

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Occasionally the suggestion is made that we should start a sort of Question Bureau. There is no need to start it. We have long made known our willingness to be questioned. Answering everything is another story, but we are ready to try, and there is always the possibility of ringing up wise men and women who know pretty well everything. One way and another we can promise a hearty welcome to inquirers: nor do we restrict the range of subjects, beyond barring out legal and political matters, and personal differences.

Readers of the Bible know that puzzling questions are greatly on the increase. Everyone at all interested in theological subjects knows that everything is in, or is sliding into, the melting pot. Inquirers and even old hands know that the more we know of spirit-communion the more our problems increase. And all of us know how life brings experiences and questionings that often perplex or that at least call for a little light and sympathy.

We offer a welcome to all; and the welcome will be all the more ardent if questioners will send experiences and thoughts as well as questions. We are confident that there is a large unused wealth of experience and thought on the readers' side of 'LIGHT.' Why not make it more available? Why not use 'LIGHT' for a sort of Mutual Improvement Bureau? We offer hospitality as hosts as well as help for inquirers.

Glancing through Mr. Charles Voysey's weekly sermons, we are often deeply impressed with his intense personification of God. He is never tired of presenting Him as a seeing, hearing, intervening, personally loving Being, acutely concerned in everything that concerns Charles Voysey and everyone else.

A recent sermon on 'Special Providence' almost outdoes all his previous utterances on this subject. If we escape death in a time of peril 'we owe a debt of gratitude to the Author and Giver of life for causing an escape from a death which was, humanly speaking, inevitable.' 'Whether I am killed or rescued, it will be due alike—not to chance, never to chance—but always and only due to the ceaseless will of God Who is alone responsible for the origin of all events both in time and space.' What we call 'calamities' we ought to regard as 'sent directly by God Himself for some wise and loving purpose.' So that every event is 'A Special Providence' whether the result is rescue or kill.

But all this is suddenly upset by the interposed statement that all these myriads of 'Providences' are 'permitted by Him or prevented as He sees fit,' 'not by resort

to special activity but by the fulfilment of natural laws instituted by Him at the very beginning.' Are we wrong in saying that this upsets all the familiar descriptions of the personal dealings of God with us?

Of course, Mr. Voysey is entitled to his own interpretations of his own statements, but it does seem to us that if a man is knocked down by a motor-car and killed or saved 'by the fulfilment of natural laws' it is romancing to talk of God deciding the matter 'for some wise and loving purpose.' Mr. Voysey appears to reconcile the two statements by the proposition that 'the Divine mind of the Creator laid His plans for it all' from the beginning, and that 'due provision' was made at the Creation for every event, the motor-car accident and its result included. That is a theory which seems to us to land us in flat Fatalism and old Calvinism of the baldest kind; and we really think that if we make up our minds to stand by the inexorable working of natural law we must give up Mr. Voysey's intense personalities in relation to the hourly dolings-out of destiny by the direct will of God.

There is, at all events, this vital difference between the two theories. If the motor-car catastrophe kills, according to natural law; and, if we assume that all natural law is an expression of the Creator's will, we may say that, indirectly, and speaking generally, it is according to the will of God. But, if that is all, we, in that case, are shut out from the theory that the death was an expression of a loving will, to fulfil 'some wise and loving purpose.' That is inevitably the introduction of a personal element of intervention and decision, beyond the working of natural law. That, in fact, is using natural law for an extra purpose by a personal will. Mr. Voysey cannot have it both ways.

It is by no means certain that what we call 'civilisation' directly tends either to ethical advance or to general happiness. In 'The Daily News' report of its correspondent's interview with Dr. A. R. Wallace, there are the following question and answer:—

You think, do you not, that the world is a better place to live in to-day than it was fifty years ago?

No; I should say for the very poorest it is a worse place. The wonderful discoveries of science and their application to industry, with the corresponding increase in wealth, have not lessened the increase in poverty, which is absolutely, and I believe relatively, enormously greater than it was fifty years ago.

What we call 'civilisation' does not necessarily civilise. By the word 'civilisation' we largely include mechanical inventions, contrivances and luxuries, many of which only add to oppressive toil with a corresponding defiling of air and springs and streams, as well as of dwelling places where vast numbers of toilers congregate, all of which tends to driving rich and poor apart, and shutting out squalor from comfort, and even social perils from security. 'Men can be moral,' Max Nordau tells us, 'and feel happy and content in a condition of barbarism and ignorance, while the most profound moral depravity, a spiritual suffering to which death comes as a relief, and the extremity of

brute wretchedness, may accompany all the wonders of mechanical science and the most advanced control over steam and electricity.' Who can doubt it?

What is the inference? The pessimist will conclude that the sinister process must go on, and from bad to worse, but the pessimist is never right, because he is without the prophetic gift. The right inference is that the workers, the suffering 'masses,' will arrive at an understanding of their power, comprehend the causes of their misery, and find political solutions of the problems that so-called 'civilisation' has evolved but not solved. The huge social machine is self-acting, but with this peculiarity, that while its action is infallible in the end, only experience and knowledge can supply the motive power: but experience and knowledge are infallibly accumulative, and that secures the self-acting of the machine.

For many months, the large space given by the newspapers to squalid details of crimes and ghastly details of accidents has induced many people to wonder whether a daily paper is a household boon: and now the hysterical outbursts of so-called 'news' concerning certain burglars and murderers have been really making the morning paper more of an unwelcome intruder at breakfast than a happy guest. It may be said that all this is of interest to someone. Possibly it is, and possibly it is interesting to the majority, and probably the newspaper people know what their customers want. All we say, as Spiritualists, is that the whole tone is distinctly squalid and deleterious. It is like a huge bucket of gutter-stuff to us, and the law of suggestion, working as it does, makes it, in our opinion, as dangerous as it is disagreeable. There must be hundreds of good and beautiful things happening every day. Why do not the newspapers notice them and chronicle them? Alas! the true reason probably is that the newspaper-makers supply slush because, as the old Hebrew prophet said—'The people love to have it so.'

THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD.

Dealing with 'The Origin of Tragedy,' Professor W. Ridgeway, Sc.D., is driven back, as are those who seek to discover the origin of religious observances, to what seems to be the most ancient of all forms of worship—the worship of the dead—regarding which, writing in 'The Daily News,' Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie says:—

It must be remembered that, according to antiquity, the ghost of a powerful hero was still powerful long after his bones were decayed, and should, if possible, be kept in a good humour. It appears, indeed, that before the fertility of crops and flocks was given to the keeping of special deities, the ghosts of a tribe's heroes had the management of the harvests and the mysteries of increase. At any rate, these famous ghosts could in general bring good or ill luck on the living representatives of their tribes, according as they were in good or ill tempers. Now, the way to keep a powerful ghost in a benevolent mood was to assure him that his tribe still had him vividly in remembrance; and the way to do that was to chant, recite, and, later, enact, the story of his sufferings, endurances, warfares against fate, and even, if they were tremendous enough, his sins and his earthly downfall. All this may seem strange to modern notions; but it is about as certain as anything anthropological can be.

Here, according to Professor Ridgeway, we have at last an appropriate and credible origin for tragedy; out of these ritualistic dances and choruses in celebration of dead heroes, to which were in time added dialogue and action, the tragic art of Greece arose. Historical evidence is strongly on the side of this theory; so are the construction and spirit of the plays themselves. . . . It is the merest pedantry which fails to see that all tragedy, of whatever land or period, is spiritually the same. This strangest and most impressive of all the arts, the art which mysteriously creates beauty and profound consolation out of sorrow and distress and defeat, has, wherever it has appeared, moved the same feelings in men and come out of the same emotional necessities.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, SUFFOLK-STREET, PALL MALL EAST (near the National Gallery), on

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, FEBRUARY 2ND,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY THE

REV. J. TYSSUL DAVIS, B.A.,

ON

'THE CREATIVE POWER OF THOUGHT.'

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

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Hon. Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

Meetings will also be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, S.W. (near the National Gallery), on the following Thursday evenings:—

Feb. 16.—Mr. James I. Wedgwood: 'The Spiritual Progress of Man.'

Mar. 2.—Mr. Angus McArthur: 'Psychic Phenomena in England, 600 A.D. to 1200 A.D.; the Remarkable Experiences of Forgotten Pioneers.'

Mar. 16.—Mr. Ernest W. Beard: 'Our Spirit Friends and the Evidence of their Identity.'

Mar. 30.—Madame d'Espérance.

April 27.—Rev. Arthur Chambers (Vicar of Brockenhurst, and Author of 'Our Life After Death,' 'Man and the Spiritual World,' &c.): 'Spiritualism and the Light it Casts on Christian Truth.'

May 11.—Mr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe, B.Sc. (Lond.): 'Essential Conditions of Life in this and other Worlds.'

MEETINGS AT 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.

FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—On Tuesday next, January 31st, Mrs. E. A. Cannock will give clairvoyant descriptions, at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each. February 7th and 14th, Mrs. Praed.

MEDIUMISTIC DEVELOPMENT.—On Thursday next, February 2nd, at 4.50 p.m., Mr. George Spriggs will conduct a Class for the Development of Mediumship, for Members and Associates.

FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE.—Members and Associates are invited to attend the rooms at 110, St. Martin's-lane, on Friday afternoons, from 3 to 4, and to introduce friends interested in Spiritualism, for informal conversation, the exchange of experiences, and mutual helpfulness.

TALKS WITH A SPIRIT CONTROL.—On Friday next, February 3rd, at 4 p.m., Mrs. M. H. Wallis, under spirit control, will reply to questions relating to life here and on 'the other side,' mediumship, and the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism generally. Admission 1s.; Members and Associates free. MEMBERS have the privilege of introducing one friend to this meeting without payment. Visitors should be prepared with written inquiries of general interest to submit to the control. Students and inquirers alike will find these meetings especially useful in helping them to solve perplexing problems and to realise the actuality of spirit personality.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

AN EVENING MEETING has been arranged, to be held at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on Wednesday next, February 1st, at 7 o'clock, for 'Talks with the "Controls" of Miss Florence Morse.' Admission 1s., Members and Associates free. Members may introduce one friend without payment.

'A WELCOME GIFT.'—Under this heading the 'Banner of Life,' of Boston, U.S.A., says: 'Perhaps you have a friend whom you would like to surprise with a welcome and inexpensive gift. If so, have the "Banner of Life" mailed to him or her for one year. Its regular visits will be a frequent reminder of your friendly thoughtfulness.' Our contemporary evidently believes in the power of suggestion—so do we—and if our readers will kindly substitute the word 'LIGHT,' and act as suggested above, they will help us to let our light shine where it may do good,

STRIKING PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

(Continued from page 27.)

I recollect once, when sitting alone with Mr. S., who was off in trance with his hands on the table, watching an antimacassar that had been placed in front of the fire, which was blazing brightly, rise from off the back of the chair and travel across the room, settling upon the sofa.

On seven or eight occasions I have seen the table move when our hands were merely held over it, beginning almost in contact and gradually raising them to a foot or more above it.

Mr. S. used to talk a good deal whilst in trance, and sometimes would set me roaring with laughter at his comical descriptions of what he saw.

He preferred to use a very heavy kitchen table, as, when the power was strong, weight did not make the slightest difference, for it seemed as light as a feather, and would rap out messages at a great rate, and we knew we could not influence it by involuntary pressure. I have tried with all my strength to move that table by pressure with the palms of the hands, and found I could not do it when seated.

A curious instance of this power of movement occurred one Sunday evening. The minister from a Wesleyan chapel adjoining our house, with a few friends, had joined us after service. The table rapped out that it was the Devil, and called the minister very impolite names. He got up and left, and one of our party said, 'I don't care if you are the Devil or not, but will you move the table if we all sit upon it?' It rapped out 'Yes.'

We all, six of us, sat upon the table, but my friend, before taking his seat, walked round to see that all our feet were clear of the floor. 'Now,' he said, and immediately the table slewed along the floor sufficiently to give us a sharp jerk. By measurement we found the displacement at one end had been ten inches. The combined weight of the sitters and of the table must have approximated half a ton. It was the heavy kitchen table, without castors.

The friend alluded to was extremely mediumistic, and in his company, together with Mr. S., we had some remarkable results. A bell placed upon the mantelpiece was on more than one occasion rung over our heads, and then thrown upon the table. Messages were rapped out with great rapidity, and to me personally the most interesting experience was the fact that a little baby hand used to stroke my face and touch the back of my hands. I several times held my hand out, and the little hand would be placed in mine. I could distinctly feel each tiny finger, but the moment I attempted to grasp it, it was gone. My friend was also continually touched.

I well remember a heavy blow I received between the shoulders. I was sitting next to Mr. S., holding his hand, and that of my next neighbour on the other side. Mr. S. said in a rather awestruck manner, 'There is something that has just passed between us.'

A feeling of what I may call *unfair* incredulity passed through my mind, and immediately a blow as if from an open hand struck me with sufficient force to be heard by all present, and I was perfectly well aware that I had deserved my punishment.

In all these séances, and those that succeeded, I never felt in the slightest degree nervous except on two occasions.

In one séance, Mr. S., my wife's cousin—a young girl who was the best private séance medium I have ever known—and I were left alone. The other sitters had become too nervous, and had left the room.

Mr. S. and Miss B. were both in trance, and Mr. S. was brandishing his fists about in a most alarming manner, but I had perfect confidence that under control he could not hurt me, although they occasionally even touched my face. There was a sheet of notepaper on the mantelpiece, and also a small bell. The room was fairly lighted by the street lamp in front, for the blinds were not down. Miss B. had been leaning on me for some time, and finding myself very cramped I let her gently down on to the floor.

There were three or four chairs at different distances on the side of the table where she lay. She took hold of the nearest one by the

bottom of one of its legs and began to move it about. Thinking she would strain her wrist I took the chair from her and placed it well out of her reach. Immediately the chair nearest to her began to move along the floor towards her, and again I took this from her and placed it at some distance. The next chair then slid forward and she grasped it as before. I pulled it out of her hand. She gave a moan, as if dissatisfied, and got up and walked to the centre of the room and lay down on the floor in the full light of the street lamp.

Presently she said, 'Papa, dear papa, bring me the paper.' In an instant the paper was across the room and she was crumpling it up in her hand. 'Dear papa,' she then said, 'bring me the bell,' but the bell did not move. I was watching her very intently to see if the bell would reach her, when I could clearly perceive standing over her the figure of a woman. The face was too indistinct for recognition, but from the shawl I should have judged it to have been a Mrs. B., who had died some months previously. She was the aunt of my wife and of the girl.

For the first time I did feel somewhat nervous, and looked round for Mr. S. He was kneeling behind the back of my chair, and in his normal state.

'Don't you see that figure?' he said. 'I cannot stop in the room.'

'Well,' I answered, 'if you intend to go and leave the girl to be frightened out of her wits when she awakens and finds herself alone I do not, and it would never do to wake her suddenly.'

Our speaking had broken the connection, and in a minute or so she woke up none the worse for it, and, of course, without the slightest recollection of what had happened. And here I may state that long before this I had several times seen my little daughter, then aged eleven, moved along the floor a few inches at a time when seated with her feet placed upon the front rung of the chair.

I recollect Miss B., when in a state of trance, at a friend's house, asking for a pencil. I had one in my hand ready, for she liked to write when in that state.

I was the whole length of a dining-room table from her, but in the dim light she raised herself and extended her arms so stealthily that I do not think anyone else perceived it. In a moment she had hold of the end of the pencil, but I held it so tightly that she could not gain possession of it and relapsed into her chair with a groan. Less than a minute afterwards the pencil was snatched from my hand by some unseen intelligence and immediately she was scribbling with it upon some paper that had been placed upon the table. I had watched her intently in the dim light, and she had never moved.

This is an instance of many I have seen in which the medium has been influenced to effect some purpose, and failing his, or her, being able to accomplish it, it has been done by other means.

I recollect a man saying to me in a whisper: 'Mr. S. is a fraud—I am convinced it was he who put those chairs upon the table.' I knew perfectly well that S. had put them there, but I knew also that he was utterly unconscious of having done so.

So in the case of my wife, given later on, I was little surprised to find the influence was making use of her, or what I may call 'short circuiting,' *i.e.*, accomplishing the object along the line of least resistance, or, in other words, in the easiest manner, by making the medium do it. For this reason we should be very chary of attributing intentional fraud, especially to any private medium.

(To be continued.)

'LEST WE FORGET': NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES.

January 29—C. C. Massey, *trs.* 1905." " Mme. Noel (Villa Carmen), *trs.* 1907." 30—Hon. Mrs. Forbes, *trs.* 1901.February 4—G. Sadler (Cardiff), *trs.* 1901.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

In an early issue of 'LIGHT' we shall print an extremely interesting sketch of the life and work of the Rev. John Page Hopps, written by Mr. James Robertson, of Glasgow. In the same number we shall give, as a supplement, a fine portrait of Mr. Hopps, printed on plate paper. We hope to be able to announce the date next week.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE MAHABHARATA.*

By MRS. ALICIA SIMPSON, M.R.A.S.

(Author of *Bhakti Marga*.)

The Mahabharata sages pondered much over the mystery of the universe, the origin of human life, of all created objects, of the destiny of the soul. Here is their account of the birth of Creation. The great First Cause, they said, was called 'Manasa' (Supreme Intelligence), eternal, indestructible. This mighty being created a lotus imbued with divine energy, whence sprang Brahma, who thus existed before the dawn of all creation or of time. The immortal Brahma was called by another name, Consciousness, and he it was who evolved all things. First he created space, then water, then fire and wind, then the earth. The five elements are his body. He is unknowable, inconceivable except by those whose souls are pure and clean. His presence pervades the whole universe. It is his energy that informs all things.

The whole universe, they said, was full of an inexhaustible kind of essence called 'Prana,' the breath of life, the vital principle that makes creatures live and move. This 'Prana' they conceived as indwelling in man and all created things, the highest as the lowest. Man could increase his supply of it and so augment vitality. For instance, he could derive it from the sun, the great source of light, or by various practices which are known to the Yogis.

The relation between the senses, mind, and soul was the object of their philosophic enquiry. The five senses that are in the body, they said, are all subordinate to the mind or understanding. The understanding is subordinate to the soul. The soul cannot be seen or touched; the senses cannot apprehend it, though it directs and controls them. It suffers neither birth, growth, decline, nor dissolution. When one body is inanimate, the soul passes invisible into another body, and in that new frame the individual reaps the reward of all acts, good or bad, committed by him in past lives, as well as the result of many present deeds of good or ill. The deeds which he does in the present are helping to shape the future also. When the senses, as in death or sleep, cease to exercise their functions, the soul is free. When it is withdrawn from the body, that body ceases to experience sensation. It is, therefore, through the soul alone that man exists. Where it goes during sleep, or between one life and the next, man cannot tell, just as he cannot see the moon's face during the dark fortnight, though he knows it has not perished. Even so with the soul when freed from the body. And as the moon, reaching another stage in her journey, is visible once more, so the soul in the same manner reappears in another body. And as the moon, even when it vanishes from human ken, on the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight, is yet accompanied by the stars and constellations, so the soul, though parted from the body, is still pursued by the results of those acts it has performed within its human frame. The soul is independent of the body, and in due time is absorbed into the Supreme Soul. Thus the countless individual souls or 'Purushas' which animate human beings are all part of the great Supreme Soul, to which in the end they return and are absorbed eternally therein.

Throughout these involved discussions we note with wonder the conception the sages of the Mahabharata would seem to have had of the psychic forces of the universe. Their religious philosophy may be said to be imbued with science, for the gods and goddesses of their scriptures are in reality but personifications of the different psychic forces at work in Nature. Thus Brahma is the Creator, the Supreme Soul of the universe, Vishnu the preserver of psychic force, Siva its transformer (not destroyer), Indra the force that dwells within the lightning, &c. Such forces are all eternal, for there is no loss or destruction in Nature.

Various points connected with astronomy, medicine, and botany appear to have been familiar to them. For example, their observation of vegetable life would seem to have been remarkably acute. Trees they regarded as possessed of heat, a sense of touch, of sound, of sight, of smell, of taste, of pleasure and pain, and they proved their assertions by statements which

would lead one to suppose that their knowledge of plant life anticipated many of the discoveries which are even now only beginning to be made by botanists and scientists of the present day. They said :—

Trees fade and dry up, which proves they have perception of touch. Through sound of wind, fire, or thunder, their fruit and flowers droop, therefore they have ears and hear. A creeper twines around a tree, proving that it can see, for a blind thing would lose its way. Pleasant odours will make a tree revive and put forth blossom, therefore it has scent. It can feel pleasure and pain, and grows when cut or pruned. Hence it has life.

Maeterlinck, in his 'Intelligence des Fleurs,' shows that he would cordially confirm many of the conclusions of these ancient Nature observers as to the marvellous purpose and effort revealed in the growth and development of plants.

(To be continued.)

KING'S MAGIC.

It is highly probable that many of the chieftains of the early European tribes, such as the Franks and Teutons, were elected to office for their fighting qualities, but if we may judge by those tribes who early invaded and conquered England, the warrior chief was not king in times of peace.

Among the English the king was regarded as being, in some sort, divine, he claiming descent from Woden, or Odin, the chief god of Scandinavian mythology, who was said, among other things, to be the greatest master of sorcery, an art which he was in the habit of bestowing upon his favourites, and particularly upon his descendants. In view of this belief the conduct of the followers of Canute, the Dane, in attributing to their master power to control the ocean-tide, appears to have been rooted in something much deeper than mere flattery; indeed, it is improbable that the king would have acted as he did merely for the purpose of discomfiting his courtiers.

The fact is that kings of all ages and climes have been said to possess magical powers. Waldemar I., a mediæval King of Denmark, was believed to have them to such a degree that a touch of his hand brought prosperity and good health, and for that reason mothers brought their children to him; whilst for him to throw the farmers' seed meant good crops. Similar powers were claimed for Clovis I., the founder of the kingdom of the Franks, and they were employed for hundreds of years by various kings of France.

Classical history points to the conclusion that even in pre-historic times various tribes and cities were ruled by kings who discharged priestly duties and who were believed to be the descendants of deities. What is known of even so early a period as the patriarchal family of the Stone Age reveals that among the most important offices of the head of the family were priestly duties, which may have been magical—the patriarch was the mediator between the family and its ancestral spirits, who were its gods.

The high-priest of Ancient Egypt was often the king, whilst magic was regarded as a corollary to his office.

Among the later English monarchs 'the king's touch' was chiefly used to cure a particularly obnoxious disease called scrofula, although it may have been employed for the cure of other diseases, and no fewer than sixteen English rulers are known to have practised it. As recently as 1702 it was exercised by Queen Anne, who in one day, March 30th, 'touched' some two hundred persons, among whom was Samuel Johnson, the famous lexicographer; he was then five years old, and is said to have been in no way benefited by the treatment.

The practice reached its greatest height under Charles II., who used it repeatedly during the first twenty-two years of his reign, during which time he is said to have treated no less than ninety-two thousand one hundred and seven persons. He appears to have been successful in making cures. We learn, however, from the bills of mortality, that deaths through scrofula during this period were greater than at any other time; but the increase is claimed to be due to the absence of the king previous to his accession.

Pepys and Evelyn make frequent reference to the 'touch' in their diaries, both having witnessed its use by Charles II.

Pepys said that the king did it 'with much gravity'; Evelyn described it in detail as follows :—

July 6, 1660.—His Majesty began first to touch for the evil according to custom, thus : His Majesty sitting under his state in the banquet house, the surgeons cause the sick to be brought or led up to the throne, where they kneeling, the king strokes their faces or cheeks with both his hands at once, at which instant a chaplain in his formality says : 'He put his hands upon them and healed them.' This is said to everyone in particular. When they have all been touched, they come up again in the same order, and the other chaplain kneeling, and having angel-gold strung with a white ribbon on his arm, delivers them one by one to his Majesty, who puts them about the necks of the touched as they pass, whilst the first chaplain repeats, 'That is the true light who came into the world.' Then follow the Epistles (as at first a gospel), with a liturgy, prayers for the sick, with some alterations, lastly a blessing, and then the lord chamberlain and controller of the household bring a basin, ewer, and towel for his Majesty to wash.

The royalists in the seventeenth century, during the great controversy between them and the Commonwealth party, adduced this kingly prerogative in support of the 'Divine Right of Kings,' and held that the king was the immediate representative of God, to whom alone he was responsible ; and by virtue of this representation he had right to the absolute obedience and service of his subjects.

The Pretenders, in their efforts to prove the right of their claim to the English throne, practised the 'touch.' Prince Charles Edward 'touched' a child at Holyrood in 1746, and the child is said to have been healed in twenty-one days. So strong was public opinion on the matter that as late as 1748, years after the practice had fallen into disuse, Thomas Carte, a historian, lost a subsidy he was receiving from the Common Council of London for stating in one of his books that the Pretender had at Avignon cured a man of the 'King's Evil' by means of the 'touch.' This was apparently regarded as supporting the Pretender's claim to the throne by declaring that he possessed the divinely granted prerogative.

It is interesting to note that Philip I., of France, who is known to have used the gift with success, is said to have lost it through immorality ; yet, in spite of a like fault, Charles II. continued to exercise it till within two years of his decease.

The medicine-men of modern primitive peoples are often chiefs as well as priests of their tribes ; and in cases where there is a separate civic functionary, the medicine-man or priest has often the greater sway. The chief is frequently a descendant of the principal tribal god, who is his deceased ancestor, the worship of ancestors being very prevalent, and through that relationship he makes claim to Divine right, as did the early English kings through Odin.

It is difficult to say whether all the kings actually possessed healing power, mainly because records are incomplete, but it seems unlikely that a ceremony practised so solemnly and persistently, and entailing so much time and labour, as it did to Charles II. at least, and regarded as of such importance as to be an expression of Divine favour and kingly right, would be entirely without something of the nature attributed to it, although large allowances must be made for the influence of suggestion and expectancy, or auto-suggestion. Its reality is rendered still more probable by the efforts of the Pretenders to strengthen their claims by its use. At any rate, the extensive evidence of the wide-spread belief in the magical powers and duties of kings and their supposed descent from deity or possession by Divine favour, points to an origin of the office from other and more important sources than that of mere superstition, especially as ancient testimony is supported by modern facts of a similar nature.

HORACE LEAF.

DR. J. M. PEEBLES and his travelling companion, Mr. R. P. Sudall, formerly of Darwen and Glasgow, during a recent visit to Chicago, called upon the Bangs Sisters and obtained a portrait under conditions similar to those recently described by Rear-Admiral Moore in his address to the London Spiritualist Alliance. They testify, in 'The Sunflower' of December 31st, that all doubt as to the honesty and integrity of the mediums was dispelled by their thorough willingness to agree to test conditions.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING.

Among the many reforms now being advocated by humane men and women, many of whom are Spiritualists, that of improved methods of dealing with wrong-doers is one of the most important. Sir Oliver Lodge, in a recent address to the members of the Christian Social Union, said :—

It is a mistake to imagine that all people in prison are bad. Some are criminals ; some are only law-breakers. Some of the best men in the world have been in prison. You can turn an honest man into a criminal by a blow on the head. He goes all wrong till he is relieved by a surgical operation. I am afraid we allow a great deal of crime to be produced under the influence of heredity.

Admitting that 'people who have committed crime cannot be allowed to go loose,' Sir Oliver rightly observed that

it is a serious matter to confiscate a portion of a man's life. It is a great responsibility ; and to waste it and merely shut him up would be to waste a great opportunity. . . . The thing to go for is discipline, industry and self-respect. Never try to undermine a man's self-respect. To take control of a man's life and to work him like a machine tends to the weakening of character ; and to turn him loose is cruel.

Slowly but surely we are moving towards the realisation of our duty, to 'do unto others as we would be done unto,' and to the recognition of the fact, which Dr. A. R. Wallace so strongly insists upon, that moral improvement can best be secured by better environments. Evidently Sir Oliver Lodge entertains the same opinion, for, after referring to a prison system, which is already in operation in New York, by which prisoners are trained in habits of industry, and secured a little capital and employment before they are allowed to go, Sir Oliver very pertinently asked : 'If by this treatment in prisons a sound and healthy human being can be turned out, what form of manufacture can compete with that?' In his view the well-being of humanity is of greater importance than what is called wealth. He said :—

Tolstoy thought love would overcome the world. No doubt it will. But love does not mean letting people alone. It does not mean 'laissez faire.' It does not mean letting people go to rack and ruin.

No ; love must find a way by which not only justice but human brotherliness may prevail.

A USEFUL INSTITUTION.—We learn with interest that this year is to witness the rebuilding, at a cost of £90,000, of the Regent-street Polytechnic, founded in 1882 by Mr. Quintin Hogg, who, as we know from Mr. E. Dawson Rogers' experiences, sat in circle at Mr. Everitt's home and was satisfied as to the spirit origin of the manifestations. The rebuilding scheme was inaugurated by a grant of £20,000 from the London County Council, and a loan of £20,000 from the City Parochial Foundation. With the exception of £2,500 reserved, the whole of the £50,000 needed to complete the fund has been subscribed and promised by Lord Leith of Fyvie, the Governors, members and students of the Polytechnic, and other friends as a memorial to his late Majesty King Edward VII. The committee now cordially invite all who have ever been identified with, and benefited by, the institution to contribute. Subscriptions may be paid in instalments terminating in June, 1912, and should be sent to the Polytechnic, 309, Regent-street, addressed either to the Secretary or to the President and Chairman, Mr. J. E. K. Studd. It is added that the scheme has the approval of the King.

'EXCELSIOR,' the title of a little book by Sophie Rosen Dufaure, the president of the Society for Psychic Studies at Geneva, is a clear index to its character as a contribution to the literature of philosophy and morality which urges man to regard his life on earth as a time of education. The following sentiment will appeal to many : 'How great will be the pacific revolution in our customs and our laws when legislators and judges, become more just as they have grown more wise, regard the criminal not as a fallen being but as a new arrival in the realms of man, who still betrays the brutal instincts of the animal nature whence he has sprung.' Whether we take this sentiment literally, or whether we take it figuratively in the belief that in the evolution of mankind there must be some higher and some lower and therefore that the offspring of the lower are not fallen from high estate but have not progressed so far as the average man, we must still hold that such an opinion necessarily modifies our outlook, not only on the criminal but on the incompetent. These seventy-six pages are worth reading. The book is published by the Librairie des Sciences Psychiques, Paris, and sells for one and a-half franc.

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IS NATURE CRUEL?

An enlightening and very consoling chapter concludes Dr. Wallace's book, 'The World of Life,' coming to grips with the old problem of the seeming cruelty of Nature, which, of course, means the seeming cruelty or callousness or impotence of God. John Stuart Mill probably outstripped everyone in his indictment against Nature, and other men—a long procession of them—have gone with him. Huxley, after describing the sufferings of the animals, said that if our ears were sharp enough we should hear sighs and groans of pain like those heard by Dante at the gate of Hell. Tennyson's 'Nature, red in tooth and claw with rapine, shrieked,' is only too familiar; and ten thousand kindly but inconsiderate bewailers have followed him.

Dr. Wallace faces it all like a man, and begins his chapter with a sympathetic but firm recognition of the distress of the humanitarians who are so disturbed at the sufferings of all kinds of 'dumb creatures' that they find it difficult to believe in a God who is all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good. He kindly but bluntly tells them that they are wasting an immense amount of sympathy, and quite mistaking the situation. Dr. Wallace quotes 'the poet' who tearfully wrote:—

The poor beetle, that we tread upon;
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

He thinks this is sad nonsense, and says, 'Whatever the giant may feel, if the theory of evolution is true the "poor beetle" certainly feels an almost irreducible minimum of pain, probably none at all.'

Of course it is not denied that there is a margin of misery that cannot be comfortably accounted for, and he excludes benevolence and omnipotence (in our 'ignorant' use of these terms) in relation to Nature and Nature's God. But what he stoutly maintains is that the mighty whole is a unity, that the course of Evolution has been beneficent, and that successive orders of life have contributed and, on the whole, happily, to the splendid end of the process, the advent of Man.

Dr. Wallace, as a sort of text, cites two brief passages from Darwin's 'Origin of Species':—

Thus, from the war of Nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows.

When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of Nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy and the happy survive and multiply.

But Dr. Wallace does not think these statements go far enough. He advances the controlling doctrine that no faculty, no sensation, is developed until there is a use for it, and is therefore never developed beyond the economical use of each form of life, or beyond what was actually needed for the preservation of that life. This rules out an enormous area of life-forms as sufferers, in our sense of the word. The early forms of life had to exist under conditions of utility—were, in fact, simply food-stuff, with no sense or sensation beyond mere existence. But for the development of higher forms of life, these lower forms would have occupied the whole available space. Referring to one of the infusoria, Paramecium, Dr. Wallace says that if it had been possible for these little creatures to go on in creasing and multiplying unchecked for about two years the produce would have been sufficient in bulk to occupy a sphere larger than the known universe. Obviously these gentry needed keeping down. Prolific multipliers of that kind were needed, however, as food-stuff: and very useful they have been and are, without any inconvenience to themselves. We really must try hard to grasp the idea of orders of creatures existing as necessary food-stuffs, quite in the same way that grain and berries and vegetables exist. 'We find, then, that the whole system of life-development is that of the lower providing food for the higher in ever-expanding circles of organic existence.' 'That system has succeeded marvellously, even gloriously, inasmuch as it has produced, as its final outcome, MAN, the one being who can appreciate the infinite variety and beauty of the life-world, the one being who can utilise in any adequate manner the myriad products of its mechanics and its chemistry.'

Dr. Wallace argues that the method—shall we say adopted?—was not only the best but the only one. The whole cosmic process is an orderly and a progressive one, involving the gradual development of faculties, functions and sensations; and this could only be by the provision of food for each fresh and higher stage. The creatures which thus served for food multiplied rapidly for the purpose, and, being produced for that purpose only, there was no reason why death should be associated with pain: their end fulfilled in mere existence, without the fears or sensations we associate with death and pain. 'Our whole tendency to transfer our sensations of pain to all other animals,' says Dr. Wallace, 'is grossly misleading. The probability is that there is as great a gap between man and the lower animals in sensitiveness to pain as there is in their intellectual and moral faculties.'

The grave problem of pain, indeed, seems to begin only as we near Man, for knowledge, anticipation and sensation only then severely intervene. And here Dr. Wallace is greatly daring, but only so as pushing home his argument. He pictures Man as tormented with exposure and the sense of it precisely because that was a condition of his advance. Every added possession was an added danger. He was to be exposed to a thousand self-created dangers totally unknown to the rest of the animal world. His use of fire, his more intricate dwellings, his cookery, his weapons and tools, were sources of danger; and all kept him on the alert and thus ministered to his growth in care, to his experience, his sensitiveness and his skill: and it is as man progresses that he is more susceptible to pain: and, says Dr. Wallace, 'it is this specially developed sensibility that we, most illogically, transfer to the animal-world in our wholly exaggerated and often quite mistaken views as to the cruelty of Nature.' 'No other animal needs the pain-

sensations that we need ; it is therefore absolutely certain that no other possesses such sensations in more than a fractional degree of ours.'

Dr. Wallace, as an honest truth-seeker and truth-follower, falters not in his argument although he is aware that it will be used against him as an anti-vivisectionist : but he protests that the moral argument against vivisection remains :—

The bad effect on the operator and on the students and spectators remains : the undoubted fact that the practice tends to produce a callousness and a passion for experiment which leads to unauthorised experiments in hospitals on unprotected patients, remains ; the horrible callousness of binding the sufferers in the operating trough, so that they cannot express their pain by sound or motion, remains : their treatment, after the experiment, by careless attendants, brutalised by custom, remains ; the argument of the uselessness of a large proportion of the experiments repeated again and again on scores and hundreds of animals, to confirm or refute the work of other vivisectioners, remains ; and, finally, the iniquity of its use to demonstrate already-established facts to physiological students in hundreds of colleges and schools all over the world, remains. I myself am thankful to be able to believe that even the highest animals below ourselves do not feel so acutely as we do, but that fact does not in any way remove my fundamental disgust at vivisection as being brutalising and immoral.

LIFE AFTER LIFE.

Last week we mentioned that the 'Clarion' was opening its columns to correspondence on the question of a future life, and in the issue for the 20th inst. there are letters from Dr. A. R. Wallace, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others. Dr. Wallace points out that the subject is not one wherein 'likes' or 'dislikes' count, but one of facts. With reference to the 'dogmatic assertions as to what is "scientific" or "rational" or "probable," or opposed to science and to evolution,' he asks :—

What is the value of such opinions as opposed to those of men like Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, the Earl of Crawford, Professor W. F. Barrett, of Dublin, the late Robert Chambers, and Professor Lombroso, besides a hundred others who have been convinced by facts, carefully and thoroughly investigated, that there is life after this life, that the 'bourne from which no traveller returns' is a figment of the imagination—a fallacy due to the ignorance of an unscientific age?

Continuing, Dr. Wallace says :—

Your correspondents, so far, seem to be totally ignorant of the fact that in every civilised country in the world there are millions of educated men and women who, against all their prepossessions and beliefs, have become convinced by direct evidence that the so-called dead do return ; that every civilised country possesses numerous societies and many periodicals devoted to this inquiry and dealing with a vast mass of well-sifted evidence ; and that there exists a literature of several thousand volumes devoted to it, for the most part as well written and as closely founded on observed facts as those dealing with any of the recognised sciences.

After asking 'What should we think of people who discussed the future possibilities of electricity without even a rudimentary knowledge of it?' he names a few easily accessible books which set forth some of the evidence to which he alludes, *viz.*, the Dialectical Society's 'Report on Spiritualism' ; 'Automatic Speaking and Writing,' by Mr. E. T. Bennett, 'Psychic Philosophy,' by V. C. Desertis, R. Dale Owen's 'Footfalls' and 'The Debatable Land,' and 'Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,' by A. R. Wallace. All of these books are in the library of the London Spiritualist Alliance, but unfortunately, some of them are not very accessible elsewhere.

The editor, Mr. Robert Blatchford, says that he has 'no desire to live his life over again,' but the life after death is not a repetition of this life—it is a continuation, under other and more favourable conditions. Besides, it is not a question of what we 'desire,' for, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, 'Fortunately, things are settled for us, whether we are aware of them or no, and facts will not be altered by any wrong-headedness of ours.' Mr. Blatchford is tired, bored, and weary, and writes as he feels. He says, 'If my personality is to persist, then I don't want to be immortal. I should grow absolutely sick of myself. Fancy

being your own old threadbare, dog-eared weary self for ever and ever : it is unthinkable'—but there is no need to think any such thing. Why not look forward to the new life, after the rejuvenating experience of the sleep of death, as but another stage in the great adventure of existence, where, to use his own simile, we shall know how to play a better game than we did when we came here, and shall have infinite opportunity for learning, doing, loving, and becoming—where, indeed, we shall realise our present ideals, and move on to still loftier heights of attainment and fulfilment, under new, strange, and inviting conditions? Mr. Blatchford admits that his life here has been worth the living—why should he not anticipate that the next stage will be still better, because enriched and beautified and sweetened by all that he has learned and acquired here?

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF G. F. WATTS.

On Thursday, the 19th inst., the Rev. Lucking Tavenor delivered a very fine Address on 'The Spiritual Message of G. F. Watts' to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East. The Address, which was exceptionally interesting, was illustrated with some sixty lantern slides of special photographs, taken by Mr. Tavenor himself, of many of the artist's most famous pictures.

MR. H. WITHALL, in introducing the speaker, said that Sir Francis Galton once dwelt on the advantage of close and careful observation, and he thought that the lecturer would emphasise that lesson. 'This world,' said Mr. Withall, 'is very beautiful, but many a lovely sunrise occurs too early for us, and beautiful sunsets are often inconveniently late. In summer and winter scenes—yes, even in fogs—there are many beauties which we miss by our failure to watch for and to appreciate them. In all ages and places, however, there have been men gifted with the power of observation who have been able to penetrate through the phenomenal and see the spiritual reality behind the appearance. These men, artists generally, have endeavoured to express what they have seen, in verse, in prose, in drawing or in colour, or even simply in their lives. Our lecturer this evening, the Rev. Lucking Tavenor, has been in close association with one of these master minds, the late George Frederick Watts ; has entered into his thoughts, feelings, and ideals, and his endeavours to depict them in his pictures, and, under Mr. Tavenor's guidance, as interpreter, we shall no doubt learn to see much more in those pictures than we have ever seen before.'

MR. LUCKING TAVENOR said : No man ever devoted himself more thoroughly to the expression of the spiritual life than did George Frederick Watts. Many critics would regard that statement as alone sufficient to condemn him as an artist. It is often said that an artist has no business with anything else than a beautiful representation of a beautiful thing. Though not agreeing with the surface meaning of the criticism, I believe that the art of Mr. Watts, as a whole, falls into line with that dictum. To Mr. Watts there was nothing so beautiful as the spiritual life ; and, even on the level of the art criticism that I have mentioned, he was perfectly justified in spending the whole of the sixty years of his working life in expressing, as best he was able, the most beautiful thing he knew. It may be argued that thoughts are not things, that spirituality is abstraction, and therefore does not come within the material domain of art. Why? Who dares claim for himself the right to say that what he is pleased to call spiritual abstraction is not as real as anything he may bring forward as material? The acknowledged wisest men in the history of the world have, each in his own way, asserted that the spiritual is the lasting, the eternal, and therefore the most real. From Plato onwards, philosophers and poets have been loud in their assertion that beauty and harmony are the true aims and ideals of art of every kind, and that these are spiritual. Perfect beauty and complete harmony exist as the greatest of all realities because they are more closely associated with the God of love than anything else we can conceive ; and art of any kind, of any land, and of any time, has been the seeking of this harmony and beauty. When men secure a glimpse of it, and express it, art is born. Let it be admitted at once that Mr. Watts sought, first of all, to teach

spiritual truths by his art; and if the orthodox artists are pleased to rule him out of their sacred ranks, and call him a heretic, so be it. I cannot but remember that, in other walks of life and work, the branded heretic of one age has been looked upon as the saviour by the next. And, indeed, I think I see signs even now of the alteration of opinion, so far, at any rate, as Mr. Watts was concerned. But whether I am right or wrong in this, I am very proud that an Englishman of the nineteenth century spent his whole untiring and long life in the permanent expression on canvas of the loftiest spiritual thoughts that came to him.

Watts was but a youth when he made the resolution to paint spiritual truths, and to continue to paint them whether the art market cared for his work or not; and he bravely persisted all through his life in making those spiritual conceptions as complete as possible. I shall never forget what a hero he seemed to me one day, when I was bidding him good-bye at his studio door, when he said, 'I shall be eighty in February, but I mean to do my best work yet.'

Here is a photograph of a sketch of himself that he made when he was seventeen years of age. He had his ideal then, but how was he to carry it out? Pictures of an ideal character, such as he wished to paint, would not sell, because they would not be according to popular taste. Fortunately, just at that time, the new Houses of Parliament were being decorated. He competed for the work, winning a prize of £300 for a design of 'Caractacus led prisoner through the streets of Rome.' The picture was never executed on the walls of Parliament House, but the design is well known. The important thing about this incident is that it furnished the young painter with the funds wherewith he was able to fulfil a dream of his, which was to visit Florence. He had letters of introduction to Lord Holland, the British Ambassador at Florence, through whose influence many commissions were obtained for portraits; he stayed in Florence at this lucrative work for four years, and at the end of this time was able to purchase an annuity for himself. It was not a large one, but sufficient to enable him to live comfortably and work for the rest of his days on the ideal scheme he had planned.

Florence did one other thing for him. It revealed to him how the early Italian artists taught religious and spiritual truths by paint. He carefully examined the church frescoes and found a complete system of symbolism. This lesson, with that which he had already learnt at the British Museum before the Elgin Marbles, revealed to him the fact that he could work on similar lines, using modern methods and more universal symbols. His four years' experience in fashionable circles of Florence had impressed him deeply with the thought that the majority of people live lives that are too materialistic to produce the highest results. Aims, considered to be of the highest, were low. People lived for vain show, with trust in fictitious pleasures and unsound securities. The spiritual element of life was ignored. Seeing all this, he resolved that he would do his best on his return home to help to bring the people's minds to a more sane and lasting view, for to him the spiritual was everything.

Once I had the privilege of lecturing to the villagers of Compton, where Mr. Watts was living. The lecture was given in the studio in which the pictures had been painted. The idea was that these villagers, who had seen the artist at work, should know what his pictures meant. Mr. Watts asked me to go down to Surrey and make the needed explanations for him. Of course I consulted him as to the arrangement. We put the pictures on to a platform, which was lighted with lamps, and as each picture was described it was removed, showing the one behind it. As near as possible I shall this evening take the same order, and, as closely as may be, use the same words as I used then.

A small canvas, which, I believe, has never been exhibited, represents man at the foot of the tree of knowledge in a desponding attitude. You may think of the figure as the type of man who has not seen the truth of his nature. He knows he is a being in a world which is beautiful; but he feels crushed by the sense of impotence. He is low down, even close to the earth, and does not attempt to rise because he is not yet conscious of the power within him. You may think of him as in his prehistoric state, when he had scarcely emerged from the

animal stage. At any rate, he does not know what powers he does possess. He has not yet climbed the tree of knowledge to obtain a wide view, for, though he is conscious of a desire to rise, his nearness to the animal realm makes it difficult for him to understand the spiritual element within him, which, if he knew how to use it, would give him power to overcome his difficulties. He is conscious, too, that there is much that hinders his rising. The painter has given visible shape to these opposing powers, in forms akin to the human. Together they present the appearance of a thick cloud like a fog; and the man feels as though he were in an atmosphere stifling, sultry, and so dense that he cannot properly breathe in it. The picture is the suggestion that man without exercising the spiritual life is a failure. He looks to the ground; sinks to the level of the animal, and is of all creatures the most pessimistic, because the powers that are his by virtue of his being a man want outlet, and, not finding that outlet, make his existence a meaningless riddle.

A companion to this picture represents the same figure at the same place, attempting to use the powers he possesses. Like the prodigal son, he is coming to himself. He turns on his side and tries to rise. He presses upon the earth on which he has rested and finds that he has a force within him which will enable him to become a creature of higher attainments. From his side there emerges a more refined and beautiful personality; and as that higher life finds its way into earth's atmosphere, those forms that awhile ago were oppressive, now, in harmony with the newer rising development, no more press down, but lift up, and send the word upward that a soul has been born from mankind, a new life spirit has come to being. The man has come to himself. He has realised that his true nature is not that of a grovelling animal, but a being of lofty individuality and spiritual power, capable of lifting himself upright and taking part in spiritual things. The realisation of this fact is not confined to himself: the spiritual forces recognise it also and communicate the news to those who are still higher; these again send up the message, and it is taken higher and yet higher, till there is rejoicing in the presence of God over the fact of another soul starting on its journey to Paradise.

The picture now before us was once called 'The Birth of Eve'; and in a way the title is correct. Mr. Watts looked upon the Genesis story of the creation of man and woman as a spiritual symbol. Man was the outcome and pinnacle of creation so far. He was the highest expression of Nature. All materiality had found its culmination in man; and now that the highest animal had come to being, the spiritual—or the breath of God's spirit—should, and could, find manifest expression in him. In his sleep—the suffering of animal tendencies to become inactive—the woman side comes to being: the spiritual side of man is born. 'God created man in his own image; male and female created he them.' The more animally strong part is that which we call man; the more spiritually refined part, that which we call female.

Mr. Watts made a great effort to make this thought clear. In the Tate Gallery there is that wonderful conception called 'She shall be called Woman.' The tall canvas is occupied chiefly by the form of a woman. Her feet are firmly planted on earth, but her body reaches up through all space to heaven. Her face is lost in the clouds and her eyes look not on earth, but through the clouds to heaven. Thus she is the connecting link between earth and heaven—she is the symbol and the emblem of the spiritual life. From her life of love, sacrifice and tenderness, we get the bringing to earth of heaven's love and light. Where she in her purity treads, the spring flowers of joy and hope grow; the lilies of purity blossom by her knees and the butterfly of the soul hovers always near where she is. Of course, he does not say that every woman or any woman is spiritually higher than every man or any man. It is possible for a woman to sink beneath even the general animal life of man, and it is possible for a man to rise to spiritual heights loftier than many women. But those characteristics which we associate with the woman nature are the spiritual life of man. When we see the love side strong either in male or female it is the spiritual nature which should distinguish man from the beasts of the field.

Watts never descended to sectarianism or narrowed his view to the requirements of any cult; but he grieved much when he

found evidences of the lower nature manifest anywhere. It may be urged that he left his lofty pinnacle of spiritual teacher when he painted his picture to support the crusade against the wearing of feathers in ladies' hats; but I think a higher view than sectarianism was his, when he made the design to which I now refer. He would think that ladies who follow the dictates of fashion do not always realise what is involved. Could they but know that beautiful birds suffer much pain when certain feathers are plucked they would not encourage the market for them. It is well known that the feathers are in better and more gorgeous condition at certain times of a bird's life. Their splendour is associated with their period of maternity, and it is certain that they suffer much if the feathers are taken then. Also it is becoming known that many species of beautiful birds are rapidly becoming extinct through this custom. This sacrifice to the god of fashion pained the prophet-artist, and he painted this picture of 'The Sorrowing Angel,' feeling sure that if the ladies but realised what had to be done to satisfy fashion's demands they would soon stop the practice. If they but knew that an angel bent over the altar on which these beautiful wings and feathers were sacrificed, and that they could prevent both the sacrifice and the angel's sorrow, they would exert their power for the good reform.

Fashion, however, is not the only tempter whose power we have to guard against if we would maintain our true spiritual life. Many tempters meet us along the entire road of life. Every temptation, whatever be its form, is in some way an attempt to spoil the spiritual life and make prominent the animal quality of our being. In 'Eve Tempted' we see the allurements of the carnal nature figured in that playful, fascinating creature shown as a tiger's body with serpent tail. As you look at the picture you feel that there is, in the finely painted form of Eve, the foolish, eager rush in the direction of the allurements of the senses. Eve is under the magic spell, and is rushing madly to disaster. But the fascination may be short-lived. The satisfaction which the senses are capable of giving is not lasting. The glamour dies and remorse comes. In the companion picture called 'Eve Repentant,' we see the sorrow and shame consequent on the loss of spiritual dignity due to the giving way to temptation. From an artistic point of view these two pictures are wonderful works; the most exacting art critics can find little to complain of; but from the higher point of view they are of an even greater value.

As I try to understand the one aim running through all the pictures Mr. Watts has painted, it seems to me that it is to urge upon us the truth that man in reality is a spiritual being. The material, though the most prominent, is not the most important characteristic of his nature. When an individual does not know, or act on the knowledge, that he is a spiritual being, he gets false values of life and things, and is discouraged and disheartened with the failures of his life. The great temptation which more than another besets the individual who desires to be of service is to consider that the power bestowed on him by Nature is inadequate. The earnest soul invariably thinks he is not able to perform the task he sees necessary to be done. One would imagine that this temptation would have met Mr. Watts when he set out on so great an undertaking as his was. Perhaps it did; and perhaps that was the reason which led him to work for ten years on his great statue called 'Energy.' By it he hoped to help to guard his fellows against that temptation. Man's environment and apparently opposing circumstances seem overwhelming; but Mr. Watts would say, by this statue, that this is a mistake. He has represented an athlete riding a powerful and highly tempered steed. It is no half-fed horse, warranted not to kick or bite, but a fully-developed and high-spirited animal, exceedingly difficult to manage. It is, indeed, the artist's emblem of difficulty: his figure for the many things which seem obstacles to the proper development of the best within us. The rider has had no easy task, but he has succeeded. Throwing away from him all material things which would hinder him, like the athlete that he is, he has given himself whole-heartedly to his task, has mounted the horse, holds him well in hand, and is master of the situation. He is, however, not yet satisfied. His eyes—shielded from the bright sun-rays by the hand that is at liberty—

scan the horizon, to see if, in the distance, there are any fresh difficulties to conquer. And such is the attitude Mr. Watts would have us all assume in front of all the innumerable problems and difficulties with which life is beset. His answer to our cry of weakness is that we are all athletes. Apart from all material clothing, of sect or creed, of office or position, we each have within us that spiritual power and energy sufficient to enable us to overcome any and every difficulty. We hesitate and quail before our tasks *only* when we fail to believe that we have the spiritual life—and God is Spirit.

But we are not left by our artist teacher in any vagueness on this matter. He has dealt with these difficulties in detail. They are made vivid on many canvases. 'Greed,' 'Lust,' 'Cruel Vengeance,' 'Jonah,' and others, are not pleasing subjects. But because they have a quality which has to be reckoned with when dealing with spiritual things, Mr. Watts could not avoid them.

Take the picture of 'Mammon,' for instance. Jesus assumed that this spirit of Mammon was the opposite to God. 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' Now, while we Christians profess to be followers of Jesus, and admit his teaching in a general way, we do not really believe this doctrine, do we? Though we would not like to admit it, we worship at the shrine of Mammon. This is what we do when we make the getting of money the chief object in life. And surely it is correct to say that the majority feel secure only when sufficiently supplied with cash. Mr. Watts, as it were, tears away the veil from what Carlyle calls 'the brute god, Mammon,' in order that we may see it in its terrible deformity. In the picture we have a great bloated body wrapped in an ample but ill-fitting cloak of gold, seated upon a throne partly consisting of the bones of its victims. Skulls are shown to adorn the uprights of that throne. The face is coarse and powerful. A crown of gold looks very much out of place on its brow. This, then, is the artist's revelation of materiality—man's trust in the outward seeming rather than in the inner reality of the spirit, which is God. On one side, a delicate girl is kneeling with her head bent in submission upon the god's lap. Her courage, hope and life seem to have vanished, and she is simply a slave to the monster, who holds her head down with his horrid hand. On the other side a stalwart young man lies prostrate on the ground with the monster's foot upon his neck. So the artist teaches that the spirit which prompts to money-getting and hoarding is not a bestower of blessing, but a dreadful tyrant, who robs his devotees of their nobility and life, and spreads misery and degradation around. The saddest thing about it is that the youth and maiden grow up beneath his power, but are unconscious that they are forfeiting the best of life.

In the picture called 'Great Possessions,' Mr. Watts has shown us the wealthy young man who went to Jesus with a desire to know the truth and the ideal. He wanted to know what was right for life and salvation. 'Sell all thou hast and give to the poor.' This was too great a demand for him, and the young man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

There seems very little in this picture, and yet how powerful it is! The pose is wonderfully expressive. The bent, proud body, the drooping head, the back turned on Jesus, the luxurious robes, the jewelled hand hanging dejectedly by the side. The young man was anxious to know the ideal; he saw it in Christ. But it was too high for him. To throw away his trust in material goods and rest only in the spiritual life was, to him, too great a demand—he turned from it.

(To be continued.)

IN a new book entitled 'An Adventure,' which will be published immediately by Messrs. Macmillan and Co., two ladies narrate some psychical experiences which occurred to them while at Versailles in 1901 and 1902. When visiting the Petit Trianon they saw buildings and details of scenery, not as they are now, but as they existed in the time of Marie Antoinette. They spoke to persons of that period who were present in the park and about the building, never doubting at the time that they were in communication with real individuals. The publishers guarantee that the authors have put down what happened to them as faithfully and accurately as was in their power.

MR. PETERS' FAREWELL MEETING.

Mr. A. Vout Peters sailed for Finland *en route* for Russia on the Wednesday of last week. Prior to his departure he gave a remarkable exhibition of his clairvoyant powers before a large audience of Members, Associates and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at 110, St. Martin's-lane, on the Tuesday afternoon. For an hour and a-half an almost bewildering succession of word-pictures—all more or less recognised, generally more—passed before the mental vision of the listeners. The close attention with which each description was followed was now and then broken by involuntary applause when some more than ordinarily vivid scene or incident was certified as correct. As an example we may quote the picture of a bright, studious young lad, who seemed to have everything to live for, and yet to his mother's deep distress had been summoned hence: 'When you and he were alone, he was fond of sitting on the arm of your chair and kissing you on the left cheek and saying what a pretty mother he had. He liked paying you such little compliments. To-day, when you put on your veil to attend this meeting, you mentally said to him, "Do come back!"'

In another instance, after handling a little cross and reminding the lady to whom it belonged of a friend of hers who had died of cancer, Mr. Peters went on to describe the lady's house—the entrance hall, the disposition of the rooms, the situation of her own special room, the window, the writing-desk near it, at which she had sat down to write *at a quarter to three on the previous afternoon*, and lastly the portrait of her friend in the room. 'Yes,' exclaimed the owner of the cross, 'that portrait was left me by the lady in her will!'

There were several such striking cases, and in none of them did Mr. Peters know anything beforehand of the persons whose psychic surroundings he so clearly sensed. At the close of the meeting Mrs. Bell, who occupied the chair, voiced the wishes of all present that Mr. Peters might meet with every success in the mission on which he was about to start. Mrs. Boddington added her testimony to Mr. Peters' character and powers, with the reflection that 'the best mediums we have met have been the men and women who have come through the most severe trials.'

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

According to the 'Daily Mail' of the 20th inst., 'A new problem for schoolmasters is reported from Okayama, Japan, where a boy named Kawasaki, aged sixteen, has developed gifts of clairvoyance which are declared to render examinations futile. Recently he forecasted accurately all the questions set in several examinations, with the result (says the "Japan Times") that his classmates all scored full marks by learning the answers to these questions by heart and neglecting any other preparation.'

The advocates of 'deep breathing' have a recruit in Dr. A. S. Turner, of Quetta, whose testimony to the efficacy of the long breath as a cold cure has gone the rounds of the newspapers. He says: 'By accident I discovered that if, immediately on feeling the first symptoms of a cold, I practised taking a deep breath every now and then, say every five or ten minutes, for half an hour or an hour, the attack did not proceed, and many times have I satisfied myself of the utility of the method. It has since then been rare for me to have more than one catarrhal cold in six months, where before I was having one every two or three weeks.'

A somewhat sensational article on The London Spiritualist Alliance appeared in 'Tit Bits' for December 31st last. The writer describes the Alliance as a 'lively and "going" concern' and gives a fairly accurate account of the work carried on at 110, St. Martin's-lane; but he claims too much for us when he says that 'even the most prejudiced unbeliever can find out at the offices of the Spiritualist Alliance whether he has a soul or not.' Of course it is impossible to obtain any definite figures as regards the number of 'professed' Spiritualists or of those who admit the truth of spirit intercourse, but we should imagine that there must be many more than the thirty-five thousand he credits us with. Possibly the editorial blue-pencil has been at work, for in another place he speaks of the total membership of the Spiritualist churches as fifty thousand. We fancy that even this estimate is under the mark. If we are wrong we must console ourselves with the reflection that, after all, 'one, and the truth, are a majority.'

Mr. Harold Begbie says that Dr. A. R. Wallace is 'a man eager for the good of his country, the peace of the world, and the righteous glory of humanity.' He sees, with the clear insight of the prophet-seer, that all lasting progress depends upon moral purpose; the attitude of the individuals composing the nations of the earth. There is, to him, but one road of virtue and justice, and he holds 'that all classes in the community, united by the general principle that we are here to help one another, ought to combine so to order our social life that there is no chaos anywhere, no friction in any of the parts, no waste of fuel, no discord in the running, and no division as to the goal.'

The Vienna correspondent of 'The Morning Leader' reports that Hungarian newspapers have recently published particulars respecting a young Roumanian girl, named Tirna Valean, of Koeroesbanya, in Southern Hungary, of whom it is said that: 'wherever she stands or walks stones and pieces of wood fall from the sky upon her, but without hurting or even hitting her. The burgomaster, the judge, the school-mistress, and other reliable persons who have repeatedly seen these mysterious occurrences are quite unable to explain them. The local doctor proposes to send the girl to a hospital in Budapest for examination. The priests suggest that Tirna should be treated by exorcists. She is now in the house of the parish priest, who offered her protection as the villagers persecuted her as a witch.'

A writer in the 'Barnet Press' of the 21st inst., who styles himself 'A Masculine Cook,' argues that because in some matters the testimony of the senses cannot be trusted, because emotion disturbs intellectual operations, and because, in his opinion, the phenomena of Spiritualism are observed in darkened rooms, where excitement, expectation, and emotion prevail, therefore the witnesses cannot be trusted. He holds that 'the things seen and heard are hallucinations—they are subjective not objective,' and advises those who experience such hallucinations to 'see a doctor.' Apparently he is himself hallucinated into the belief that his subjective imaginings dispose of the whole case for Spiritualism and of the 'stories of occurrences' that were 'too well authenticated for it to be possible' for him to doubt them. We would remind him, to use his own words—with a difference—that 'it is much easier to disagree with them [the Spiritualists] than to disprove their conclusions.'

Dr. Andrew Jackson Davis, in a letter to Mr. James Robertson, of Glasgow, written in 1908, said: 'You are a natural finder of rubies and best diamonds in fields where most minds see only stones and worthless material. You hopefully and trustfully "knock," and lo! the door opens wide upon a whole world of unchangeable truth. When your rod smites the rock, the pure water immediately flows forth to refresh and purify our struggling and hungering humanity. You therefore are the true psychical researcher.' There is much truth in this, as everyone who is acquainted with Mr. Robertson knows. He is genial, sympathetic and psychically unfolded, and so gives splendid conditions for the operators on the other side to accomplish what they desire. Mr. Robertson keenly feels that the knowledge of the survival of man should fire the soul and make a man speak out fearlessly, and he acts in harmony with that feeling. To him Spiritualism is a fact of transcendent importance, and he never hesitates to say so.

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 which may elicit discussion.

Spiritualism and Progress.

SIR,—I am much obliged to you for calling my attention to the article on 'Spiritualism and Progress,' as you did in 'Answers to Correspondents' on the 14th inst. I realise there is a large amount of truth in the views expressed by 'B. G. E.,' but he fails to clear up a point on which I desire to write at this time. I contend that Spiritualists, as such, should be at the front in all reform movements, not as isolated individuals but collectively. As London is a centre for national and international conferences on reform subjects, why should we not be represented at such gatherings by delegates bearing the credentials of organised bodies of Spiritualists? At present we are behind the times—not advanced, indeed, as far as some ultra-orthodox churches. I was much struck during the seventeenth Universal Peace Congress in 1908, which I

attended as a delegate from a political association, by the fact that among the seven hundred and odd delegates from all parts of the world, representing a large number of political and religious bodies, there was not one from an organised body of Spiritualists.

I feel that we, as a people, do not live up to our highest and best opportunities; we lag behind in the procession of great reform movements instead of being in the front. We need waking up, and I should be glad to hear from prominent workers their opinion on this matter.—Yours, &c.,

W. E. BONNEY.

Monk Sherborne, Basingstoke.

A Cornish Convert Seeks Advice.

SIR,—I have been a reader of 'LIGHT' for about three years, and last year I had the blessed privilege of holding communication with departed, or rather ever present, loved ones. My wife and I receive very helpful messages from our little girl, and others, by means of the 'Alpha' board, and are perfectly convinced that they come from those they represent themselves to be, as we have had many test questions satisfactorily answered. My wife is a medium, and her spirit brother and her daughter both want to control her, but as we have never had any experience of trance mediumship and there is no one here, so far as we know, who can advise us, we are rather doubtful as to what we should do. She feels very sleepy at times and we have to give up sitting. We should be pleased to meet with or hear from someone who has had experience who would direct us. I have been all my life in a religious society of some sort—Church of England, Methodist, Salvation Army, but they did not give me the satisfaction that Spiritualism does.—Yours, &c.,

Back-road East, St. Ives, Cornwall.

J. TUCKER.

Professor and Mrs. Ayrton: A Correction.

SIR,—My attention has been called to a note in your issue of the 14th inst., which I hope you will allow me to correct.

Quoting from the 'Daily News,' you say 'Among other wives whose scientific attainments have been more or less hidden in the work of their husbands, are Madame Hertha Ayrton, widow of the great electrician, Professor W. E. Ayrton,' &c., &c.

I wish to deny, in the most emphatic manner, that my work was ever hidden in my husband's; he himself took good care that it should not be so. Realising the danger of such a possibility, and being keenly anxious, both as a matter of principle and of affection, that I should get all the credit that was due to me, he always dissociated himself publicly from any research that I was carrying on, and even went so far as to refuse to be my partner in one when I proposed it, because he thought it so essential at the present juncture that there should be no possibility of confusion as to the true authorship of any woman's work.

My husband's behaviour in this matter was so scrupulous that it gave rise to many little jokes in his family; but his attitude was really full of the finest chivalry, and was the best possible answer to the cry that we women must lose in chivalry what we gain in equality.—Yours, &c.,

HERTHA AYRTON.

'No Darkness like Ignorance.'

SIR,—Would any of your readers be kind enough to explain the following experiences, or to mention a book which would enlighten one who is realising the truth that 'there is no darkness like ignorance'?

I know nothing of Spiritualism, nor have I ever attended any meeting, but one day, about four or five months ago, I had been reading and dwelling on some little elementary books on Yoga, Psychometry, and Telepathy, and on going to bed, without any thought of anything Spiritualistic, after turning the light out, I saw a long, narrow streak of white light standing by the side of my bed, which vanished as I walked up to, or as it seemed, almost into it. Afterwards, when in bed, clouds and shadows of light gathered distinctly about me, and the room and atmosphere seemed full of them. I had never experienced anything of the kind before, but since that night these appearances have been a constant nightly occurrence. Black shadows seem to appear and move about. At first balls of light circle about, as if almost from my eyes, it seems. Sometimes a light has come up to me and stood and flashed and twinkled, something like a star. Small pictures have appeared as if in the lights, generally confused, but once or twice one has stood out with great clearness. Sometimes I have heard strange noises.

I should be grateful if I could know whether experiences of this kind are to be encouraged, whether they are productive of good or evil, and whether it is usual for Spiritualists to have such occurrences, and constantly, or whether it is possible to avoid them.—Yours, &c.,

K,

'The Way of the Soul.'

SIR,—We were interested to see your notice of Mr. W. T. Horton's 'Way of the Soul,' on page 13, but surely you are not justified in describing the book as costly? It is published at only 6s. net, and several people have already exclaimed in surprise that the price has not been put higher. We suggest that the expression is rather misleading to readers of your valuable and always interesting paper.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM RIDER & SON, LIMITED.

164, Aldersgate-street,
London, E.C.

Some Critical Remarks.

SIR,—Again there crop up in your issue of the 14th inst. the nine words, torn from the context, 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' Why will writers go out of the way to outrage truth? I have been all over the planes and spheres of heaven and can find no one that believes such nonsense. No real Spiritualist would repeat such an evident falsehood. It is an utter impossibility to reap what we sow, no one does it. We really want more light and a fresh study of the Bible, some intelligent thought on the subject, but I despair of getting it in the movement which is waterlogged with materialism.

Then I read that the Rev. R. J. Campbell is obsessed with the idea that Jesus is inspiring and controlling him. One naturally asks which Jesus? There are as many conceptions of the form and person and name as there are people who talk about him.

Do we want a new vision? Well, consider the material puerility of folks who imagine that children in the spirit world frequent Gamage's or Hamley's to buy undressed dolls! Fancy a child-spirit *handling* toys in an Oxford-street toy shop! This in the twentieth century of Christian progress.

Oh, angels and spirits of light, send us a new vision of your work and place! Give us the visions of old when men saw the rapture of the saints and the ineffable peace and glory of the celestial spheres.

So mote it be. In the spirit—Yours, &c.,

THOS. MAY.

Elmes-road, Winton, Bournemouth.

P.S.—It will be noticed that 'H.' speaks of a *still-born infant* talking, buying and dressing dolls, &c. This opens up afresh the mediæval argument as to the moment of the soul's entry into the body, at conception, quickening, birth and so on; and leads to the reflection that we do not seem to progress much in our ideas of the spirit spheres.—T. M.

An Interesting Problem.

SIR,—As an old member of the Alliance, I venture to bring to your notice a phenomenon which I have frequently observed in the course of my professional duties, and concerning which I should be glad to have the opinion of your readers. I refer to the abnormal mental activity exhibited by some of my patients whilst under the influence of an anæsthetic.

As an instance of this, I was once attending a well-known Church of England clergyman who was about to proceed abroad, to a country in which he subsequently rose to an episcopal position.

For the purpose of extracting a badly decayed tooth I had administered the usual quantity of nitrous oxide gas, with the result, as was to be expected, that the offending molar ceased to trouble. There was, however, a further result of a totally unanticipated character. As the patient regained consciousness he sprang up with a jubilant cry of 'I've got it! I've got it!' 'Got what?' I inquired. 'Got a solution of that mathematical problem which has been puzzling me for weeks,' he replied; 'it came to me in a flash just as I was coming round.'

Space prevents my entering into other details, but I may say that this is no isolated instance in my experience with anæsthetics, and I think that, for students of the occult, this class of phenomena has a deeper significance than that of mere strangeness.

I believe Carl du Prel once postulated the possibility of man's abnormal powers being only really free to act in the dream state. Can it be that, as the result of the dream state, artificially induced by means of anæsthetics, man's higher faculties, momentarily freed from the thralldom of bodily sensations, are, for that moment, free to function at their highest pitch? In other words, do we in such circumstances get a dim glimpse of the real man as he shall function when, leaving his poor work-worn body to kindly mother earth who nourished it, he stands erect at last in the land where thoughts are things and dust is—just dust?—Yours, &c.,

W. WEST, L.D.S.

3, Finsbury-square, E.C.

A Famous Singer's Vision.

SIR,—In the new book, 'The Romance of a Great Singer: A Memoir of Mario,' by Mrs. Godfrey Pearse and Frank Hird (London: Smith, Elder and Co.), there are many things, such as visions and dreams, that will be interesting to the readers of 'LIGHT.' For instance, we read: 'In the spring of 1869 Giulia Grisi had had a strange vision. She had seen her little daughter Maria Bella, who died at Brighton in 1861, standing by her bedside: the child told her they would soon be together again. Mario tried to rally her out of her depression . . . but her belief in its reality was not to be shaken, and she was convinced that her call had come. . . The great singer, Giulia Grisi, passed away on the morning of November 25th, 1869. Her last word was the name of her child. . . Suddenly she raised herself in her bed, stretched out her arms as if to an invisible person, murmured "*Bella*" and then sank back' (pp. 270, 274).—Yours, &c.,

Rome, 59, via Campana.

GIULIO COTTRAU.

A Curious Experience.

SIR,—On many occasions I have had removed and brought back, seemingly without human contact, many personal belongings, the disappearance of which sometimes caused me great inconvenience. The last of these removings happened on the afternoon of the 8th inst. I was then wearing a set of trinkets consisting of a long neckchain and earrings to match (quite new), composed of stones which were sent to me from South Africa and had been made up with enamel on silver. While I was in the sitting room, wearing these, a friend who had called on us saw both earrings in my ears. Suddenly I missed the ring from one ear, and together with my husband and son began to search for it, all agreeing that it *must* be in the room. We hunted for an hour, but could not find it. My husband then suggested that we should have a séance round the table. Since Christmas we have had extraordinary rappings in our sitting-room, some of the strongest being made on the glass of the photograph of our friend Mr. John B. Shipley. When we sat down raps came immediately. Our friend Shipley purported to be communicating. He told us that the earring had been taken from my ear by spirit power and was on the floor. My husband then asked 'Do you see it?' and the reply came 'Yes.' Its position on the floor was then given and we searched again but could not find it. On Friday, the 13th (five days later) I was alone in the house—my husband being in London and my son at the dentist's, and from 10.30 to 11.30 a.m. was busy in my kitchen doing household duties. Suddenly I looked down and there, in front of the fireplace, was my lost earring. It was not broken, but in the place where it lay there were little pieces of the enamel round about it! I was so astonished, and even frightened, that for a few moments I could not move. I am perfectly certain that the earring had been brought back as I stood at the table, for I had passed and re-passed where it was many times during that hour and, I need hardly add, the kitchen had been swept daily since the Sunday. Now, the table raps had told us we should find the earring 'in front of the fireplace,' and so it *was*, but they did not specify the room. This to me is certainly a proof that our friend was communicating with us. The communicating raps in reply to our questions were loud and distinct. The table we use has four legs, and a very solid firm frame.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCES EAVEY PETERS.

May I add that my wife is of a sceptical turn of mind, but this experience has fully convinced her of the truth of spirit return and power. I should like to say all occurred as written above.

ALFRED VOUT PETERS.

This account, as my mother has given it, is correct.

PERCY R. PETERS.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- 'A Holiday with a Hegelian.' By FRANCIS SEDLAK. London: A. C. Fifield. 3s. 6d. *net*.
 'Contrasts: Poems of Poverty' (illustrated). By W. B. NORTHROP. 6d.
 'The Psychic Realm.' By E. KATHARINE BATES. London: Greening & Co., Ltd. 2s. 6d. *net*.
 'Fashionable Furs—How they are Obtained.' By EDITH CARRINGTON. Our Animal Brothers' Guild, Bristol. 1d.
 'The Alliance of Honour Record' for January. Morgan & Scott, Paternoster-buildings, E.C. Quarterly, 1d.
 'How Sealskins are Obtained.' By JOSEPH COLLINSON. 'The Sentimental Vegetarian.' By M. LITTLE. Animals' Friend Society. 2d. each.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold the Annual Conference with the Ealing Society on Sunday, February 5th, at 7 p.m. Speakers, Messrs. G. Tayler Gwinn and Geo. F. Tilby.

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 22nd, &c.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—*Cavendish Rooms*.—Mr. Leigh Hunt gave successful clairvoyant descriptions and helpful messages to a deeply interested audience. Mr. A. J. Watts presided.—*Percy Hall*.—On Monday, the 16th inst., Miss Florence Morse gave excellent clairvoyant descriptions to members and friends. Mr. Leigh Hunt presided. Sunday next, see advt.—D. N.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—Miss Violet Burton gave an address. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Sarfas, address and clairvoyance; Lyceum, 3. Circles: Monday, 7.30, ladies'; Tuesday, 8.15, members'; Thursday, 8.15, public. Wednesday, 7, Lyceum.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, HAMPTON WICK.—Mr. G. Tayler Gwinn gave an address on 'Spirit Teachings' and answered questions. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Geo. Sexton's control will speak on 'The Mediums of the Bible.'

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—Mr. Stebbens and Mrs. Boddington gave addresses. Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., public circle; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Podmore. Thursday, February 2nd, at 8.30 p.m., public circle; silver collection.—N. B.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, FERNHURST-ROAD.—Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Effie Bathe on 'Auric Colours, their Psychic Significance.' Saturday, the 28th, at 7.30, musical play, 'Maid Marian.' Proceeds towards building fund. Admission 6d.

STRATFORD.—WORKMEN'S HALL, 27, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—Mr. T. Olman Todd lectured on 'The Miracles of the Ages' to a crowded audience. Solos were sung by Mr. and Mrs. Alcock-Rush and Miss Carter. Sunday next, Mr. Todd's fourth and last lecture of the series will be 'Foregleams of Immortality.'—W.H.S.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—Mr. J. Macbeth Bain gave an interesting address on 'The Food Question.' Sunday next, Miss F. Morse will give addresses and clairvoyant descriptions; also on Monday at 8. Meetings for clairvoyance: Wednesday, at 3; Thursday, at 8, public circle.

BRIXTON.—KOSMON HOUSE, 73, WILTSHIRE-ROAD.—Mr. F. T. A. Davies gave an instructive address on 'The Mystic Path,' followed by clairvoyant descriptions by Mrs. Johnson, Miss Betty Boyd, and Miss Ethel Smith. Public services on Sunday at 7 p.m., and Wednesday at 8.15 p.m.

CROYDON.—ELMWOOD HALL, ELMWOOD-ROAD, BROAD-GREEN.—Mr. E. W. Wallis gave an uplifting address on 'The Use of Spiritualism.' An enjoyable social gathering was held on the 20th. Mrs. Jamrach, Mrs. Imison and Mr. J. Skinner kindly gave illustrations of clairvoyance and palmistry. Sunday next, at 11.15 and 7, Mr. and Mrs. J. Roberts.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—Nurse Graham gave an address on 'Do the Spirit People really help us?' and excellent clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, Mrs. Mary Davies, address and clairvoyant descriptions. February 5th, Mrs. Podmore; February 10th, 8 p.m., Mrs. Fanny Roberts; February 11th, 7 p.m., social evening.—N. R.

PECKHAM.—LAUSANNE HALL, LAUSANNE-ROAD.—Morning, a circle was held. Evening, Mrs. Mary Davies spoke on 'Thought Vibrations and their Spiritual Significance,' and gave clairvoyant descriptions. On the 19th inst. Mrs. Webster gave an address and psychometric delineations. Sunday next, morning and evening, Mrs. Alice Webb; and Sunday week, Mrs. F. Roberts.—A. C. S.

FOREST GATE.—447, KATHERINE-ROAD.—Morning, Mr. Primmer gave an address on 'Spiritualism and Universal Peace,' followed by discussion; evening, Mr. Connor spoke on 'What Spiritualism Teaches,' and Mrs. Connor gave clairvoyant descriptions. Healing by Mr. E. Lewis. 29th, at 11.30, men's discussion class; at 6.30, Mrs. Jamrach; February 5th, Mr. and Mrs. Smith; 12th, Mrs. T. Olman Todd.—A. T. C.

HIGHGATE.—GROVEDALE HALL, GROVEDALE-ROAD.—Morning, Mr. Karl Reynolds spoke on 'Life Here and Life Beyond.' Evening, Mr. Horace Leaf gave an uplifting address on 'Philosophy and Teachings' and clairvoyant descriptions. On the 18th Mrs. Jamrach gave an address and successful clairvoyant descriptions. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., Mr. A. W. Jones; at 7 p.m., Mr. J. Kelland. Wednesday, Mrs. Podmore. February 5th, Mrs. Jamrach.—J. F.

BOURNEMOUTH.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, TOWN HALL AVENUE.—At 11 a.m. Mr. Thomas May spoke on 'Symbolism.' At 7 p.m., Mr. A. Punter gave clairvoyant descriptions. On the 19th Mr. H. Hiscock gave an address and Mr. F. T. Blake clairvoyant descriptions. The annual business meeting was held on Wednesday, January 18th. The balance-sheet showed a very satisfactory financial result for the past year, and the members warmly expressed their appreciation of the work that had been done by the retiring officials. The election of office-bearers for 1911 resulted as follows: Hon. Presidents, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, O.M., F.R.S., Mr. J. Sharpe, M.A., and Mr. J. Castnor; President, Mr. H. Mundy; Vice-Presidents, Mr. F. T. Blake and Mr. H. Hiscock; Secretary, Mr. John Walker; Treasurer, Mr. F. T. Blake; Cor. Secretary, Mrs. Walker; Organist, Mr. W. J. Street; General Committee, Mr. J. Hunt, Mr. A. Punter, and Mr. Taylor.