

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.

We have heard so much about *our* 'fakes' that we may be forgiven for feeling a little more comfortable when revelations of other people's fakes come our way. Fakes of old masters, old manuscripts, old coins, old fossils, old antiques—all come in their turn; and now actually there is a great exposure about old mummies! And yet, we suppose, there are genuine old masters, old manuscripts, old coins, old fossils, old antiques, and even old mummies. Let us all be unhappy together!

Southern California is the scene of the latest mummy-making factory, and a man who has been in the business for nearly thirty years is the informer. 'The Pacific Monthly' tells the story, and gives full particulars of the process. The writer, who seems to be a mummy expert, says of himself:—

Even on closest inspection he was not able to discover anything in the artificial product that was not exactly in accordance with all he ever observed in the original mummies. The very shape of the head, the expression of the hollow eyes, the shrivelled lips, the bits of skin and bone exposed; the general aspect and pose of the limbs and body, wrappings and all, are such as to exactly resemble the genuine article, and would, were the result of the artisan's labour exhibited in a museum, deceive any but the eye of an expert—and his, too, unless he looked very close. Standing in the very workshop, seeing them made, and hearing the maker's explanations, it is hard to realise that those weird figures should be imitations.

And if the artist tells you that he has been working in his line of business for twenty-nine years; that he has learned his trade in a regular factory long ago, and that he is able to turn out several mummies a day; then, gentle reader, you will perhaps agree with me that even your keen eye and undeceivable instinct may have been deceived, and that very likely it will have been deceived, if you will but stop to roughly calculate what this one man alone has done in his line.

The only difference between ourselves and the philosophers and scientists seems to be that they accept their stream of fakes like mother's milk while we promptly bowl out ours.

A writer in 'Cosmos,' a French paper, discusses the problem connected with the apparently near connection between genius and eccentricity or something like insanity: and there does seem to be a connection; though, of course, there are geniuses who are neither eccentric nor insane. A genius is a person who is highly developed, perhaps on one side or in regard to one thing. So far he is abnormal. He is also necessarily more or less separated from the common mind, the common order, and the common habit. In a word, he is singular, and 'singular' is a word which, in some uses of it, is equivalent to eccentric: and

eccentricity has only to be sufficiently accentuated in order to become insanity.

Much of what is regarded as insane or even criminal is only an extension of the anti-social: and 'anti-social' is descriptive of a great deal that is characteristic of genius, the product of intense individuality, the consciousness of power, the growth of pride, and the desire to be or to seem to be different from the ruck.

The 'Cosmos' gives a remarkable list of geniuses who were 'queer.' August Comte ran insanity very close at times. Saint-Simon, Guy de Maupassant, Villemain, were all haunted by delusions; Schumann tried suicide; Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote a sort of love letter to God which he deposited under the altar at Notre Dame; Nietzsche ended as a lunatic; Schopenhauer was exceedingly 'singular,' and so on. It certainly seems that to be commonplace is to be safe; and that the profession of a genius is a dangerous one.

'The Literary Digest' gives a very readable account of M. Fabre's new work, 'La Pensée Chrétienne,' the special importance of which is that it reveals the existence of a deep undercurrent of serious religious sentiment in France, outside of the Romish Church, and, indeed, apart from all religious organisations. The 'Digest' says:—

M. Amant-Joseph Fabre professes to represent a large number of men in France who are sincere Christians, though neither Catholics nor Protestants. It is unfortunate that the Separation Law and other anti-clerical demonstrations in France have led many people to exaggerate the anti-Christian spirit which prevails in the native land of Bossuet and Fénelon. As a matter of fact, we are assured by French writers, the French are quite as Christian in general feeling and practice as the other nations of Europe. M. Fabre is an eminent professor, writer, and politician, who . . . writes of Christianity with the utmost reverence and faith—but refuses to acknowledge the ecclesiastical claims of Catholicism or other institutional form of Christianity.

Of his revolt from the current dogmatic and ecclesiastical form of Christianity he speaks in the following terms:—

'It is with no light-heartedness that so many men have renounced the belief of their forefathers and have turned away from all the poetry of a religion in which their childhood had been cradled. They have only done so because the imperious force of personal and universal reason, which they could not disobey, laid its command upon them. The progress of time had brought to light new evidences, and revealed contradictions which overcame the thought and conscience whether men liked it or not. It is a bitter grief to break with the traditional faith, but it would be equally bitter for a man to lie to himself and to others. This course would involve utter degradation. When reason spoke to me in a tone louder than that of mere conventionalism, I used to read with ardour all that could confirm my tottering faith. I fought against doubt, for my faith as for my life. Could I forget the believers who had trembled with veneration and joy when they imagined themselves to be receiving into their mouth the very body of God?'

M. Fabre is a passionate believer in Christianity, and yet he holds that it has not yet cast off the swaddling-bands of the Middle Ages. He believes in a Christianity which is freed from ecclesiasticism and superstition. 'I cherish the hope,' he says, 'that coming generations will arrive at a Christianity eminently progressive, at all points in accord with science and the human conscience, and equalling the highest points of

teaching and inspiration which have been reached by the great religions on which humanity has hitherto relied for safe guidance.'

'The Message of Life' (New Zealand) indulges in the following smile at Telepathy:—

Many persons try to explain the phenomena of Spiritualism as the mind of mortals acting one upon another, and they call this 'telepathy.' But Professor Hyslop, an eminent scientist and investigator into occult matters, declares that what is called 'telepathy' has not been proved. Our readers will remember the experiment made last year by this professor. It was designed to send a telepathic message from America to England. The arrangements were carefully made, and the English sensitive was waiting the message at the time appointed, and with a committee to oversee. The message was received—the very message telepathically despatched from America. So far it might be called a triumphant success, but alas! and alas! The message was despatched in good honest English, and arrived in classical Latin! Neither sensitive is a Latin scholar, so there was really nothing telepathic in that experiment. Some outside intelligence, one with a classical frame of mind, just transposed the message into good Latin.

Every asserted proof of telepathy might be rationally explained by assuming that an 'outside intelligence' bore the message. The word 'telepathy' was coined to smooth the feathers of those who have declared they would accept any explanation rather than acknowledge immortality and spirit return.

'The Message of Light' quotes from 'Everybody's Magazine' a smart reference to the value of Professor Richet's testimony, as far as it goes: 'He is an admirable type of the psychic researcher. He is leagues away from mysticism. An experimenter, a vivisectionist, a savant—cold-blooded, dubious—he represents capitally those men of science who have taken up the study of the invisible world.'

Referring generally to the subject, 'Everybody's Magazine' appears to be quite sympathetic. It says:—

Science recognises the existence of an invisible world, wherein unknown forces flit to and fro. What ghostly things there are it knows not, but they are very real, very strong, and terrible. They are not material—they are the masters of matter. Occult forces are no longer unknown; science has given them passports and name. Science itself is becoming mystic, phantomic, ghost-ridden. . . . Ghosts confront the camera, as M. Sardou attests. Unto M. Fernand Desmoulins ghosts come as he sits blindfolded in his studio, and guide his unwitting hand while it draws their ghostly faces. To another man this thing happened: upon the soft plaster laid before him and others, ghosts impressed their hands and faces—not death masks, but ghost masks. Strange days to live in. And all one can say is that these phenomena, and others—for which in the old days sorcerers were burned at the stake—are now admittedly within the sphere of scientific investigation.

The Rev. B. F. Austin, B.A., lays before the clergy, through 'Reason,' one hundred questions, the majority of which are indeed posers. The following specially interest us:—

Can you deny that angels frequently appeared to men and women in early Bible times and that nearly all the miracles of Old and New Testament times are in connection with, or a result of, angelic visitation?

Were not these angels, in most cases at least, the spirits of departed men and women? Did they not come in the form of men, speak like men, eat like men, and show by their language and conduct a sympathy with man that could only be born of common experiences?

If men who have passed through the change called death are 'angels' or 'equal to the angels,' and angels are 'all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation,' may not all the so-called miracles wrought on our plane be the exercise of spirit power through their ministry? The works of Edison and Tesla—though in strict accord with law—seem miraculous to the savage observer. Is it strange that spirit power exercised on our plane should seem miraculous to those who do not understand it?

Is it not true that angelic manifestations and displays of angelic power only occurred in presence of those possessing certain natural endowments and that such people were variously

styled prophets, seers, apostles, oracles, mediums, saints, and in some cases wizards, according to the nature and character of the manifestation and the enlightenment of the people?

Is not the Bible record full of significant dreams, visions, prophecies, angelic appearances, angelic voices, spirit writing, miraculous healing, speaking with tongues, &c., and are not these classes of spiritual phenomena found in every nation and among every people? Are they not very common among Spiritualists to-day?

'Pioneers of Progress,' by Dr. T. A. Bland (Chicago: T. A. Bland and Co.), is a book of delightful gossip,—the very book for a long railway journey, or to loll about with on a short holiday. It is really a book of lively stories about such men and women as Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Wendell Phillips, Lucretia Mott, Gerald Massey, William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, Benjamin F. Butler, Susan B. Anthony, Andrew Jackson Davis, Peter Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Julia Ward Howe, Robert G. Ingersoll, Henry George, and Alfred Russel Wallace.

It is a book of 254 pages, excellently printed and on first-rate paper, and it can be procured through any good foreign house, or direct from the author, who is a good Spiritualist (231, Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, U.S.A.).

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS.

(From many shrines.)

Almighty God, Lord of the nations and King of kings, who hast gathered our people into a great nation, and sent them to sow beside all waters, and multiply sure dwellings on the earth, deepen the root of our life in everlasting righteousness, and let not the crown of our pride be as a fading flower. Make us equal to our high trusts; reverent in the use of freedom, just in the exercise of power, generous in the protection of weakness. To our legislators and counsellors give insight and faithfulness, that our laws may clearly speak the right, and our judges purely interpret it. Let it be known among us how Thou hatest robbery for burnt-offering; that the gains of industry may be all upright, and the use of wealth considerate. May wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times, and our deepest trust be in Thee. May we not shut our hearts against pity, O Thou All-merciful! but seek to heal the wounds with which our fellow men lie stricken on the way. May we make no peace with oppression; but, amid the negligence of the world and the seduction of guilty custom, put into us the spirit of the holy prophets and martyrs of old. So may we labour, and watch, and pray for the coming of Thy kingdom. Amen.

A PROPHETESS OF GOOD.

In the July issue of the 'World's Advance-Thought,' Mrs. Lucy A. Mallory ventures to predict that 'the present year, 1906, will witness a marvellous advance in the upward and onward progress of the world,' and further, she affirms that: 'It will be an unusually favourable period for psychic unfoldment, and sensitiveness to spiritual energies will become widespread. Spiritual marvels will multiply, and the transformation of the world to peace and harmony will make great strides.'

As almost two-thirds of the year have passed without any marvellous developments, save, perhaps, the marked tendency towards a more peaceful solution of the difficult problems which face the nations of the world, it is to be hoped that the promised advance will speedily take place, and the anticipated spiritual phenomena occur. We like the optimistic and kindly spirit of Mrs. Mallory; she does her utmost to help the world onward and comforts us with the assurance that 'all which appears inharmonious on the surface will ultimately work together for good.' We cheerfully believe that it will.

THE 'GOLDEN MEAN.'

'BE NOT ANYTHING OVERMUCH.'

The Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, pastor of Plymouth Church, N.Y. (which church was made famous by the late Henry Ward Beecher), according to the 'Progressive Thinker,' recently took up his parable against the present-day tendency to be too strenuous. He referred to the fact that an athlete, named Murphy, who had won a silver cup in a long-distance walking race, was rejected by the examining physicians on his arrival at New York because, in over-developing his heart and his speeding muscles, he had atrophied other muscles and worn his heart out. 'His excess ruined him,' said the preacher:—

'By forcing all the blood and food to one part of the body he slowly robbed the other organs. Yet all the time Nature was storing up her penalties. At last the retribution has come; the sword of Damocles has fallen. Nature whispers "too much." The two hundred mile run has ended in a hospital. That is a brief resting place in sight of the graveyard.'

'The world is full of examples of excess. Men over-emphasise a good thing until it becomes an essential evil. The wise man said even of goodness, "Be not righteous overmuch." Moses saw that it was a good thing to keep the Sabbath for brooding, song, prayer, worship, family love. Being a good thing, the old Hebrews straightway began to extend the law, until they would not wear shoes on Sunday lest they thresh out the grass seed in walking across the lawn. They would not kindle a fire to warm the broth for a dying invalid, lest they break the law of work.'

'Moses said to a man who had stolen some sheep that it was a good thing to sacrifice one of his own lambs as an outer sign of his inner sorrow, and also to send home all the sheep he had stolen. But, it being a good thing for a bad man to sacrifice a lamb to show that every sin costs something, in a little while the Hebrews became so overmuch righteous that one day a Hebrew king killed twenty-thousand sheep and burned them, and every time a rain-storm came up the Hebrew farmer began to say: "How many sheep must I kill to keep God from sending a cloudburst to the hill-side?" Prayer was a good thing in reviewing the events of the day, so, running to an excess, the Pharisees began to make long prayers on the streets, and carry around a cane on which they cut notches every time they said a prayer an hour long.'

'Finally the religion of outer sign and symbol had developed into a complex system of rules and sacrifices, and kneeling and risings, that broke faith down by its very bulk. In outer observance they were overmuch righteous. One day Jesus told the Pharisees that the spiritual heart was dying, the intellectual muscles were full of deterioration, worship had all but perished, faith was death-stricken, like this Irish athlete. As over-exercise ruined the youth, excess in religious form destroys the soul.'

'Not less ruinous is over-intellectual development. Not all knowledge is of equal worth. Much culture, indeed, is over-culture and represents a mass of selfishness. How many scholars are now pulling down their blinds, closing their doors and withdrawing themselves from the vulgar crowd? One of them said to me the other day: "I only want a little handful of select friends." He sneered and scoffed at the ignorant multitudes. He has had travel, leisure and opportunity. He has old paintings and rare missals; he has marbles and curios, he prides himself on his first editions and rare bindings; but he has built a wall about his house that not a breath of the perfume from his garden may be permitted to go forth to bless any working man who passes by.'

'Able financially to give up work, he lives and breathes for his own study and culture. Meanwhile his affections have dried up. All sympathy with the poor has perished. His interest in the problems of democracy and the common people has waned to the vanishing point. His intellectual polish is as fine as a mahogany finish. His culture is as clear as crystal but as cold as ice. His intellect has absorbed everything. Essentially he is dying in all that makes a man to be a man. This stricken athlete over-developed his body; this scholar has over-developed his mind. He showed me one of his books bound in calfskin going back to the fifteenth century, but the poor man himself could be stuck up on the shelf, for he is just as dry as his old vellum, and a tear from either the pigskin or the human skin would be a miracle. This man needs to hear Solomon say, "Be not scholarly overmuch."

'In riches all men need to listen to Nature, who whispers "Be not overmuch rich." Manhood means all-round character. But there are business men who have converted everything into life into gold. To get money they have denied worship

on Sunday; to get money they have denied themselves friendship; to get money they have denied the eye colour and the ear music; to get money they have even denied themselves justice and an approving conscience and converted their very sense of right into gold.

'They know that an over-supply of food in the stomach means poison; they do not seem to know that an over-supply of undigested millions means death. Their unspiritualised possessions and unassimilated millions are as hideous as a tumour on the body.'

'Meanwhile, by excess, the athlete ruins himself physically and comes to a hospital and a grave. Over-developing his intellect, the scholar becomes a mere intellectual dagger and sword. Over-developing the acquisitive faculty, the practical man ruins his life. The sin of the hour is excess. Women over-dress, men over-eat and over-drink. Automobilitists over-drive. Editors over-write. Authors who become successful over-publish. Orators speak too long and too often. One drop of aniline is believed to leave one speck of red in each drop of water in Lake Michigan, which is a figure full of suggestion.'

This protest against excess was needed. We have had the 'gospel of success,' and of 'the strenuous life'; the 'get there' policy, and the 'get rich quick' doctrine until the tendency to compete—to hurry and worry—is so widespread that the man who does not join in the procession of 'hustlers' is regarded as 'out of the running,' 'used up,' 'out of date,' or too old.

After all the object of life should be to live; not to throw away the present, with its opportunities for quiet growth and enjoyment, in the mad rush for excitement and future gain. It is time a halt was called and that we should seek knowledge for use; education for strength and fitness; truth for its own sake; and find rational pleasures every day. To-morrow will take care of itself if we live to-day in the right spirit. It is the steady, gentle, temperate life which gives us the fullest return for our labour and our love, and as the Rev. Newell Hillis truly says:—

'A little travel, a little conversation, a gentle friendship, a simple style, unobtrusive and quiet manners, a few books, a small house full of love, a song, a prayer—and the heart is full of peace. Too much—excess stands for the arctic of poverty; somewhere between lies the temperate zone and the golden mean, where joy and peace have set up their tents. And, lo, all the happy ones who dwell therein have harkened to these words: "Be not anything overmuch."'

THE KAISER AND THE DIVINING ROD.

According to a telegram from the Berlin correspondent of the 'Daily News,' who is evidently not a believer, 'dowsing experiments' have been conducted at the Imperial quarters at Wilhelmshöhe:—

'On Monday, August 27th, Prince Carolath enjoyed the privilege of showing their Majesties his art. The Empress hid various little things, the Kaiser's purse, coins, &c., and Prince Carolath's "Dowsing" rod promptly discovered them. Nor could a diamond pin, hid by Princess Victoria Louise, resist the "Dowsing" rod's magic power. Afterwards the whole Imperial Family and a large suite went into the Royal garden to test the rod's power in discovering water.'

'A spring at a depth of fifty metres was discovered, and the Kaiser took a lively interest in measuring the position, source, and direction of the watercourse. Prince Carolath told his Majesty that he had in the neighbourhood of the castle ascertained the presence of a mineral spring, and his Majesty expressed the wish to begin boring.'

'Their Imperial Majesties themselves made experiments with the "Dowsing" rod, but without success. Others also failed, and only Prince Carolath succeeded, and was rewarded by two large photographs of the Imperial Family with the autographs of their Majesties. The Kaiser said he wished that the mysterious power of the "Dowsing" rod should become known to all.'

HAPPINESS.—'Cease looking outside of yourself for happiness. It is not there. We labour long under the delusion that things do or can cause happiness or sorrow. The causes are solely and wholly within ourselves. When the mood is thus or thus, the mind readily finds or creates materials of condition and circumstance wherein to mirror itself.'—MRS. MARY RUSSELL MILLS.

ANIMAL FOOD AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

Before entering on the discussion of the spiritual results depending on the use of animal flesh as food, it will be necessary to form some clear idea as to the nature and use of that which we call 'food'; and, without going deeply into physiological technicalities, 'food' may be briefly defined as those elements of which organic bodies consist; and its use is to supply the waste perpetually going on in such bodies, from their inception to their final disintegration.

These elements exist, primarily, partly in the atmosphere and partly in the mineral, or inorganic, kingdom; from which they are abstracted and absorbed into the tissues of plants and fruits in the vegetable world, by means of which they are assimilated into the animal economy.

Next it is necessary to fix man's place, as a member of the animal world; and, although authorities are not agreed on this point, save that he is not carnivorous, he will be found, on comparison in dentition and structure generally, to be closely allied to the simiïdæ, which are frugivorous and his superiors in strength. Some instances have, however, been recorded of anthropoids occasionally devouring reptiles, but their ordinary and chief diet consists of nuts, fruits, berries and roots.

In both the vegetable and animal kingdoms there are found individuals which prey upon their own kind, but such are regarded by all, whether consciously or not, as discordant notes in the harmony of Nature; for although when we witness the swoop of the hawk upon the defenceless nightingale we comfort ourselves with the supposition that the former is but carrying out the purpose of an inscrutable Providence, and hope some recompense remains for the victim; yet an inexpressible conviction forces itself upon our inner consciousness that we have witnessed an act of violence that was 'not so from the beginning'; and one that we would not have permitted had we been there to alter the nature of the bird of prey.

The origin of these Nature discords cannot be discussed here, but there is every reason to suppose that they did not form part of the original scheme of 'Creation.' There is no mention of predatory bird or beast in that story of Genesis and the assignment of their individual food; and when the spiritual redemption is complete we are told 'they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'

The ethics of Christianity are generally admitted to be the highest yet evolved, and its fundamental, cardinal principle is 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' And how is this relevant to the question of animal food? Because, as attested by a cloud of witnesses, man can derive the whole of the elements necessary to sustain life from the vegetable kingdom, and that without the deliberate sacrifice of a single sentient creature.

The whole physiological process of consciousness is common to both man and his lesser brethren, the 'birds, beasts and fishes,' though it may be that the ratio of sensitiveness is directly dependent on development.

When man feels pain or pleasure the nerves implicated in the part affected convey the impulse to the brain, where it is registered and classified as a sensation; and referred back to the starting point as pain or pleasure; but all this, so to say, mechanical act would be useless unless the Ego or soul were present to *know* or perceive the process; for a process cannot perceive itself. The same physiological and psychological processes are common to the animal kingdom generally, as may be proved, without the aid of vivisection, by merely observing the effect of pain or pleasure, physical or psychical, upon any individual.

Therefore a greater bond exists between man and the lower animals than similarity of organ or function, the bond of *soul*.

This is borne out by a critical perusal of the first chapter of Genesis, every word of which is pregnant with mystical meaning. Of the herb and fruit tree, whose seed is in itself, it is merely recorded that such was the result of the 'third day's' creation. But the distinction is pointed that on the fifth and sixth days the 'waters' and the earth brought forth the 'moving creature that hath life,' the Hebrew rendering

being not 'life' but 'soul,' the translators appearing to have been less influenced by what the text said than anxious to read into it the meaning which they thought it ought to convey, in accordance with the conventional concept of the relation of man to beast.

Can any Spiritualist, with the knowledge that the elements necessary for the sustenance of the body can be derived directly from the insentient vegetable kingdom, as is witnessed by millions of vegetarians of various nations, claim that he is loving his neighbour as himself in taking life from a fellow-creature because he desires his body as food? Is it doing unto others as you would they should do unto you?

"The climax of the spiritual development of the individual is reached when that individual recognises the brotherhood of creation and is filled with universal love, as is symbolised by the expression 'God is Love'; and can there be a moment's doubt that in the direct inverse ratio of our abuse of creation to appease our selfish appetites is our spiritual unfoldment?

'Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man, for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, &c.; these are the things which defile a man.' And out of the heart proceeds the desire to gratify our senses at the expense of our weaker brethren. Is this conducive to spiritual progress?

'Take no thought saying, What shall we eat?' &c., can hardly seriously be construed into a licence to slay and destroy, but rather that the search for the Kingdom of God should take precedence of material matters. Certainly if a man ate by mistake a fruit tart made with animal instead of vegetable fat it would not be detrimental to his spiritual advance, for that which entered unwittingly by his mouth would not defile him; but if, to satisfy a sensual desire, he took the life of an animal to obtain the fat for his fruit tart, that would emanate from the heart, and would defile both soul and body.

'Know ye not that ye (your bodies) are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you?'

It is beyond the scope of this article to reply to all the stock objections raised against the adoption of a universal vegetarian or frugivorous diet, such as that the land would be overrun with cattle, &c. Such arguments are specious but easily disproved. Nature, if left without the interference of man, adjusts the balance.

ALEPH GIMEL.

CURIOUS EPITAPHS.

In his discourse on the 'Risen Christ,' reported in 'LIGHT' of July 14th, the Rev. J. Page Hopps mentioned a curious old epitaph over a grave in Finchley Parish Churchyard. Here are several others, which, although much shorter, are strikingly suggestive. The 'Sunflower' says:—

'At Worcester, England, the slab erected over a departed auctioneer is inscribed with a single word "Gone." In Sussex the initials and date of the death of the deceased are followed by two words "He was." On the monument of Charles the Great of Germany the brief inscription is "Carolo Magno." The most remarkable is at Cane Hill Cemetery, Belfast, where the inscription says, "Left till called for."'

The writer of the last inscription fully believed, apparently, in the 'resurrection of the body'; but one wonders what has happened to the emancipated spirit in the meantime! If he, from the other side, ever visits that cemetery and reads the inscription over his grave, what a laugh he must have!

'THE WOMAN'S MAGAZINE.'—The 'Woman's Magazine' is an illustrated monthly journal for the home, price one penny, which seems to have made a place for itself. It has been purchased from the Standard Press, Limited, by the 'Woman's Magazine' Company, Limited, and is published at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C. The editor says of his magazine that 'its appeal is to women; to maid and wife; therefore, it is clean, wholesome and bright. Mothers and daughters can read aloud everything it contains in either literary or advertisement columns, to the family circle, and explain it to the children without embarrassment.' Number six (for September) is full of interesting information, portraits, advice, hints, and serial stories, and is deserving of a large circulation.

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE ON RELIGION.

There was a final letter in the 'Daily Express' of Friday, August 31st, by Sir A. Conan Doyle, in which he replied to a number of writers who had criticised his former communication—the one which is referred to in our leading article in this issue. Those who objected to the views he then expressed were for the most part clerical correspondents, and he says: 'In all ages, any attempt at breadth of thought and at wide charity in interpretation of the relations between man and his Maker has always met with the same clerical opposition,' but, fortunately, 'in the present age there are many clergy, of all denominations, who recognise that their creeds must grow more tolerant and more comprehensive.' The word 'religion' has been used where, he thinks, 'ritual' was the more appropriate, because 'Religion is the relation between any human soul and its Creator, and is shown outwardly by the actions of the individual.' 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and, judged by that standard, he thinks 'England has enormously improved and is therefore more truly religious.' With reference to the pious days of old, to which so many correspondents had alluded, he asks:—

'Are they the days drawn by Hogarth and described by Fielding? When was England ever so sober, so intelligent, so well educated, so thrifty, and so industrious as at present? As to this decay of forms and ceremonies, while some deplore it others may regard it as the sunrise of saner, better, and more charitable days.'

After pointing out that God has given us a compass, viz., reason, the noblest of all human faculties, he says:—

'It is reason which tells us that if each sect would abate something of its rigid doctrine, and insist upon the points which unite it with its neighbours instead of accentuating those which divide it, there would be some hope for the gradual extinction of those theological differences which have, as I hold, nothing to do with true religion, and have been the source of more bloodshed and misery than any other single cause in the world's history.'

Replying to the charge of being an Agnostic, he says:—

'I am not an Agnostic, though I extend to that body the respect which I feel for all earnest-minded men. I am a believer in the Christian system in its simplest and least dogmatic form as being on the whole the noblest which the world has evolved, though it has been so overlaid by the bigots and the formalists that it is difficult sometimes to see the original outlines at all. It is not a shaven head, but it is wide charity in the heart which is the essence of that creed. I am a convinced Theist also, and a profound believer in the direct action of a guiding force in the affairs of this world.'

'Finally, I may say that I do not believe that the Divine message to the human race was delivered once for all two thousand years ago, but I hold that every piece of prose and verse which has in it anything which is helpful to the individual soul is in some sense a message from Beyond—a message which grows and expands as all vital things must do.'

'Let me end this letter by a quotation from verse of this character:—

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee;
For Thou, oh, Lord, art more than they."

'BROAD VIEWS.'—In the September number of 'Broad Views,' under the heading of 'The Prejudice against Reincarnation,' Mr. A. P. Sinnett writes confidently and positively regarding the evolution of 'newly evolving spiritual entities,' and sets himself the task of trying to clear away misapprehensions and misunderstandings regarding his favourite doctrine. One 'vast block of prejudice' he regards as the fact that 'hitherto communications received from departed friends, by Spiritualists, have generally discountenanced the doctrine of reincarnation.' It is just because it is a doctrine that we hesitate. We always feel inclined to ask those who so learnedly expound and lucidly 'explain' this doctrine and its bearing upon life here and hereafter—'How do you know?' but we never receive a satisfactory reply. Mr. Sinnett, however, is hopeful, and anticipates that 'by degrees the Spiritualism of the future will infallibly be illumined by a good deal of what we now speak of as occult science.' Some of us think that this would be to darken—not illumine—Spiritualism. But we shall see!

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A CONVERSAZIONE

Of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held

IN THE THRONE ROOM OF THE

HOLBORN RESTAURANT, HIGH HOLBORN

(Entrance in Newton-street),

ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4TH, AT 7 P.M.

Short Addresses at 8 o'clock.

Music, Social Intercourse, and Refreshments during the Evening.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Members and Associates may have tickets for themselves on payment of the nominal charge of one shilling each, and for their friends at the rate of two shillings each.

It is respectfully requested that Members and Associates will make application for tickets, accompanied by remittances, not later than October 1st, to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

In accordance with No. XV. of the Articles of Association, the subscriptions of Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken as for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1907.

THOUGHT CONTROL AND DIRECTION.

One of the greatest benefits of the 'New Thought' movement (of which, by the way, we hear less just now than formerly) is the fact that it emphasises the power which men possess to control and direct their thoughts and in that way demonstrate the supremacy of spirit, and its ability, through thought influence, to work out its own salvation.

Instead of encouraging dependence upon outside influences and agencies it stimulates the student to call upon the interior potencies of his being and govern his own thoughts and feelings. By this self-regulation he obtains mastery over his body and his moods, and becomes confident instead of appealing; optimistic instead of apprehensive; powerful instead of yielding; happy and calm instead of irritable and wayward, and, instead of waiting to be lifted, or calling for help, he struggles bravely out of his slough of despondency and up and above his old limitations. This is not, and cannot be, accomplished all at once, but, by preserving the right mental attitude, a habit of thought is formed which ultimately leads to success.

This recognition of the power of the mind, or spirit, for self-expression and self-realisation leads to self-reliance and to the knowledge that the spirit self is the centre of power. All progress, all attainment, results from this awakening of the spirit, which, facing outwards from the divine centre of its own consciousness, grows confident of its ability to rightly interpret its environment, and to execute its own purposes. A writer on this subject says:—

'Any state of mind, prolonged indefinitely, will become a permanent condition externalised. Therefore hold in your mind the qualities you wish to develop, and in time you will see them begin to appear. Think of yourself as serene, unruffled, graceful, and happy, and you will be so. The seeds of ideals have to be planted in the sub-conscious thought. Then nurture them by more thought and activity and wait patiently for them to come up. Any quality of being can be developed that the conscious mind can conceive as desirable.'

'Control of the mind is the solution of all the problems of life. There are no difficulties nor dangers for the higher consciousness and the finer forces.'

Some day men will cease to drift and learn to direct their own course; then there will be fewer wrecks on the stream of life, and each one will realise that the divinest thing we can do for ourselves and the world is to be always idealising ourselves, seeing the divine and eternal which is our true selves. This is the way by which we grow. This is the way by which we measure greatnesses with God.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th, 1906.

EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assistant Editors ... E. W. WALLIS and J. B. SHIPLEY.

Light,

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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IS RELIGION VANISHING?

'The Daily Express' people have sent us a huge sheet containing letters on the question, 'Are we becoming less religious?' Holding as we do that true Religion is true Spiritualism, we have examined these letters from influential public men with some care. The discussion was started by a serious-minded writer who begins by saying:—

I have lately returned from a ten years' residence in one of our colonies, and naturally enough I find that a great many changes have taken place in the Old Country. I have been greatly impressed by many things that have occurred during my absence—the growing luxury, the widespread gambling, the increased strain of life, the broadened gap between the rich and the poor, the universal hurry, and the almost ferocious competition; but most of all have I been impressed by the extraordinary growth of disregard for those religious considerations which, in my youth, counted for so much in English life, and I have found myself asking the question again and again—Is England becoming less religious?

He specifies the greatly diminished attendance upon public worship, the equally great increase of Sunday pleasure-seeking, the decline of the practice of family prayers, the prevailing indifference to religious beliefs, and the extraordinary development of the critical, sceptical spirit, and concludes with a moan in answer to the question he asked.

The writers that follow, on the whole, agree with him, Archdeacon Wilberforce standing almost alone as an optimist, with his opinion that 'a marked characteristic of the age is a genuine hunger for a high, noble and rational conception of the Infinite Originator, called God,' and that 'side by side with this spiritual hunger, there is a strenuous and ever-increasing activity on the part of the wealthier classes to ameliorate the condition of those less well off than themselves which has never been equalled in any previous generation. I deny,' he says, 'that true Christianity is declining.'

Bishop Wilkinson, like most of the clerical persons who write on the subject, brings 'God' into the controversy quite in the old Jewish style, as 'the God of Battles' with 'His right hand and His arm': and he tells us that 'one turn of God's hand against us, and we sink into a despised and ruined nation.' He writes a terribly long letter, threatening us with numerous calamities, from ruined industries to the coming of the German fleet. He rolls out long

sentences about honouring and despising God, but does not exactly tell us what is the matter, though he does reprove England for its foolish boastings, 'as if we were the favourites of Heaven,' its conceited sense of security, and its betting, gambling, fraud, intemperance, immorality, disobedience to parents, and selfish luxury. 'Father Vaughan's denunciations,' he says, 'have not been one whit too strong.'

The Bishop of Bathurst, writing from South Hampstead, says that things are better in London than in Sydney, 'in relation to church attendance and observance of the Lord's Day.' 'Still, England in ten years is much richer, and religion does not gain by the increase of wealth':—a shrewd remark. The Primate of New Zealand contents himself with three lines, driving home the conclusion of his Bathurst brother: 'It is the old question of increased wealth giving increased opportunity and inclination to all sensual gratifications.' The Dean of Ripon, always a little less clerical than the rest of the clergy, finds it difficult to answer the question. 'We are in an age of transition,' he says, 'and such ages are always accompanied by certain undesirable movements.' Luther complained that the Reformation broke up all fixed ideas of doctrine and conduct. What is really wanted is a firmer centering upon personal responsibility both for thought and life. He does not believe in any permanent retrogression. 'We need not be afraid. Some things will be shaken; but the great verities and principles of life will stand fast. We shall inevitably think less of ordinances and of external authority; but the Gospel begins not with rules, but with personal faith, and works out, as seen in the last chapters of the Revelation, not into a system, but into a society inwrought by the Divine Spirit.' The Archdeacon of Lewes believes that 'excitement, devotion to worldly pleasure, unbridled self-indulgence, have become characteristics, recently more than ever, of the age we live in,' and he suggests, as the one remedy, the keeping of the Friday Fast, 'through the grace of God the Holy Spirit, the best preparation for, at once, our Sunday worship, and for enabling us to rise, yet more and more each week, into newness of life.' Canon Tetley laments that 'the spirit of materialism is everywhere about us,' and says that 'the circumstances of the day have combined alike to bring tangible gain within the reach of men, and to lend an artificial and a false value to it'; but he also hopes for better things 'when the existing miserable madness has passed.'

The one clear, strong and helpful letter, however, is one by Sir A. Conan Doyle. It is in perfect harmony with our own repeated deliverances on this subject, and we are confident that only by getting right clean and clear out of the old dogmatic ruts can any useful word be spoken on this subject. Let Spiritualists bravely and joyfully face it! We want the broader view, broader than any creed or book or priest can give. In a word, we want a Religion for Humanity. Conan Doyle goes straight to the mark when he says:—

The true tests of progress in true religion are (1) Is there a kinder and broader view of such subjects, enabling all men of all creeds to live in amity and charity? (2) Are the criminal statistics better? (3) Are the drink returns better, showing that man is acquiring greater animal self-control? (4) Are the illegitimacy returns better, showing the same thing? (5) Is there more reading, more demand for lectures, more interest in science, showing that the mind is gaining upon the body? (6) Are the savings bank returns better, showing thrift and self-denial? (7) Are the trade returns better, showing greater industry and efficiency? (8) Are there more charitable institutions, and does man show more clearly his sense of duty towards the lower animals?

Such practical tests as these, which do actually for the most part show progress, are worth more than the ritual observances which may or may not go with a good life.

Religion up to this very day has been identified with obligatory ceremonials and binding beliefs, usually attended by persecutions here and threats of further eternal persecutions hereafter. All sects, but four, says Conan Doyle, are chargeable with the 'blood-guiltiness' of persecution,—the four exceptions are the original Buddhists, the Quakers, the Unitarians, and the Agnostics. 'And what has been the root cause of it all? Saying you believe what the mind cannot grasp, and what your free reason would frequently reject.'

We do not condemn those who are still content with the old enclosures and the narrow view; and they must bear with us, if they cannot be grateful to us, when we ascend 'the hill of the Lord,' and look around and beyond. 'If,' as Conan Doyle says, 'the Catholic finds the Pope, or the Anglican the bishop, or the Nonconformist the minister a help upon his path, then in every case it is a good thing—a splendid thing—if it causes that man to be a better, more noble, human creature. Every form of belief is admirable so far as it does that.' But there is something that unites and surmounts Pope and Bishop and Minister; and that something is what lies at the heart of Spiritualism—the solidarity of the Human Race in the unity of the all-embracing Spirit. For this we stand.

A SPIRIT SISTER ANSWERS PRAYER.

The 'New York World' told a remarkable story recently of how Mrs. Johnson, a deserted woman, discovered in a dream the whereabouts of her missing husband. She is reported to have said:—

'For many years my husband and I had lived an ideal life. We were very happy and contented.

'I had no decisive answer to my prayer for some months. I would tell my dreams to some of my more intimate friends, but few believed very much in them. One night I was feeling particularly weak, weary and unhappy, and before going to bed I asked for enlightenment and a special blessing. I was rewarded for all my suffering. There appeared to me an immense white cloud which descended upon me, and in one corner was a letter. Soon this was withdrawn, and in its stead came the spirit of my dear, dead sister. Then I seemed to hear something about a telephone and Crawfordsville, and I saw a vision of my husband with a policeman and a woman. That vision came in answer to my prayer and led me to my husband.'

Mrs. Johnson, who lived in Indianapolis, telephoned to the police marshal at 'Crawfordsville,' with the result that the latter discovered that Mr. Johnson, under the name of 'Schmidt,' had married in that town and afterwards removed to Lafayette, a larger city about twenty-five miles away. Mrs. Johnson travelled to Crawfordsville and thence, accompanied by the city marshal, to Lafayette. When Mr. Johnson was confronted with his first wife he hung his head in shame, and when he saw his second wife he pleaded guilty and asked to be dealt with at once, and within twenty-four hours was on his way to prison under sentence for a term of years for bigamy. In spite of this result Mrs. Johnson expresses her belief that, 'somehow, everything will come out all right in the end.' She says: 'After all, my faith in the efficacy of prayer has only been strengthened by this trial, and I will still go on praying that some day he will be restored to me.'

BEAUTY.—'The world is beautiful by divine right. It is beautiful to make you beautiful. Beauty is the Divine Presence here to bless you.'—'The Grail.'

MEMORIES OF PAST LIVES.—To a discussion in the 'Daily Mail' on 'Have we Lived Before?' Mr. Vincent N. Turvey, of Bournemouth, contributes the following: 'To cite my own experience, I used to "remember" having been 8,000 years ago a Persian magician, 5,000 years ago an Egyptian seer, and 100 years back a Delaware Indian. But when I became a clairvoyant I saw those previous selves as actual living personalities, and I now know them to be, not my remembrances, but my spirit guides. I say I know, because eight other clairvoyants have testified to their presence with me.'

THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT.

Not long since a writer in a religious journal made a strong 'plea for sects,' and doubtless while authority is wielded by ecclesiastical bodies, it will still be necessary to protest on behalf of private judgment and the liberty of conscience; but surely there is a better way than the multiplication of 'little Bethels,' and the formation of organisations which divide men into 'folds,' 'camps,' 'schools,' and 'isms.' Surely the true genius of religion is towards unity, not separation! The new spirit of the age is moving men to seek for a common standing ground for faith. We are realising that there can be no monopoly of truth, and that where all are equally earnest and sincere in their desires it is worse than folly for one man, or body of men, to denounce another because certain conclusions are not accepted as final.

There can be no doubt that the rivalry of the sects has been detrimental to true religion, and the hostility displayed by sectarians towards each other has injured the cause of religion in the eyes of impartial onlookers who, instead of finding co-operation for the education of the young, and the reformation of mankind, have witnessed a struggle for the maintenance of authority and vested interests—a struggle which is as unedifying as it has been unspiritual. Theological uniformity is not, and never will be, possible of achievement; but theology and religion are two distinct things and should be so regarded. Religion is an attitude of the spirit. Theology is called a science—but it cannot be so in the same sense as the physical sciences, for it consists of statements by men which simply embody their thoughts about God and religion. If the truths of religion were like the facts of science and could be as clearly proved as a problem in Euclid there would be some excuse for dogmatism and intolerance, but since absolute truth has yet to be discovered men must, since they occupy different standpoints, see the truth in different ways; and all opinions honestly held are entitled to respect.

There is in America a society called 'The New York State Conference of Religion.' It was organised in 1899 by ministers and laymen of twelve different denominations. Its affirmations are as follows:—

'Agreeing that individual beliefs should be loyally held and frankly maintained, but also that religion unites many whom theology divides, it affirms the unity of the religious spirit in the differing religious organisations, the supremacy of character and service as the witnesses of that spirit, and the obligation resting on all men of religious spirit to co-operate for social salvation. Its motto is, "*Religions are many, religion is one.*" The great need of the hour is a strenuous spiritual morality, a quickening of the social conscience, a purification of principle and conduct in industrial, financial and political life, a renaissance of devotion to the moral ideals of the religion that is pure and undefiled. Believing that all true seekers after God are supremely intent on the righteousness in personal and social life that God requires as the most acceptable worship, the conference aims to draw together religious men of every creed in associated effort for this common and fundamental interest.'

This is splendid! Every effort in the direction of a larger hospitality toward those who differ from us in religious opinion, and to bring about unity and fellowship for practical helpfulness, is worthy of support and should be recognised and encouraged by all progressive thinkers; including Spiritualists, of course.

The Rev. Dr. R. Heber Newton gave an Address before this 'Conference of Religion,' on November 13th last, on the 'Limits of Religious Fellowship,' in which he made a strong plea for the fellowship of the spirit, and, after referring to the fact that there are no fewer than 350 sects in Christendom, of which, in each case, a creed or an institution is the foundation, he claimed that:—

'The very fact of the existence of the sect implies that there is something which is really regarded as more important than our "common Christianity," viz., our peculiar and private Christianity. It is all very well to love, and hope, and believe, but the prime thing is to observe our ordinance, to maintain

our dogma. The creed, the institution, becomes unconsciously the dominant factor of our peculiar brand of Christianity.'

The real, essential thing, apart from all minor differences, in reference to religion, Dr. Newton regarded as 'the life of the spirit,' and he said :—

'Wherever I find a man living the Golden Rule, walking in the Spirit, loving God and loving man, dealing justly, showing mercy and walking humbly before God, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, keeping himself unspotted from the world; wherever I find a man thus living ethically and spiritually, there I find a religious man, there I recognise the presence of religion, and there I feel the bonds of a man, the including limits of religious fellowship.'

After some striking testimony to the pure and loving spirit and service of Nicholas Herman, of Lorraine, afterwards known as 'Brother Lawrence,' and also of a 'saint of God,' known in his own land as 'Paramahansa Srimat Ramakrishna,' Dr. Newton continued :—

'Here, then, we have the barefooted Carmelite of the Catholic Church and the ascetic Yogi of the Hindu forest, at equally opposite extremes from us, each living essential religion, the religion which is the life of the spirit. The limits of religious fellowship must include them, must it not?'

To this question we should answer, emphatically, 'Yes!' In our opinion, whatever prevents us from co-operating with others for the benefit of mankind should be classed as heresy and must be eliminated before we are entitled to call ourselves religious. As the late Rev. George H. Hepworth said :—

'While there are so many wrongs to be righted, it is a pity to insist on theological uniformity as a matter of prime importance. The man who spends his life in doing simple acts of goodness is worth more on earth and in heaven than he who thinks we cannot be saved unless we believe just as he does. There is very little variety of opinion as to what we ought to do, but a large variety as to what we ought to think. No one can fail to receive the approval of the Lord who does what is right because it is right, and hates the wrong because it is wrong. He must needs go to heaven at last, since there is no other place in the universe for him.'

By a strange coincidence, almost simultaneously with the meeting of the Conference, at Rochester, at which Dr. Newton spoke, a similar gathering was held in New York City to consider the possibility of federating the churches for practical work for religion—but the latter body deliberately declined to include representatives of Unitarianism. Dr. Newton said in reference to this action :—

'They still count the notes of orthodoxy as of greater moment than the fruits of the spirit. What men think about Christ is more important to them than what Christ thought about man. And so the door of that great conference was, with regretful courtesy, shut in the face of such Christian men as Edward Everett Hale, John D. Long and Samuel Eliot. Is not this lamentable action of that conference a recrudescence of a lower conception of religion than that which the Christ taught and lived?'

To those who hesitate to accept the idea that the limits of religious fellowship must include all who display the true spirit, Dr. Newton said :—

'Recall, I pray you, that noble article of the oldest and simplest of Christian creeds. "I believe in . . . the communion of saints," the spiritual fellowship of holy souls. And this without a single qualifying word in the creed to limit this communion by any boundaries, even of Christianity itself? And then hearken to the fine exposition of this belief given in the Sarum Manual, one of the mediæval progenitors of the offices of the Prayer Book. In the office for the Visitation of the Sick, the parish priest is directed thus to examine the sick man: "Dearest Brother, dost thou believe . . . in the Communion of Saints; that is, that all men who live in charity are partakers of all the gifts of grace which are dispensed in the church, and that all who are in fellowship with the just here in the life of grace are in fellowship with them in glory?"'

'We may need our creeds and institutions a long while yet, but let these swathing-bands of the infant soul be elastic. Let them stretch as the life swells within the soul, the life which is the love of God and the love of man; stretch until the miracle shall be accomplished, and those whom our intellects judge to stand outside the limits of religious fellowship the heart sees to be within the bands of a man. Oh! the shame and the sin of

the waste of men and money over our petty, parochial pieties, our devotion to creeds and institutions, our slavery to sects and churches, our enthusiasm over the things which only separate us; while above us all, in our pitiful blindness, soba the great heart of the Christ: "That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."'

THE ARENA OF THE GODS.

We stand in close contact with the Unseen, and fight out the battle of life in the arena of the gods. 'Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses' we are never alone, our every act being seen by those in the realm of the Unseen and the spiritual. Does it not, therefore, behoove us to walk circumspectly through the devious ways of this material sphere, and learn patiently the lessons the gods have set before us? Let us open wide the windows of our souls and behold the glory from on high, and listen to those angel voices which breathe from the Unseen kindly words of encouragement and good cheer. 'Hope on! hope ever,' they gently say; 'death and despair are not for man; even now you may stand in the vestibule of life where reign joy and peace eternal.'

Even now 'the veil is rending and the voices of the day are heard across the voices of the dark.' We enter this life—the arena of the gods—in darkness and alone, and throughout our pilgrimage we see but 'through a glass darkly,' and at times complete darkness enshrouds the way; then we cry aloud in our hopelessness and despair to the Great Creator of all things for help and guidance. We feel completely forsaken and weary, surrounded by dangers and difficulties, lost amid mists of illusion, with no glimpse of the boundary of the arena, and the surrounding gods, who seem to mock us in our struggles for light and freedom. Then say we, 'There are no gods; there's nothing beyond this world! Why continue the toilsome fight when there will be no reward from the gods who no longer exist? Let us eat, drink, and be sinful, for to-morrow we enter oblivion. Who can say we are immortal when there is no proof?'

Then, at times, the mists clear away, and behold the gods are still on their thrones around the lofty walls of the arena—silent, grave, and watchful—mighty arbitrators in the battle of life, and also we see that we are not alone; perchance 'the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still' may penetrate the barrier of the mystic Unseen, and prove to us that those we had loved and lost in the transition of death are still able to see, and be in touch with, those they left behind on this material plane.

With these indications of a world and life beyond, we behold the struggle in the arena in a new light, and take up with renewed zest and earnestness the duties which lie before us. Life is now coloured with roseate hues and is full of purpose and significance. No longer are we under the delusion that we are struggling aimlessly in darkness and confusion. No longer do we grope our way with faltering steps and heavy hearts, for the light has come, and the spiritual and eternal have eclipsed the material and temporal. We dwell now and forever in the midst of the infinite—spiritual beings in a spiritual world—incarnated for the time being in machines of clay, so that we may undergo the discipline and probationary course necessary for our evolution and welfare; and so, when in due time we have finished the good fight, we cast off our armour and ascend from the arena to the judgment seats of the gods to receive the rewards of merit, or otherwise, according to our natures and characters, for it is written, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.'

REGINALD B. SPAN.

THE 'CHESTER PLAYS.'—We are informed that an arrangement is being made for the English Drama Society to revive the cycle of Mysteries known as the 'Chester Plays.' The Council of the Chester Archaeological Society has been constituted a committee with a view of furthering the reproductions, and it is hoped that the representations will take place at Whitsuntide, 1907.

LEARNING THE TRUTH THROUGH ERROR.

'To err is human,' is an adage the truth of which is universally admitted; but we are not all of us ready to refrain from harsh judgments and condemnations of our fellows; we have yet to learn how to practise that forgiveness which is divine. Yet, character is formed as the result of errors, efforts and conquests, and it seems to be the only way in which we can be trained. Mr. Charles Brodie Patterson has well said:—

'It is as much, perhaps, by our errors, our wanderings and our stumbling as by any other sign posts, that we learn at last the way of truth; to discriminate between things and the semblance of things, between true aspiration and the morbid cravings of mental delirium.

"'Though there's many a road and many an inn,
And room to roam—there's only one home
For all the world to win."

'And perhaps for one's own encouragement (for the higher self needs often to have patience with the lower) as well as the encouragement of helpful sympathy with one's fellows, it is good to recall again and again that "inertia is potential momentum"—just so heavy and hard as the stone is to move, so much the farther and faster does it go, once it is started. The same law holds throughout every plane. The soul that is slow to release its hold on the lesser, the immature, the fleeting, will be in like measure firm of grasp on the higher things—once they take their rightful place in substitution for the others. The soul to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. One of the most merciful provisions is that "the way of the transgressor is hard." By the inexorable law of the universe that is at once perfect justice and tenderest love, the lessons learned through error are yet the lessons of truth. He who steals, and lies and murders, nevertheless at last inevitably learns thereby the all-underlying eternal truths of honesty and verity of life.

'We can help most swiftly and most surely those struggling through these rougher ways, not by criticism or condemnation or even preachment, but by being ourselves what we would have them be.

"'Be noble, and the nobleness that lies
In others, sleeping still but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

'In true nobility of soul there is no trace of self-righteousness:—

"'The best men, doing their best,
Know, peradventure, least of what they do;
Men usefulest in the world are simply used."

'Patience and an all-encompassing love are the staff and script we need for life's journey. None can defraud us, nor malign us, nor injure us. Let us to whom is vouchsafed this sure knowledge take heed that we leave no stumbling block, no shadow of equivocal action, in the pathway of another.'

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in one of her admirable little poems, entitled 'Mistakes,' embodies the same thought in her usual hopeful and stimulating fashion. She says:—

'God sent us here to make mistakes,
To strive, and fail, and rebegin;
To taste the tempting fruit of sin
And find what bitter food it makes;

'To miss the path and go astray,
To wander blindly in the night,
But searching, praying for the light
Until at last we find the way.

'And looking back across the past,
We know we needed all the strain,
Of fear, and doubt, and strife, and pain,
To make us value peace at last.

'Who fails, finds later triumphs sweet,
Who stumbles once, walks then with care,
And knows the place to cry Beware!
To other unaccustomed feet.

'Through strife, the slumbering soul awakes;
We learn on error's troubled route
The truths we could not prize without,
The sorrow of our sad mistakes.'

MYSTERIOUS RECOVERY OF A LOST KEEPSAKE.

The 'New York Herald' recently printed a remarkable story of the mysterious recovery of a lost keepsake, a silver match-box. From this account we learn that Mr. Edgar O. Achorn, a Boston attorney, and the late Dr. S. M. Burnett, of Washington (first husband of Frances Hodgson Burnett and father of the original 'Little Lord Fauntleroy'), were lifelong friends, their companionship being broken only by the doctor's death last January.

Dr. Burnett had read much in regard to Eastern religions and took a deep interest in such subjects from a philosophical standpoint, even going so far as to proclaim himself to his intimate friends a Buddhist, while Mr. Achorn spent much time in research into Scandinavian folk-lore and has given to the literary world an intimate study of Ibsen. Thus kindred tastes and sympathies led to a friendship surpassing ordinary comradeship, and Dr. Burnett gave Mr. Achorn a silver match-box to be a constant daily reminder of their friendship. This match-box Mr. Achorn was unfortunate enough to lose in December last, at Asheville, North Carolina, and he was much chagrined that, after hunting for it and searching his clothes, he failed to recover the treasured souvenir. On the journey back to Boston he stopped at Washington, on December 29th last, to visit the doctor and was pained to have to tell him of the loss of his much valued gift. On December 31st the two friends parted for the last time, as soon after Mr. Achorn's arrival in Boston he received news of his dear friend's death. Dr. Burnett thus passed to spirit life knowing of his friend's loss; a loss that had been intensified by the doctor's transition. Inasmuch as these two had discussed the question of continued existence, and Dr. Burnett was convinced of its truth, it may naturally be assumed that Dr. Burnett, when on the other side, would seek to express himself to his friend if he found the means of communication, and in this connection the unusual incident of the lost match-box, of which he was aware before he passed over, was of much psychic importance.

In February last, Mr. Achorn sailed from New York for a Mediterranean cruise on the steamer 'Arabic.' In the party there was no one else who had been at the house party at Asheville. Having reached Luxor, Mr. Achorn was sitting with some friends in the magnificent hotel gardens when the attention of the group was attracted to an approaching Oriental, who was wearing a long robe and a turban. As he drew near, the man, who was taken to be a Hindoo, centred his gaze on Mr. Achorn, extended his right hand and, as he did so, declared in a low voice: 'This is your match-box!' Taken completely unawares, Mr. Achorn clutched the match-box from the stranger's hand and turned, muttering inarticulate words of surprise. He turned again to say: 'Where did you get it?' but the Hindoo had disappeared as quickly as he came. Who he was or whence he came no one knew and no investigation disclosed, but he was no apparition, for others in the garden had seen the stranger. Mr. Achorn identified the match-box by a dent in the side and by the fact that the lid inside was fire blackened. A conjecture that Mr. Achorn did not lose the match-box but misplaced it and himself carried it to Egypt in some one of his pockets, is said to be 'absolutely impossible,' as every article of clothing had been rigorously searched again and again. He is said to wonder, as he contemplates his doubly valued souvenir: 'Can it be that our dead friends preserve an interest in our worldly distresses and have power to perform physical wonders?'

THE PERMANENCE OF SOUL.—Louis Elbe, author of a recent book on 'The Future Life,' says: 'The soul appears to be a force, and from this very fact it must be immortal. In nature no force is created, and none lost; it is only transformed and preserved. Therefore the soul must be permanent like other forces.'—'Banner of Light.'

SELF-REFORM.—'Many parents wonder at the evil in their children, and could possibly trace it to pre-natal causes as well as to post-natal influences. We try to whip the devil out of our children, instead of whipping the evil out of ourselves before the child is conceived.'—G. W. KATES, in 'Banner of Light.'

SUGGESTION PRACTICALLY EMPLOYED.

So much has been said of late years regarding the dangers of hypnotism that the readers of 'LIGHT' will doubtless be interested in the following account, published by 'Popular Science Siftings' (and reproduced by the 'Psycho-Therapeutic Journal'), of a demonstration, given to several medical men by Dr. John D. Quackenbos, Professor in Columbia University, of his method of employing hypnotism as a curative agent. 'Popular Science Siftings' says:—

'The patient, a handsome young girl, lay in an "induced" sleep on a low couch in his consulting-room. The blinds were so drawn as to throw a soft light upon doctor and patient. He leaned over, lightly touching her brow with the left hand, while with his right he made passes over the girl's left side as if to sweep away some trouble from her.

'Dr. Quackenbos said to her: "Laura, you are going to have a peaceful, tranquil, refreshing sleep. You will wake from it refreshed and happy. The past will be hidden by a curtain of forgetfulness. From this time on, you will be glad, smiling, joyful.

"All this notion that you have hair on your lip, hair on your chin, and hair on your arms, Laura, will pass away, like a bad dream. There is nothing of the kind; it's nonsense. You have a little down on your arms, but no more than any brunette may expect to have. But as for your having hair on your face, one would need a microscope to see it. Nobody is paying attention to it. There is nothing in this notion of yours that people are looking at you and saying there is hair on your face and hair on your arms. You will be ashamed of yourself that you have given way to this nonsense, that you have embittered your own life and troubled the life of your father and mother for more than a year. Now, you shall sleep. When I wake you, turn your back upon all that nonsense and be yourself."

'A half-hour later the girl was awakened. She smiled, and looked bright and serenely confident. She had, as Dr. Quackenbos's monologue indicated, been oppressed by a morbid self-consciousness caused by the almost invisible dark down that shows on the skin of many women of dark complexion.

'The next patient was one of two girls whom a schoolmistress had brought to him. These girls at times were not amenable to the discipline of the institution. The girl lay on the couch, wide awake and resisting Dr. Quackenbos's efforts to obtain control of her. He spoke for a long time in the most soothing of voices, telling her that she was in the hands of a sincere friend who was trying not so much to do anything for her as to help her do something for herself.

'The listener's eyelids grew heavy as the hypnotist healer's words rippled on. Gradually the patient's apprehensions faded away; the left arm lay limp above her head, where she had flung it in a restless movement. Now the operator's talk ran on in suave persuasion. "We all have our tasks to do and are the better for it," ran the soft harangue into the dreamer's ear: "You will be the better and happier for doing yours." The dreamer smiled and lay peaceful and quiet. When she appeared an hour later she talked with some of the women like the most docile and sweetest tempered of girls.

'A third patient had been an epileptic since receiving a blow on the back of her head. An operation on the skull had removed the primary cause of the fits, but the fits were recurrent. Dr. Quackenbos by "suggestive treatment," under hypnotic influence, had reduced these, both as to frequency and intensity. On the way to his consulting-room she had had one very slight attack.

"Ethel," he said, "you are much better, you are going to make yourself entirely well by overcoming these sick spells. You will come to me at the end of next week and tell me that you have had hardly any of them, perhaps none at all. After that you are going to the country for the summer, to have a good time. When you feel one of these sick feelings coming on, when you feel dizzy, you will sit down on the grass until it has passed by. You will have no fear of falling on the pavement." A complete cure was made in this case.'

THE PURPOSE OF KNOWLEDGE.—'The desire of knowledge for the satisfaction of knowing, and the desire of it for the purpose of living it, are as far separated as the east is from the west, as earth from heaven, and the results as unlike.'—MABEL GIFFORD, in 'The Banner of Light.'

'BE CHEERFUL: it is the only happy life. The times may be hard; it will make them no easier to wear a sad countenance. It is the sunshine, not the cloud, that makes the flowers. There is always that around us which should fill the heart with warmth.'—'The Messenger.'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'The Séance with Mr. Lees.'

SIR,—In my former letter ('LIGHT,' p. 395) I preferred to treat Mr. B. Stevens as an earnest inquirer in search of an explanation, charitably waiving certain doubts pointing in another direction. His second epistle will not allow me—retaining my self-respect—to regard him as anything more than a psychical Don Quixote on an erratic tilting expedition.

Let me justify my conclusions. He demands verbal and logical precision from others, while in his first letter he speaks of my control as being 'ignorant of the demonstration of immortality afforded by the resurrection of Samuel to King Saul and the woman of Endor.' What does he mean by 'resurrection' here? If he will take the trouble to read the narrative he will see that the appearance of Samuel was only clairvoyantly to the woman, and gives no evidence that Saul saw the prophet at all. Another instance of his loose use of words occurs in his next sentence: 'And what of Christ's own demonstration before his resurrection, of immortality, exemplified in his argument "God is the God of the living, not of the dead, for all live unto Him"?' In his logic 'demonstration' and 'assertion' are evidently convertible terms. But perhaps his most ludicrous blunder is his objection to the use of the term 'Old Dispensation.' He has yet to learn of the existence of a Jewish and Christian Dispensation, of an Old and New Testament or Covenant, or that Christ, in reference to the change the one would make in relation to the other, said: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, swear not at all.' This would seem to indicate that the ignorance lies with your correspondent and not with Christ as to the Old Dispensation, and in relation to this, is there not also a remote possibility that he does not yet know everything about what occurred at the moment of the resurrection, or, at least, may we not be permitted to doubt whether his deductions are infallible?

One other point, and I have nothing further to say to Mr. Stevens, and this in reference to his deductions. He closes his second letter with: 'I understand that Mr. Lees was in a trance. How, then, is he able to say that "LIGHT's" report was a splendid abstract of the proceedings, or to know what was said at the séance at all?' Poor logician! Has he never heard of such a thing as conscious trance, or has it never occurred to him that I have recourse to my controls on my own account? When I read such an inquiry I can well understand how to such an unenlightened mind there would be nothing awesome at the moment of the resurrection of Jesus.—Yours, &c.,

Ilfracombe.

ROBERT JAMES LEES.

September 1st, 1906.

'Automatic Writing in Latin.'

SIR,—'Vivitur parvo bene ubi gratuitum' means: 'One can live well cheaply where things are to be had for nothing.' The last sentence is clipped tersely as is often the case in proverbs.

FREDERIC THURSTAN, M.A.

Mr. Ernest Marklew.

SIR,—Whilst I was in the company of Mr. Ernest Marklew, of Burnley, to-day (September 1st), he was arrested and marched off to Preston Gaol to undergo a sentence of fourteen days passed on him by the Nelson (Lancs.) magistrates, on May 27th last, for obstruction; the said offence being committed whilst Mr. Marklew was speaking on behalf of the Nelson Social Democratic Federation, on Socialism. Mr. Marklew asked me to inform his friends and those societies which have engaged him for the next two weeks, to bear with him, and excuse his absence during that time, as, instead of spending two weeks on the sands at Blackpool, he will be having his holiday at Preston, in gaol. I think all Spiritualists will extend to him their sympathy. Mr. Marklew is undoubtedly one of our young stalwarts in the cause, ever in the forefront where hard work is required. I thought of his many friends in the country when I saw him hauled off to gaol like a common criminal to-day, for having boldly stood up for liberty, the same liberty which the Salvation Army and other religious bodies enjoy, and wondered with what feelings the news would be received by them.—Yours, &c.,

Bradford.

THOMAS BAKER.

Herbert Spencer and Work.

SIR,—In 'LIGHT' of August 25th you print the following remarks of the late Herbert Spencer concerning the relation of life and work: "Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work," is a Scriptural injunction which, in the most unmistakable way, implies that work is the end and life the means. But the whole thing is a superstition. Life is not for work, but work is for life.

Now, in the first place, the words 'Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work,' are not, as they stand, a 'Scriptural injunction' at all; they are merely a misquotation of St. John, chapter ix., verse 4; 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.' The qualifying force of the words 'the works of Him that sent Me' is, surely, significant. The passage is, in no sense, a call to unceasing and indiscriminate toil; but rather, a recognition by Christ of the obligation laid upon Him by His divine mission.

And, secondly, while it is true to say that Holy Scripture teaches that 'life is the means,' it is misleading to imply that it teaches that 'work is the end'; using the word 'work,' as Herbert Spencer uses it, in the sense of 'mere toil.'

'Work for work's sake' does not (so far as we know) meet with divine approval; but work for our fellow-workers' sake undoubtedly does. And it is this kind of work which is, in a far higher sense than that implied by Herbert Spencer, 'work for life,' inasmuch as it teaches the one invaluable life-lesson, the knowledge of Him Who has called us to work for Him.

This lesson is being patiently learnt by many a worker, in whose monotonous daily life there is no leisure 'for relaxation, for pleasure, for culture, for æsthetic gratification, for travels, for games,' things which, according to Herbert Spencer, are so all-important.—Yours, &c.,

Alderton Vicarage.

C. E. HUTCHINSON.

'Commercial Morality.'

SIR,—Your correspondent 'J. H.' writing in 'LIGHT,' of August 25th, calls in question the Rev. Minot J. Savage's statement that 'the world was never so truth-telling as it is to-day; nothing like it ever existed in the past; the commercial life of the world compels truth,' &c., and he declares that his experience as a man engaged in commerce 'proves that almost our entire modern system of business is founded on lies and deceit' and that 'between man and man there is no truth in business.' This is very sweeping and very sad, and while I do not wish to call in question 'J. H.'s veracity I respectfully submit that when he says there is 'no truth in business between man and man' he unwarrantably condemns every man connected with a business life.

Mr. Savage says commercial life compels truth to an extent such as never existed in the past, and in saying this he means, I take it, that there is more honesty and honour in business to-day than in the past. The fact is wrong-doing is pilloried and dishonesty exposed more fully and mercilessly than it used to be in the old days, and so we hear more about it than formerly; but that fact only shows that we are more exacting and that our standard is higher. If honesty were as rare as 'J. H.' would have us believe, then, instead of publishing and condemning fraud and deceit because they are exceptional—taking the whole community into consideration—we should publish, and extol, the dealings of the exceptional honest man! Surely 'J. H.' must see that a great deal of the business of the world is done on faith; and that that faith is justified in the main. Banks and large businesses simply *have* to be honestly conducted. The crafty, unscrupulous, and dishonourable persons who resort to tricks, adulteration, and fraud may succeed for a time, but they do so only by imitating the truth as closely as possible, for they know that they must at least *appear* to be honest; and that in itself is a tribute to the average honesty and fair-dealing of business men. Mr. Savage thinks we are growing better, erecting higher standards and exacting—or compelling—truth by our sterner and more business-like methods. While I admit and deplore the fact that competition has led to the introduction of sharp 'cutting' and shady practices, still I think that Mr. Savage is right, and that the business of the world could not possibly go on if, on the whole, it was not mainly honest, otherwise there would be no possibility of putting trust in anyone; and are we to believe that there are no trustworthy business men, no faithful employés, no fair-dealing traders, no honest manufacturers? 'J. H.' must not judge all men nor all businesses by the standard of the few with whom he has been unfortunately associated, and when he says that 'almost our entire modern system of business is founded on lies and deceit' he is, I think, going beyond the facts, at any rate as far as the facts are known to—Yours, &c.,

(OBSERVER.)

Advice Wanted.

SIR,—I should esteem it a favour if you or any of your readers will advise us how to act in the following circumstances in order to obtain the full development of the medium, and will also tell us the best phase of mediumship for which he is fitted, and the probable cause of the manner in which he is influenced.

Some twelve months ago a circle of ten persons, in which both sexes were equally divided, met for investigation. We had no known medium, although all were acquainted with the ordinary phenomena, and were more or less students of the subject. We obtained, in due time, the usual clairvoyance and trance speaking from different members, and all went on in the ordinary course so long as we sat for mental development. One night, however, after the close of the ordinary meeting, we sat for a short time for table phenomena, when it was at once noticed that one of the sitters, who had hitherto shown no signs of being susceptible to spirit power, and who, perhaps, was the only sceptic in the circle, was now very much impressed, inasmuch as he was quite unable to sit still; his body was twisted from head to foot to a degree impossible to describe, and, although quite conscious, he was unable to stop or hinder for a time what appeared to be a painful experience, but which had no ill effects whatever. All the time this was going on intelligent messages were being received through the table, but our friend was obliged to sit back. The remarkable thing, however, is that, although we have been sitting for twelve months or so, we can get nothing more than these abnormal twistings and contortions, and that, while sitting in the ordinary circle, he is entirely unaffected, whereas as soon as we sit at the table, although he may be at the other end of a large room, he is affected in the manner described. It would seem, sometimes, as if the power is *drawn from the table* to him, yet the power at the table is never so strong when he is absent, and at the same time he is never affected unless we sit at the table.

—Yours, &c.,

CHAS. E. H. WANN.

7, Glebe-street, Falkirk.

Cui Bono?

SIR,—Many inquirers into Spiritualism, after becoming convinced of the reality of the manifestations, stop short and exclaim, 'Given the genuineness of supernormal phenomena, what is the good of bothering our heads about them?' Now, apart from the fact that all discovery is potentially useful, we may claim that the facts of Spiritualism and psychical research have produced in many minds a changed and enlarged conception of human personality; have bridged the gulf of death, and given us glimpses of an ascending pathway on the farther brink; a pathway contiguous with the track of our earthly pilgrimage—for, indeed, the gulf is but an illusion—but amid fairer scenes and higher hopes and aims. The change is in some sort analogous to the changed conception of the physical universe brought about by Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo and Kepler; whereby the narrow bounds of the Ptolemaic system were broken down, and the human spirit looked forth for the first time on illimitable space. Thus, or in some such wise, has our spiritual cosmogony been transformed. Formerly 'cabin'd, cribb'd and confin'd' within the narrow bounds of our threescore years and ten, we plodded along as best we might, yet withal sad at heart. Nothing but the sense of companionship saved us from utter panic and despair. There seemed to be no reason for anything; the world was not moral nor immoral, but unmoral. The heavens were as brass; alas, no help anywhere! But now all that is changed. The dread spectre, feared of all, turns out—as in Plato's thought of old—to be a 'fair and white-robed woman,' beneficent to our weary souls!

Not without use, then, are the phenomena of Spiritualism, which lead us to realise that death is a doorway 'leading from light to light, through a brief darkness,' thus indefinitely extending human existence, enlarging our conception of cosmic fact and law, enabling us to see goodness at the heart of being and making possible for us belief in an Intelligence 'of infinite Benevolence and Power.' *Cui bono?* indeed! Why, *all good!* With the good we get through the new philosophy we can afford to let all other smaller goods go. We might almost reverse our questioners' implication that our researches are no good, and say that philosophically *nothing else* is any good! But we must guard against extremes. Each soul can but accept such truth as it is prepared for, and we must not try to force our thoughts on those who as yet can see no good in them. We must not demand that our brother shall empty his pockets of his copper, if he cannot see that we can fill them with silver. And on our part, let us be ever on the look-out for the gold; for in an infinite universe we know that there is still better 'on before.'—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR HILL.

The Recent Séance with Mr. Eldred.

SIR,—During this month I have been absent from town on holiday, but have now read with surprise and interest in 'LIGHT' of August 18th 'A Recent Séance with Mr. Eldred.' It is stated that it is a short report of one of a 'few sittings under test conditions.' The conditions reported may have satisfied Mr. and Mrs. Letort and the other sitters, but they are not, in my opinion, test conditions. Notice, for instance, the dodging with the light, characteristic of Mr. Eldred's previous methods, and the statement, 'Then he withdrew into the cabinet, turned the gas a little higher up, and came out again. However, even then the light was too low to allow us to distinguish his features from our seats.' This form was assumed to be 'Arthur,' but the only observation made was, 'We all saw the tall form, entirely draped in white from head to foot. He dematerialised in the opening of the curtains, sinking down before our eyes.' I am satisfied that any trained trickster could produce the same results under such conditions, but if Mr. Eldred be the materialising medium claimed, then I assert that it is his imperative duty to endeavour to demonstrate his powers to sympathetic and experienced critical observers under mutually arranged test conditions. I am quite willing even now to form one of a circle selected by you, Mr. Editor, to investigate and report, and being anxious to do justice to Mr. Eldred I am prepared to go to Havre or Paris if he is so nervous that he will not sit on this side of the Channel.

If the results were satisfactory, I am perfectly certain that his mediumistic powers, if these exist, would, in consequence, improve. Thereafter I will guarantee to get him a situation in a commercial life, if he has not already got one, and thus render him independent of paid mediumship, which, I regret to say, is, at its best, but a precarious and very often a thankless business.—Yours, &c.,

August 30th, 1906.

A. WALLACE, M.D.

National Union Fund of Benevolence.

SIR,—Will you allow me to draw especial attention, through 'LIGHT,' to the needs of the National Union Fund of Benevolence? During August no money has been received, and the sick and poor ones in receipt of help have had to accept considerably less than the usual remittances. Should this continue, I can only promise two more payments to anyone. I trust that your readers will be generously inclined and, during September, pass on to me whatever they can spare and thus cheer the hearts of many who cannot help themselves. The following contributions were received during July: E. C., 5s.; G. H. B., 2s.; Rev. A. Rushton, 10s.; London Spiritualist Alliance, £5. Received during August, a present of curtain holders (for sale).—Yours, &c.,

JESSY GREENWOOD.

Ash Leigh, Hedden Bridge.

'An Ideal Fund.'

SIR,—Sir Oliver Lodge sets forth in the July 'Contemporary' an idea of the utmost interest and suggestiveness.

Under the title 'Squandering a Surplus,' he suggests that any surplus in the nation's finances should be employed in future in national improvements, instead of being frittered away, as is usually the case, in insignificant adjustments of taxation, of little value or benefit to anyone.

Why should not the richest country in the world go even farther than this and voluntarily tax itself for high aims and the betterment of life? Two millions a year devoted to this purpose would be comparatively a trifle that would scarcely be felt, but what incalculable good might it not accomplish!

One million might be set apart for meeting current exigencies, such as the purchase of national parks, open spaces, endowment of research, and counteracting generally the ugly, demoralising, competitive commercialism of the age; the other million might accumulate at times for more ambitious enterprises—for instance, the gradual transformation of the London slums into garden cities, and the same with our other large towns. Little imagination is required to conjure up schemes of improvement that would be of vast benefit to the people generally.

There might be appointed a permanent committee of ten of the leading men of the day; men of broad minds who can think imperially and see well into the future—it might be, perhaps, under the chairmanship of the Prince of Wales—to devise a well-thought-out scheme of action. The longer one thinks over this brilliant idea the more fascinating it becomes!

A mere day dream! some may exclaim. On the contrary, nothing is more practicable, I think; it only wants a little courage to take the first step and start it. The chief difficulty would be in deciding what reforms to place first.

Think of what might be accomplished in the physical, ethical and spiritual regeneration of the people between now and a hundred years hence, with two hundred millions carefully expended on such objects! One would hardly know the country! And after the scheme was in working order the Colonies would probably follow suit and have each its own 'Lodge Ideal Fund,' and foreign countries the same.

It is to be hoped that this idea, so promising for the world's development, will not be allowed to drop out of sight. Those interested should read Sir Oliver's article.—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

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

SOCIETY WORK.

Notices of future events which do not exceed twenty-five words may be added to reports if accompanied by six penny stamps, but all such notices which exceed twenty-five words must be inserted in our advertising columns.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday last Mr. A. Thomas gave a fine address on 'Spiritualism, Pure and Simple.' On Sunday next, Mr. Stebbens; 12th inst., Mrs. Podmore; Sunday, 16th, Mr. D. J. Davis; 23rd, Mrs. F. Roberts will name a child.

BRIGHTON.—COMPTON HALL, 17, COMPTON AVENUE.—On Sunday last the ministrations of the controls of Mrs. A. Boddington were very acceptable and well received. On Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., Mr. F. G. Clarke. Hall open on Thursdays, from 3 to 5 p.m., for inquirers.—A.C.

STRATFORD.—LOMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE, E.—On Sunday last, at our harvest festival, Mrs. Webb and Messrs. Smith and Walker gave short addresses. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., discussion; at 7 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Roberts. Thursday next, Mrs. Webster.—A.G.

HACKNEY.—SIGDON-ROAD SCHOOL, DALSTON-LANE, N.E.—On Sunday last Mrs. Effie Bathe gave a highly interesting lecture on 'Auric Colours and their Psychic Significance,' illustrated by thirty original paintings. Madame Cope kindly sang a solo. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Ronald Brailey, address and clairvoyant descriptions.—N.R.

OXFORD CIRCUS.—22, PRINCE'S-STREET.—On Sunday last Mrs. Fairclough Smith gave an interesting and helpful address upon 'Spiritual Healing,' followed by lengthy clairvoyant descriptions, all but one being recognised. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss Violet Burton on 'Holiness and the Absolute.' Please note change of time.—P.E.B.

PECKHAM.—CHEPSTOW HALL, 139, PECKHAM-ROAD.—On Sunday morning last an interesting discussion was held. In the evening Mr. Williams presided and Mr. W. Underwood gave a rousing address, and, at the after-circle, some sound advice. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Agnew Jackson. On the 16th, Nurse Graham.—L.D.

CHISWICK.—110, HIGH-ROAD, W.—On Sunday morning last Mr. Moore conducted the circle. In the evening Mrs. Podmore's address on 'Some Conceptions of God' was followed by interesting discussion. On Sunday next, at 10.45 a.m., choir; at 11.15, circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. Samuel Keyworth on 'Revelations from Spiritual Sources'.—W.T.

FULHAM.—OLVEY HALL, 26, FERNHURST-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last an address by Mr. D. J. Davis, of Canning Town, was much enjoyed. On Sunday next Mr. G. H. Bibbings, of Leicester, and on the 16th Mr. G. Taylor Gwinn, will give addresses. Inquirers are cordially invited.—M.

OLAPHAM INSTITUTE, GAUDEN-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. H. Boddington gave an eloquent and convincing discourse on questions sent up from the audience. Solos by Miss Nita Clavering and Mr. Pierce were much appreciated. On Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., Lyeoum and circle; speaker at 7 p.m., Mr. Abbott. Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., psychometry and clairvoyance. Silver collection.—H.Y.

OXFORDSHIRE ROOMS, 61, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday last Mr. J. W. Boulding's admirable and brilliant address on 'Our Temple Home' greatly pleased all present. Mr. W. T. Cooper presided, and Mrs. W. T. Cooper, R.A.M., ably officiated at the organ. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss MacCreadie will give clairvoyant descriptions. Doors open at 6.30. Silver collection.—A.J.W.

BALHAM.—19, RAMSDEN-ROAD (OPPOSITE THE PUBLIC LIBRARY).—On Sunday morning last Mr. G. Morley spoke of the difference between the teachings of the Nazarene and Christianity, and in the evening on 'Have the Faithists heard Jehovah's Voice?' Clairvoyant descriptions were given at each meeting, those in the morning being by Mrs. Bryant. On Sundays, at 11.15 a.m. and 7 p.m., and Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m., public services for Faithist teachings and clairvoyant descriptions. Questions answered.—W.E.