moss, yet, in many subtler directions a fund of interesting points for observation reveal themselves, expressing psychical endowments of a high subjective order. Like the



MR. WILLIAM DAVIDSON.

From a photo by]

[P. M. Lister, Newcastle.

majority of his *confrères*, he is a small man, in build spare and wiry, with an intellectual type of head and face, while nervous energy and sensitiveness are displayed in manner and expression. He has chosen to locate himself in the busy, grimy district called the Tynedock, of Newcastle, about as relatively distant from Mr. Moss's place of abode as is Harley-street from the Surrey side of London, so that two distinctly different business centres are thus reached, to the mutual advantage of both patients and healers. An attempt to compare the work of all these interesting people would probably bring about the conclusion that there is comparatively small difference between the various methods of treatment in the generality of diseases or in the nature of the herbs prescribed, but great distinction between the individuals, with their ever varying phases of psychic sensitivity and the conditions under which they elect to practise. Each one, apparently, has his own very marked inclination or idiosyncrasy regarding time, place, and requirements for the development of his calling, becoming more or less a law unto himself, subject generally to the advice of 'guides' or invisible helpers in whom all evidently believe.

In one respect Mr. Davidson rather differs from the majority, as he has never, either for diagnosis or clairvoyance, found it necessary to take on the trance or condition of auto-suggestion. Although believing that inspirational help does come from spiritual agencies, yet he also holds that man has within himself the inherent power to direct and command natural forces when the higher attributes of mind and soul are consciously brought into play. He leans towards certain theosophical theories and gives one the impression that, consciously or unconsciously, his success in healing may

often be due to the mental and spiritual forces he sets in motion. Questioning him once on this point, he allowed that sometimes, when engaged on very bad cases, he has concentrated his mind in thought and prayer on the individual before retiring to rest, and he will also endeavour to magnetise the herbs when mixing them for such a patient. Mr. Davidson is a very silent man, with a nature which either from lack of higher education or extreme sensitiveness seems deprived of all adequate power to express thoughts and feelings by language. It is this very incapacity to articulate by ordinary vocabulary anything more than surface comments (and these sparingly) which gives his words of suggestion or advice additional force and directness when treating, yet his medical insight and intuition would seem to be astonishingly clear and accurate, induced as they are by his natural clairvoyant faculties; and in the fifteen years or more he has spent as a healer, cases of tumours, fits, first stages of consumption, jaundice, &c., have all been successfully cured. In fact, physical ailments of almost every kind short of surgical cases seem within the powers of all good herbalists to cure or alleviate.

Mr. Davidson does not often resort to magnetic treatment. For one thing, it depletes him somewhat, and for another, his faith in herbal remedies is such that when they are correctly prescribed he believes they will conquer any sickness the system can contract. He finds, too, as all do, that the accuracy with which he can diagnose is more than half the battle, and in his opinion there is no single organ of the body or phase of disease in the system which would not be susceptible to, and yield to, the action of one herb or another if correctly applied. His method of diagnosis, each time he sees a case under treatment, is to hold a hand of the patient in one of his own, and to pass the middle finger of his other hand over the clothes to the spots where the vital organs, such as heart, lungs, &c., are situated, and when he has thus lightly touched the various parts of the body his opinion is given as to the seat of the evil. This touch would appear to put him into a kind of magnetic *rapport* with the patient, and enable him to psychically see or 'sense' the conditions under consideration. The process seems so simple, but so unflinching in accuracy of response, that one feels as if a species of telegraphic information were going on between the sick organism and the brain consciousness of the healer.

The first opportunity which presented itself before the close of my northern visit, was seized one afternoon to make a trip Tynedock-wards and see something of Mr. Davidson's work under ordinary daily circumstances. Mr. W. H. Robinson, of Newcastle, kindly accompanied me, and we gave no hint of our coming, though in any case this would hardly have been necessary, as one is quite sure of finding a healer at home on given days and hours of the week. Somewhat surprised at our unexpected advent, Mr. Davidson admitted us into his modest little consulting room and dispensary at once, continuing his rapid operations of packing up herbs and attending to the patient he was occupied with at the moment of interruption. The callers may number anything from forty to one hundred a day—they were one hundred and twenty-five on one occasion—so no unnecessary waste of time is permitted. On the day of our visit, at about 4.30 p.m., he had just seen his fifty-third caller, and the waiting room was yet full. During the two hours we sat in the small clinic watching proceedings and making notes, the front door bell tinkled steadily at intervals, admitting a new comer for almost every one who left; and in the intervals after diagnosis and advice, when the healer darts into a sort of cubicle arrangement for the purpose of weighing and mixing his herbs and remedies, we were generously allowed to put any questions we liked to the different patients, Mr. Davidson requesting them to give us any information on their treatment they felt inclined to impart. This appeal, which was most good-naturedly acceded to on the part of the different patients, brought more than one pathetic and strangely interesting story to light. Despair at seeing life and work slipping away, in spite of all the doctors could do, has driven many a chance visitor to the herbalists, who are looked upon as last resources; and strange to say, these particular cases often turn out the most complete cures in the end.

Mr. Davidson is a true Northumbrian, and comes directly from the collier class, having been a pit hand, boy and man, in the Harton Colliery some twenty years ago. Like many similarly employed he was a strict chapel-goer before he became drawn into Spiritualism, at Seaham Harbour. The truth concerning his clairvoyant faculty was speedily disclosed at circles, and from one or two details which I gathered relating to his personal history, there is little doubt that he comes from a psychically sensitive family. He, himself, 'saw things' from the age of seven, and he related with much clearness of memory the nature of his first vision which occurred in his home at that early age. It appears that he described to his mother the double of his grandfather, who seemed to be seated by their fireside at a time when the old man was living in quite another neighbourhood. Child and grandfather had never met, and it was through his request to learn who the old man might be in their kitchen that his power of second sight was discovered. Rather distressed and anxious over this peculiar side of her son's mind, and finding that these visions persisted at intervals, his mother finally decided to consult a doctor living some little distance away. The result of this maternal solicitude brought about an arrangement which placed this boy of nine unreservedly in the doctor's hands for a period of six weeks. Fortunately for him, his mother, getting uneasy, removed him before the contracted time, for—as Mr. Davidson related in his usual laconic style—during the month when under the doctor's treatment he lived through one of the darkest and most miserable episodes of his young life. It would seem that this medical genius of thirty years ago could think of no better or more scientific course to adopt than to treat the case as a phase of lying and cunning in a hysterical boy. So much is now heard by the general public of *visions*, dreams, clairvoyance, &c., that a repetition of such treatment under similar circumstances would be probably beyond all possibility to-day. Mr. Davidson paid a tribute of gratitude to the doctor's wife, who was good to him and tried to alleviate his childish miseries, whenever she could secure the key of his door. It was during one of these surreptitious visits on her part that he obtained another clear and terrible vision, that of a shipwreck, in which a young officer on board figured prominently. The description of this officer being asked for and given, it was instantly recognised by the lady as that of her brother, who was a sailor, and who did indeed subsequently lose his life at sea in the manner described. This remarkable gift of prophetic clairvoyance has never deserted Mr. Davidson, though the faculty now appears to have become focussed into one channel for the use of his profession, and he rarely 'sees' spontaneously on matters unconnected with the requirements of health. He spends a busy life in a humble way, making only the small uniform charge of half a crown per person, and this includes the necessary herbs. It would be impossible to accuse him or any other of the well-known magnetic healers I met, of obtaining money under false pretences. They work untiringly, give their services ungrudgingly, at the call of charity, and however 'preposterous' or unscientific they appear to the great majority there is little doubt that as a class they do supply a want and are considered a great boon by thousands of respectable, hard-working poor.

J. STANNARD.

DR. J. M. PEEBLES IN AUSTRALIA.—The venerable 'Spiritual Pilgrim,' Dr. J. M. Peebles, has started on a fourth trip around the world, and has been accorded a hearty welcome in Melbourne, where a splendid 'Reception' was arranged in his honour, presided over by Mr. W. H. Terry, the editor of the 'Harbinger of Light.' The 'Doctor' will lecture in Australia, on Sundays and week days for an indefinite length of time, and may visit India and London on his way back to America.

MRS. PIPER'S ALLEGED 'CONFESSION.'—Writing in the 'Banner of Light,' December 7th, Miss Lilian Whiting stated that she had an interview with Mrs. Piper after the publication of her alleged 'confession,' when Mrs. Piper 'clearly pointed out that when she used the term telepathy, in explanation of the message that came through her organism, she meant telepathy from those in the Unseen, and not from persons in this world,—as she was made to appear to say in the interview.' Mrs. Piper also declared that she 'did not say that she "denied the spiritualistic hypothesis."'

ST. ANDREW'S CROSS.

FROM A SERMON PREACHED ON ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

BY 'A MIDLAND RECTOR.'

There is a particular kind of cross, in the shape of the letter X, called St. Andrew's Cross, because it was supposed to have been used at his death. He is represented in some celebrated old pictures as leaning on a cross of this description, and holding in his right hand the Gospel. And he is said to have uttered this fervent address to the cross on which he was about to suffer: 'Hail, precious Cross, consecrated by the body of Christ! I come to thee exulting and full of joy. Receive me into thy dear arms.' There must have been something wonderful, we think at once, in the Gospel that he had preached so faithfully, which enabled him to meet his dreadful fate in such a noble spirit. Alas!

in this advanced age of ours, wherein we have gained and lost much, there is but little of that exalted spirit left.

The cross on the left, and the Gospel on the right—let us see how the dark problems of the one may be solved and explained to us in the light of the other. The cross is before us all; it enters into all our lives; but where are we, any of us, without a gospel to shed its light upon it? Both these elements are needed to make our lives complete. It is the gospel that sheds a halo of glory over the cross, and over human life. The cross, even as a religious symbol, is almost as old as the soul itself; as a fact in human experience, no doubt it is as old as man, who was always 'born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards'; it is the explanation of it that we want. The gospel is the key which unlocks the mystery of the ages. The cross, which in the ancient religions used to be carried about, and was the most common and familiar emblem in use, under Christianity took the form of the Papal keys, or St. Peter's keys, which were supposed to unlock the gate of Heaven. Of course, it is only a corrupt superstition to think that the Pope has any more 'power of the keys' than any other man, but there is profound truth in the original idea, which under the gospel transforms the old cross into a key. Because apart from all Romish nonsense and all superstitious use, the truth is there, that the cross does remain the key for all of us. There is only one key that for any of us can unlock the gates of eternal life, which those words of Christ supply: 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' That cross, whenever we will learn to take it up, we shall find to be indeed a key of gold. No, the Pope cannot do it for you; the Church cannot do it for you; the priest, by muttering a few words, cannot make it all right for you, either before or after death: even Christ can only point out the way. You must each have your own cross, and that, if you bear it in Christ's spirit, will become your own key.

We are so accustomed to think of the cross in connection with Christianity, that the cross and the Gospel have become almost synonymous terms. But the cross, as a religious symbol, was in the world thousands of years before Christ came. It was a prominent feature in the ceremonial of the ancient religions of Egypt, and there were various sacred meanings attached to it by the ancient Egyptians just as there are by Christians in our day. When Christ

speaks of every disciple 'taking up his cross,' He is referring to what was a well-known practice, then and always existing; well known, at any rate, to Him with all its mystic meanings, familiar as He was with all the wisdom of Egypt. And what we have grown accustomed to signify by the cross, in the sense of trouble and sorrow, was of course an established fact in the world at an even earlier period. The Gospel does not bring the cross, it finds it here already. It suggests a remedy and an explanation, but it does not offer to remove it for us, because that would be impossible, and would defeat the very object of life itself. And it teaches us that we can only enter the innermost shrine, the Holy of Holies, we can only win rest and peace, as we learn to lift it up, each one for himself. People often do, think, and talk as though the following of Christ in some way *makes* the cross. No, the fact of the cross is there, whether you follow Him or not. They would have no check or restraint on their earthly impulses; they would kick the cross away from them, they would hide it out of sight, they would turn their backs upon it, but its shadow is upon them all the time. You do not change the facts of life because you refuse to recognise and understand them. It is only when we seek to throw off the yoke and shirk the cross that we make the burden heavier than we can bear. The true following of the Christ brings only joy and gladness, and lights up the future with everlasting hope; it expands our nature in every direction, and raises it to heaven. When you were brought as an infant to yonder font, and the sign of the cross was made on your brow, it was not to put upon you something that was not already there: it was only as a sign that you should live to take up that cross for yourself, and stamp it so upon your soul as to win the crown of glory to which it points. It is an interesting and instructive symbol of eternal truth, that links us to the most ancient times. It takes our minds back to those early days when the first followers of Christ did nothing without it. As they rose in the morning and lay down at night, whenever they ate and drank or engaged in any enterprise, whenever they entered in or went out of the house, this sign was always made. And in their last earthly sleep, a cross, as the sweetest symbol of immortal life, was held before their closing eyes, and when the spirit fled, was left to rest upon the deserted corpse. We have changed all that, as we change so many things: but there is no getting away from the fact which that cross conveys: and we need the consolation of its beautiful truth, no less than the saints of old did.

Ah! it is not the cross that brings sadness, it but takes it away. It is the neglect to carry it that causes all the gloom and sorrow and doubt that fills our world to-day. If we understood it rightly, we should welcome it with joy, as St. Andrew did, even when it came in its most forbidding aspect, its seemingly most cruel form—most kind really, perhaps, when it appeared most cruel, because about to bestow its richest gift of all.

Would we have it otherwise? Would you forfeit the crown of immortality, because you can only gain it by taking up your cross for these few earthly years? Would you be without the roses, if you cannot have them without the thorns? Would you miss the smiles, because mingled with them there must be tears? You would like it all roses and all smiles: but that would not be good for you. If there was no difficulty there would be nothing to make an effort for; if there were no hills to climb we should always remain below. You would like it all sunshine, but the clouds are needed too. You would like to banish death, to remain always as you are, poor, stunted, helpless, undeveloped creatures, always clinging to the earth; but it is only death that can admit you to real life. No, it is all in wiser hands than ours. Let us take life as we find it; let us cheerfully and thankfully accept our cross, such as it is; if it seems hard for a while, it will be easier by and bye. Let us deny ourselves, and we shall surely find ourselves better, and larger, and purer, and truer, because we lost ourselves. Let us follow Christ, and He will lead us to the Highest. Let us crucify our lower nature, that above the tomb of our dead selves the new man may have power to manifest in its risen beauty.

Then, after all, the cross represents the veritable Tree of

Life for all of us. Why should we seek to shirk its burden? Is it not the best emblem of human life, what it is, what it should be, what it is coming to be? The cross with its foot on the earth, its branches extending far and wide, and the top of it pointing to the stars! That is the human body itself—the form of a cross, and how well it signifies the real and spiritual life of man! The earthly element below, but the divine and boundless at the top; our feet standing on the ground, our arms outstretched in sympathy to embrace the world, while the noblest part towers upwards like a god.

So every man by denying himself, by subduing his lower nature, has to raise his own cross from Earth to Heaven. And so those griefs and cares and hardships which now for awhile seem to make a cross for you, may change in character, according to your way of looking at it. You may gaze always downward at its foot, or you may look with it upwards to the skies. You may lift up your cross higher and higher, till the light of Heaven shines upon it, and all its sadness fades away. You may turn it into a ladder, upon which you shall see the angels going up and down, bearing you strength and peace and comfort. We shall always welcome it with joy, when we know the blessedness to which it leads. It is no longer dark and terrible, with a gospel that explains its mystery: a gospel that points us upwards to a future of immortal hope, a future of never-ending ascent and progress to the infinite beyond; a gospel that reveals to us, in the eternal love of God, our perfect crown of life; a gospel that draws aside death's curtain to show us glimpses of the glory which awaits each faithful struggler, each earnest worker, each patient sufferer, who through this earthly discipline and trial shall win his way at length to everlasting peace.

SYMBOLICAL MONOGRAMS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION.

I wish to confirm and supplement the remarks made by your representative in regard to the interesting illuminated monograms produced psychometrically by Mrs. Skilton, of Brentford, and interpreted, apparently by inspirational methods, by Mrs. William Paulet.

The special sitting referred to was one in which I endeavoured to exclude any possibility of thought transference in obtaining the results. The signature of the gentleman was sent to me, and, though I was acquainted with his mother, I had met her son on two occasions only, and knew little regarding his character and past history, and certainly neither Mrs. Skilton nor Mrs. Paulet had any idea regarding him, and could not possibly have obtained any knowledge by normal means, as his signature was only produced by me at the beginning of the sitting. While the artist medium was painting the monogram in question, Mrs. Paulet described clairvoyantly a form with an Eastern appearance, resembling a native of China, close to Mrs. Skilton, which she asserted had also been described by other clairvoyants. While the painting was proceeding, in a room well illuminated with electric light—the medium being in an abstracted mental condition, as if fully absorbed in her work, and only answering questions with an effort—numerous percussive sounds were audible, apparently in confirmation of the explanations given by Mrs. Paulet, who during the process, and immediately afterwards, gave a long account of the character of the gentleman, and much of his previous history, which was quite unknown to me or to my wife, who was also present. In reference to the result of the interpretation, the mother of the gentleman writes thus: 'It is wonderful, and I who know my boy's life and character well can say it is truthfully exact.'

I have had several monograms executed for friends by simply sending their signatures to Mrs. Skilton, who in her own house produced the paintings, and the interpretations have been given afterwards by Mrs. Paulet. A very sceptical, shrewd Scotch friend of mine sent his own and his wife's signatures, and in acknowledging the monograms with the interpretation, two days ago, writes to my wife thus: 'The whole thing is rather wonderful, indeed it is very *uncanny*, for there are traits described in them that neither you nor

the doctor, nor anyone that has come in contact with Mrs. Paulet can know.'

The facts alluded to by your representative as to the relation of colour and emblems to physical, moral and spiritual qualities, as well as to health conditions and prospects, are most remarkable, for in the interpretations of these monograms not only are peculiarities of character given, but instructions as to dietetic and hygienic conditions have been communicated which afterwards proved to be most useful, and were according to the most scientific principles.

All these facts point to the necessity for further investigations being made in this special field of psychological research.

A. WALLACE, M.D.

39, Harley-street, W.

December 16th, 1901.

POEMS BY GEORGE BARLOW.*

Rather curiously, just twenty years ago, the writer of this notice contributed a short article on a volume of Mr. Barlow's poems, 'Song-Bloom,' to the 'Burlington' Magazine of October, 1881. A few lines from that article seem appropriate as an introduction: 'To the poet is accorded the high privilege of presenting to the world its ideals. The world at large is blind, devoid of true spiritual insight. In ancient language, the poet takes of the things of God and hands them to men. He is the interpreter of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.' This aim has undoubtedly been Mr. Barlow's.

The present volume differs, we think, from all his preceding volumes, in being a selection, extending over twenty years, from 1881 to the present time, most being dated. The poem which gives the title to this volume was written in 1894. It is difficult to read some of the verses without smiling, and there is much brilliant sarcasm, but the lesson it would teach is good. The real bit of poetry in it is the idea of the 'launch' of the 'legend that all time has cherished' of 'Venus born from the enchanted foam.' The moral is summed up in one of the concluding verses:—

Remember, for your part,
That youth will gain its impulse purest, mightiest,
Never from woman's brain—from woman's heart.'

The gems in the volume, and there are many, are in the shorter pieces; gems that show the true poetic gift and the mastership of expression which are to be found in Mr. Barlow's work. Nearly always, despondency is followed by a gleam of eternal hope. For instance, in 'Kensal Green,' after many stanzas of doubt and questioning, comes this conclusion:—

'So I pondered. Since I pondered, I have seen a living face
arise;
Seen a face from out death's darkness flash with still un-
changed and loving eyes.'

But on the other hand, one of the most pathetic poems, 'The Long Parting,' reads like a true incident on the North Cornish coast, and describes a maiden awaiting the return of her 'sailor-love,' 'to-morrow,' after a year's absence. The last two lines are:—

'Over the wires this message flew:
Lost—with all hands—in the night!'

Ought not a true poet, who deals with realities, not with appearances, to have added one more verse?

There are many short poems which once read will never be wholly forgotten. We select the first and last stanzas from two—'As we Grow Older,' and 'The Unseen Land.'

'As we grow older, life grows more divine:
Slow word by word and tedious line by line
We learn the next world's lore.
Then all our hearts are changed, the temporal ends;
We bid farewell to old, we make new friends
Upon the eternal shore.

'So we pass onward, till we stand at last
With every struggle, each love, in the past;
Our soul surmounts its throne.
Then the large deathless rapture through us thrills:
We turn from human hearts, from flowers and hills,
And meet God's eyes, alone.'

'We shall not lonely be:
The breakers of death's sea
Fringe with their white line no inhuman shore.
Within death's valleys, meet
The faces we found sweet,
The hearts and hands that sought our own of yore.
Upon death's uplands, lo!
Full many a voice we know
And flowers like those our living green earth bore.

'We need not doubt nor dread:
The armies of the dead
Beckon us on with many a living hand.
The lonelier we are here
The less we have to fear
For on the other side more dear ones stand:
Each summer sends its ghosts
Of flowers to death's dim coasts;
Each year new loved ones seek that unseen land.'

There is a remarkable poem under the title of 'England's Choice,' near the end of the volume, just written, dated July, 1901. It is on South Africa. We cannot refer to it further, except to say that in an accompanying sonnet the writer laments:—

'No strong note sounded, save from Watson's lyre.'

Twenty years ago a selection from the whole series of Mr. Barlow's volumes of poetry was an ideal of the present writer. It is still an ideal. If ever realised, such a selection would certainly include pieces from this, his latest.

The book is a handsome, well-printed volume, on good thick paper, and 5s. net seems a low price for it.

E. T. B.

BIRMINGHAM SPIRITUALIST UNION.

On Sunday December 15th, Mr. J. J. Morse delivered addresses at the Masonic Hall, Birmingham, and in the evening discoursed on 'Man the Spirit—a Search and a Definition.'

Considerable interest had been centred in the gathering owing to the fact that this was the last engagement Mr. Morse has with the Birmingham Spiritualist Union for some twelve months to come. There was a large audience to do honour to this veteran worker, and the discourse was worthy of the occasion; it held the keenest attention of the audience and fully maintained our friend's reputation for closely reasoned philosophy.

At the end of the service, the chairman, Mr. W. Davis, expressed in a few well chosen sentences the fraternal feeling which existed for Mr. Morse among the members and friends of the Birmingham Spiritualist Union, and sincerely wished him God-speed in the good work for which he has laboured so earnestly and effectively for many years.

Mr. Morse expressed himself as much moved by the kindly references that had been made to the fraternal spirit with which his Birmingham friends regarded him, and he heartily reciprocated their good wishes for the future. But as to the eulogies the chairman had pronounced upon the addresses which had been delivered through his organism, he could not take the credit to himself, for after some thirty years of labour on behalf of the cause of Spiritualism, he felt compelled to reiterate, what was to him an incontrovertible fact, that the addresses were the work of a disembodied spirit acting upon and through his organism, and it was on this spiritual source that he relied for their delivery. He had personally made no preparation for the address to which they had listened, and to which the chairman had alluded as so worthy of commendation, and he was glad to take that opportunity of publicly stating his indebtedness to that spiritual source which to him was a profound reality.

J. H.

HUSK FUND.—The following additional contributions have been received: 'E.', 5s.; 'C. S.', £1 1s.; G. Davis (second contribution), £1 1s.

MR. W. J. COLVILLE.—The 'Philosophical Journal,' of December 7th, stated that Mr. W. J. Colville would reach San Francisco on December 16th, and after spending three weeks in that city would start for New York on or about January 7th, and then cross the Atlantic to fulfil his engagements in England.

* 'To the Women of England; and other Poems.' By GEORGE BARLOW. London: Henry J. Glazier, 1900.