

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

The Yule log has given way to a gas fire, the Christmas coach is represented by a motor 'bus, the place of the 'mummers' is occupied by a musical comedy or a cinematograph show. Even the Christmas dinner that of yore meant the reunion of the scattered members of a family under the roof of the old home is eaten at a fashionable hotel. The 'Ghost of Christmas Past' has more cause for lamentation than ever it had when it paid its memorable visit to Ebenezer Scrooge. That spirit, we remember, had for its headgear a great extinguisher, and in his struggle with it Scrooge

seized the extinguisher cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head. The spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light which streamed from under it in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

There is a parable there. All the artificiality of modern life will fail in putting an extinguisher on Christmas. The light will continue to stream forth, for it is the light of Spirit.

As for the 'Ghost of Christmas Present,' it has its redeeming features. True, its old, warm, homespun simplicities have departed. It carries an electric light in place of the old blazing torch, its holly branch looks suspiciously unnatural with its imitation leaves and berries, and the carols that greet its approach have a music-hall flavour. It has a jaded look—it is not so festive as its forerunners. But it has not forgotten the poor, for it comes laden with a great store of dolls, and is rumoured to have filled the stockings of many thousands of poor children of late years with seasonable gifts. Santa Claus has abandoned his sledge for an automobile (or haply an aeroplane) but he is still Santa Claus. In a word, Christmas is not changed at heart. And perhaps the 'Spirit of Christmas Yet to Be,' while preserving all the old kindness and festivity, will come to us with something of the ancient freshness and simplicity, so that the 'Nature spirits'—whose memory is preserved by the greenery with which we deck our homes—will find its coming less uncongenial than they must assuredly do at present.

Mrs. Hubert Bland, better known to the reading public as 'E. Nesbit,' has been saying some wise things concerning fairy stories. She observed, for instance:—

It seems to me so foolish to tell children that fairies don't exist, and then a little later on expect them to believe in spiritual things—in all the great, wonderful world that lies behind the things we touch and see,

It is, indeed, foolish. It was the Gradgrinds, the 'hustlers,' the 'hard-headed, practical men' who began it. They poured their cheap contempt on the fanciful, the romantic and imaginative side of life. They talked of 'moonshine,' and the necessity for 'facts and figures' and a whole-hearted devotion to the 'stern realities.' And they got their facts and figures in the shape of statistics of crime and depravity and physical degeneration and neurasthenia and 'freak dinners' and other evidences of a lack of spiritual health in the community. These were among the realities for which they clamoured. We hope they are satisfied, or, rather, dissatisfied.

But to return to the fairies, which are ever so much more interesting than the doctrines of those political economists which have made life for the rising generation such a squalid struggle. As 'E. Nesbit' points out:—

It's quite natural that children should believe in fairies, because, you know, all the young races of the world have believed in them, and children pass through, in a certain sense, the various stages of evolution. Of course, I don't mean that you should tell a child that a fairy exists in the same way that a poker or a flower-pot exists, but there is not the least need, even in these days of science, to kill the natural exercise of a child's imagination.

'In these days of science,' however, it is worth noting, there is an uneasy feeling amongst some of the scientists that, somehow, things are not what they seem. It is beginning to be questioned whether the 'real' things are so very real after all. There is a suspicion that the unknown something in man which tabulates facts and sets down figures may be more of a reality in the true sense than any of the facts or figures with which it deals. Pursued with eager persistence, the 'solid' things—the things that chink and rattle and can be handled and weighed—show signs of being very sorry illusions after all compared even with the 'airy nothings' that belong to the ideal world. So 'the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.' The Thing, the Thought and the Thinker. That was the old order. The thing first because it was 'substantial,' the thought next because it aided to procure the thing, and the thinker, well, he was left to take care of himself—if he could. And now the order of importance is being slowly changed. A transformation quite of the fairyland type.

There were never days in which the soul had more need of harbours of refuge. Mr. Francis Grierson, whose writings stamp him as a thinker and seer of rare vision, proclaims music to be the greatest refuge of the spirit. Music, as he well says,

is the only art untrammelled by sects, opinions, parties, and geographical limits with an adequate expression for all the varying moods of humanity, and the most subtle intimations of a world lying beyond that of reason and will.

That divine art with which we link the names of St. Cecilia, of Euterpe and Erato, is now, according to Mr. Grierson, only beginning to receive due attention as a ministry to the deeper needs of the spirit. The myriad

discords of an age of materialistic ideals have fairly driven the more highly-wrought minds for solace to the world of harmony. Music, indeed, 'makes a psychic appeal to the higher states of consciousness,' by providing a means of religious exaltation.

Professor Orth, of Cornell University, in a letter to the New York 'Times,' supplements and enforces Mr. Grierson's argument. In the course of his letter he observes:—

Francis Grierson maintains that the people are themselves seeking a refuge that has elsewhere been denied them, in the significant and world-wide revival of the musical art. In other words, the people are beginning to revolt against the annihilation of the æsthetic emotions. . . . We are under debt to him [Mr. Grierson] for his chaste and penetrating analysis that goes deep under the surface and brings to light the supreme motives of life, and warns us that relief from the delusion of materialism and the false solace of riches cannot come through any mere formal arrangement of society, but must spring from the deeper emotionalism of the soul.

Nowadays the protest against the sordid and soul-deadening conditions of the modern world comes from many quarters and in many forms. The appeal to music is full of promise, for music holds the key to all literature and philosophy.

We have received from Lahore a pamphlet containing the powerful address delivered by Professor T. L. Vaswani at the Berlin World Congress of Religions held in August, 1910, but as this received attention in many quarters at the time of its delivery, we cannot do more now than acknowledge it as a welcome addition to our pamphlet-literature. But accompanying it is a smaller pamphlet containing an address delivered during 1912 to the Young Men's Christian Association at Karachi. It is entitled 'The Path of Service' and contains many fine thoughts. It is indeed a happy message that 'the secret of the world process is *ananda*, Joy.'

Over and over again is the truth sung in our [Hindu] scriptures that the Parent Spirit is Joy. Your own books set forth the same truth in the words, 'God is love.' It is the joy of Love which is expressed in the beauteous forms of Nature and the highest life of Man. The impulse and origin of all is the self-giving of God's love, and that self-giving of the Spirit has no pain-element because it is spontaneous.

That doctrine of joy is peculiarly appropriate for the Christmas season.

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS.

(From many Shrines.)

Almighty God! when I look at the starry heavens, how I wonder at Thy infinity, for I know not Thy beginning and end, Thy height and depth. The radiance of the sun, the calmer light of the moon, the soft gleam of the stars, all remind me of Thee and Thy power and wisdom. When I look around me, the loveliness and fragrance of the flower, the ripple of the brook, the melody of the bird's song, all tell me of Thy sweetness and beauty. In the home the mother's care for her child, the child's affection for, and implicit faith in, its mother, teach me Thy motherly care for me and incite me to a warmer love for, and more perfect trust in, the Divine Author of my being. O Thou Holy Spirit-God! do Thou lead me into all truth. Thou hast enabled me to see, by Thy light, that Thou alone canst lead man from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to life eternal. Holy Spirit! I look up to Thee for light and guidance. Out of Thy grace Thou dost daily speak to me through Thy universe, and I cannot mistake Thy message. Thou wouldst have my life be radiant as the sun, calm and pure as the moon, fragrant as the flower, joyous as the song of the bird, seeking Thee even as the stream seeks the ocean, and confident in Thee with the confidence of a child in its mother. Help me, in that filial confidence, to say in all things, 'Thy will be done.' Amen.

SEVERAL letters and other communications intended for this issue of 'LIGHT' are unavoidably held over until next week.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

AFTERNOON SOCIAL GATHERING.

On Thursday, January 9th, at 3 o'clock, a SOCIAL GATHERING will be held at 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.; and at 4 p.m. Miss S. W. MACCREADIE will give clairvoyant descriptions of spirit friends present. Tea will be served during the afternoon. Admission to this meeting will be confined to Members and Associates. No tickets required.

During 1913 the following meetings will be held in the SALON OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East, S.W. (near the National Gallery):—

- Jan. 16—Mr. Percy R. Street on 'Psychic Development; its Relation to Body and Mind.'
- „ 30—Rev. Lucking Tavener on 'The Spiritual Life as Expressed in Greek Art.' With sixty lantern illustrations.
- Feb. 13—Mr. J. I. Wedgwood on 'A Theosophic Conception of the Invisible Worlds.'
- „ 27—Mrs. Despard on 'The Spiritual Aspect of the Woman's Movement.'
- Mar. 13—Miss Estelle W. Stead on 'What Spiritualism Means to Me, and Some Messages Received.'
- „ 27—Mr. E. W. Wallis on 'Spiritual Emancipation by the Elimination of Fear.'
- Apr. 10—Mr. Angus McArthur. (Subject to be announced.)
- „ 24—'Cheiro' on 'Hands of Famous People.' With lantern illustrations.
- May 8—Miss Felicia Scatcherd on 'Psychophasms and Skotographs': psychic pictures produced in darkness.

SPIRIT HEALING.—Daily, except Thursdays and Saturdays, Mr. Percy R. Street, the healing medium, will attend between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., for diagnosis by a spirit control, magnetic healing, and delineations from the personal aura.

On Thursday evening, the 12th inst., in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, Mr. H. Biden Steele delivered a thoughtful and earnest Address to the Members and Associates on 'Psychic Investigation from Several Aspects, with some Illustrations.' We shall give a full report of this Address in our January issues.

'LIGHT': 'TRIAL' SUBSCRIPTION.

As an inducement to new and casual readers to become subscribers, we will supply 'LIGHT' for thirteen weeks, *post free*, for 2s., as a 'trial' subscription, feeling assured that at the termination of that period they will find that they 'cannot do without it,' and will then subscribe at the usual rates. May we at the same time suggest to those of our regular readers who have friends to whom they would like to introduce the paper, that they should avail themselves of this offer, and forward to us the names and addresses of such friends, upon receipt of which, together with the requisite postal order, we shall be pleased to send 'LIGHT' to them by post, as stated above?

FINCHLEY.—Speaking at a chamber meeting at 'Durie Dene,' Bibbworth-road, Church End, Finchley, on the 13th inst., Miss Edith K. Harper gave a *resumé* of the work of 'Julia's Bureau' during the three years of its existence, and showed that a large number of applications from all parts of the world had been successfully dealt with. Miss Harper also described some experiences with Mrs. Wriedt, which afforded strong presumptive evidence of the identity of the manifesting spirits. Appreciative comments and questions followed, and a cordial vote of thanks to Miss Harper, on the motion of Mr. Arthur G. Wallis, seconded by Mr. W. R. Cowan, was carried with acclamation.

'OLD MOORE'S MONTHLY MESSENGER' for December has not much to say about the Balkan War; it prefers rather to refer to the horoscopes of the kings concerned than to forecast the course of events. The solar ingress into Capricorn (December 22nd) is ominous for the Government, and a general election is not unlikely. 'Sepharial' deals in an interesting way with the nativity of Japan's new Mikado. Other articles discuss 'Experimental Psychology versus Fortune-Telling,' 'Thirteen,' and 'Astrology and Western Civilisation.' The promised portrait and horoscope of the 'Frog-child' are given. The weather for the month, we note, is to be unsettled, with high winds and rains.

THE HAUNTINGS AT D— HOUSE.

BY E. FRANCIS.

We took D— House one September several years ago. I and one of the maids went to it three days before the rest of the family, but we were to sleep the first two nights at the village inn.

D— House was a rambling old place; the principal part was only about one hundred years old, but the rest of the building was reputed to be over two hundred, and had originally been a farm house. It was approached by a lane leading off the high road, and stood in a small park. The situation was somewhat lonely, but needless to say, we had not the slightest idea of any hauntings connected with it. We, the maid H. and myself, were very busy the first two days and saw nothing to alarm us. We did not leave the house until 11 p.m., and on the third day H. informed me that the landlady of the inn had remarked that we must be very brave to remain there alone so late at night.

'I expect they are nervous about tramps,' I said, and thought no more about it.

On this day one of my brothers joined us, and we slept that night at the house. My bedroom was in the front of the house in the old part, and was approached by a dressing-room leading off a long passage. I was tired out, and slept soundly until the early morning, when I suddenly awoke. My window was wide open at the top and the linen blind drawn down. I lay for awhile wide awake, when suddenly I heard wheels coming up the lane, and to my astonishment they turned into the drive and drew up under the porch. I could hear the crunching of wheels on the gravel and the horses stamping and jingling their bits, all the while blowing and snorting, as horses do; then a moment later all was silence. I jumped out of bed, and, lifting the blind, looked out, but it was too dark to see anything; the time by my watch was 2 a.m. I was not frightened, but thought it strange, and I never heard it again, nor could I ever satisfactorily account for it.

It was in November that the first startling phenomenon occurred. There was a small room in the old part which we used as a writing-room. I had been sitting there until it became too dark to read, when I went to fetch a lamp from a table in the passage outside, and was busy lighting it, when suddenly I heard the most frightful noise that I have ever heard or hope to hear again. It seemed to come from the stable yard, so I opened the passage door and listened. A terrible wailing, sobbing, and shrieking seemed to fill the air, mingled with a sound like the clashing of arms. Out I rushed into the yard and there found the coachman and the gardener listening horror-struck. The noise seemed to come from a field a little way off, on the other side of the lane; I ran out into the lane, but could see nothing there. Meanwhile the noise continued, so, running indoors, I summoned my father (who, by the way, was a pronounced sceptic regarding things psychical), and he came to the hall door, scoffing, to listen. The next moment he seized a hunting crop and ran out into the lane, telling me to remain where I was. However, I felt obliged to follow him. It was twilight, and save for the uncanny noise, was one of those still, breathless autumn evenings. We ran to a large field which sloped down to a copse; a field which had always held a curious attraction for my sister and myself, it was so large and bare and there seemed to be something weird and melancholy about it; we used to say we felt as if a battle had been fought there long ago. As we reached it the noise decreased, fell into alternate moanings and wailings. One moment it seemed to come from the end near the copse, and next instant it filled the air overhead, but during all this time nothing whatever was to be seen. Presently the sounds ceased, and as they died away a dog in the yard began to howl. Later the same night the coachman heard the noise again, but fainter, in the kitchen garden. He said that it seemed to be in the air above him, and he ran home in a fright. A few months later one of the maids also heard it while waiting in the lane for her 'young man.' Risking her swain's disappointment, she returned to the house much upset.

The next occurrence took place in December. My mother came to me and said that several times when she had been alone

in the writing-room rather late at night, she had heard deep sighs behind her, but on turning sharply could see no one, nor did a thorough search reveal anything which could account for the strange sound. This had made her so nervous that she determined not to remain there alone at night any longer. She had mentioned this to the maid H., an old and trusted servant, and to her astonishment H. had confessed to hearing the same thing in the butler's pantry, not once, but several times. She said it was always after 10 p.m. that she had heard it, and at first she had fancied that someone was playing a trick upon her, but it had since happened when all save herself and my parents had retired to bed. Soon after this, when in bed one night I heard a loud groan, which seemed to come from the room beneath—the writing-room. It was repeated three times, at intervals, and I was much frightened; but before we left I had heard this several times, also the sighs. My sister's bedroom adjoined mine, and had two doors to it—one leading on to the principal landing, the other into my dressing-room. One night she suddenly awoke from an apparently dreamless sleep in a state of terror, imagining that something dark and oppressive was leaning over her, and trying in some way to communicate with her. Then the presence seemed to lift, and she lay for a few moments trying to regain her presence of mind. After a few minutes she was able to get out of bed and lock her door; she was scarcely back in bed again when she heard the cuckoo clock on the landing outside strike 'three,' much to her relief for the familiar sound brought comfort; but almost immediately afterwards a dreadful groan came from outside the same door. For the first and only time in her life she felt her hair literally stand on end, and she lay awake till the dawn, almost too frightened to breathe or move. A few days later, when calling on some neighbours, we were asked if we intended to stay a long time at D— House, as 'nobody stays there long'!

Besides the groaning, which in time I became almost used to, several of the family heard footsteps walking up and down the corridors, at different times during the night. Many a time, when I knew all the household had retired, have I sallied out, candle in hand, to discover who it was, but all in vain. My mother once pursued them down the corridor, to no better purpose. One night when I was away from home, my sister and the cook were talking together in a room near to mine, the door being half closed, when they heard footsteps coming down the passage; then, to their surprise, for it was late, they heard them enter the dressing-room, the door of which stood open. 'There's someone going into E.'s room,' exclaimed my sister, and jumping up she ran into the dressing-room right on the very heels of the 'ghost.' Of course, the room was empty and my bedroom door was locked. A little while after this, H. said that she was awakened in the middle of the night by groans which seemed to come from my room (she slept near me). She came to my door to listen, but, finding all dark and silent, returned to her own room. Sometimes I would hear the footsteps cross the polished boards of the dressing-room floor and actually come up to my very door, and this made me so nervous that I changed my room for a while; eventually, however, I returned to my own apartment.

One Sunday morning at about six o'clock my mother came down to fetch a book from the study. While there she heard footsteps coming down the stone-flagged passage from the kitchen quarters. She called out to know who was there, but receiving no answer, she came out into the hall just in time to see a pair of bare legs and a fluttering white garment vanishing round the top of the stairs into the long corridor at the head of the staircase. My mother ran upstairs in pursuit, and made the most searching inquiries as to who it could have been, but with every appearance of truth one and all denied having left their rooms—in fact, most of the household were still asleep. The cook, however, who happened to be awake, said that she had heard my mother's steps go down the corridor, and a moment later had heard other footsteps following her; a little while later these other footsteps came scurrying back, stopping at my dressing-room door just as my mother was heard returning. This was certainly very odd, as my mother was so positive that the footsteps came along the lower corridor. H. had a similar experience one Sunday morning when she was leaving the house for the early service.

About this time we were told of a sad occurrence which had happened at D—House many years previously. One of the former tenants had been addicted to drink, and subject to *delirium tremens*. Finally, he had a last and terrible attack, during which his ravings and struggles were appalling. He never recovered his senses, and died early one Sunday morning. The circumstances attendant on his death had instilled such horror into the minds of the other inmates that they refused to allow his body to remain in the house, and had it placed in the coach-house until the funeral. I discovered, after discreet questionings, that this tenant had spent most of his time in the old wing, but when I asked which was his bedroom, my informant, after having ascertained who slept in the room I occupied, returned an evasive answer!

Once my mother woke in the early morning and saw a woman's figure standing by the dressing-table. 'How did you get in here?' my mother said. 'The door is locked.' Receiving no answer and being only half awake, she turned over and went to sleep. When she awoke again she got up and tried the door—it was locked as usual. My father now told us that once, when crossing the hall late at night, when all but himself were in bed, he had seen, reflected in the large pier-glass facing the stairs, a woman's figure ascending them. He also saw the same figure standing beside a standard lamp in the drawing-room as he passed the open door; but, on entering the room, found it empty. Once, while sitting in the drawing-room when the rest of the family were at dinner, I saw the same figure cross the hall and ascend the stairs. I followed it and found the upstairs rooms empty, and on inquiry found all the maids were downstairs as usual at that hour. I must add here that we never could discover any reason for this *female* ghost; but in such an old house many tragedies had no doubt taken place.

On another Sunday morning an extraordinary thing happened. The staircase was lighted by a domed skylight; I was going upstairs, when from over my head came the crash of breaking glass and the tinkling sound as the pieces fell. Instinctively I crouched into an angle of the stairs, raising my arm to protect my head, but on looking fearfully up, to my amazement I saw the skylight was unbroken! At the same time my mother came out of an upstairs room and said: 'Someone has broken all the china in B.'s room' (which stood at the head of the stairs), while my father came into the hall below and said: 'What is smashed?' But nothing in the house had been broken. A day or two later my sister B. in her bedroom, and my father in his study below, both heard, simultaneously, a noise in the air beside them resembling the falling of a loose faggot of wood. Twice, also, were similar sounds heard by the maids while at dinner in the kitchen, but, as usual, nothing broken could be found to account for them.

As all these things made my sister and myself somewhat nervous, we fixed up a speaking tube between our bed-rooms, so that at any time of the night we could call each other quickly. One day our old nurse S. said to us: 'I do wish you young ladies wouldn't talk so late down your speaking tube, you kept me awake a long time last night.' (S.'s room was opposite ours.) On our assuring her that we had not done so, she said she thought she heard us using it quite late, and that we had been trying to frighten her; as we kept calling out: 'Help me, help me!'

In connection with this cry for help it may not be amiss here to mention that my sister dreamt that she heard the dreadful noise that I have referred to above, outside her window, and mingling with it were repeated cries of 'They're killing me!'

But two of the most alarming episodes were still to come, and they also were the last.

For several reasons, unconnected with the hauntings, we decided to leave D—House. My mother and sister were away house-hunting, and save for my father and the servants I was alone at home. One night I had retired about eleven o'clock, and as I was not feeling sleepy I took a book and read until a little past midnight, when I blew out my candle. Hardly had I done so when, in the stillness of the sleeping house, I heard heavy, dragging footsteps coming down the corridor and across the dressing-room floor, then a weighty body flung itself against my door and the handle was violently

rattled. I shall never forget what I went through in that awful moment that seemed an eternity. Luckily the door was locked, but would that have been any safeguard against the ghostly visitor? It apparently was, for a moment later the noise ceased and all was still as the grave; but I did not hear the footsteps *go away*. At last I dared to strike a light, and was too terrified to sleep until the early morning. S., who slept opposite, heard nothing.

The last thing to happen was as follows:

We were in the very throes of moving, and all day I had been busy packing. It was March, and about six o'clock I went into the kitchen. While there, S. and I began to discuss 'the ghost,' and, in fun, I said, laughingly, 'Well, though I've heard him so often, I've never seen him, and I *should* like to before I leave.' A little later I came out into the passage on my way to the hall. This passage was a winding one, and rather dark. As I turned a corner I saw a tall man standing in the middle of the passage close to the door of the writing-room. Thinking it was one of the packers (who were at the time still in the house), as it was too tall for one of our servants, I advanced to meet him. He made no effort to move out of my way, but thinking that, of course, he would move aside for me, I still went on. I came right up to him; he still blocked my way, and before I could stop myself, *I had walked right through him*. Even now I can vividly recall the awful shock it gave me. 'Oh, S.,' I cried out, 'I've walked through the ghost!'

Truly my thoughtless wish was speedily granted.

We left D—House a week later. Some years ago I heard that a family had taken it, and had apparently found nothing to alarm them there, but just before we left we heard from neighbours that D—House *was* haunted. There was a tradition in the village that the lane was haunted also, but how, or by what, was lost in obscurity.

[We have received, in confidence, the full name and particulars of the house described as 'D—House,' also letters from the mother and sister of E. Francis confirming the accuracy of the account given above.—ED. 'LIGHT.']

LIFE WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE VEIL.

BY L. V. H. WITLEY.

VI.

SPIRIT COMMUNION AND MINISTRY.

Certain theologians—and these not always of the minor persuasion—would appear to regard Spiritualism as always a safe subject upon which to 'play to the gallery.'

For example, the editor of one of the best-known British religious weeklies recently wrote: 'Without the exception of a single sentence or a single line, new messages from the spirit world are all tommy-rot of an unmitigated kind.'

Two other cases may be cited, one a leading English Presbyterian minister and the other a dean of the Church of England. The first suffered himself to say: 'In all the records of Spiritualism, with their extraordinary futility, and even vulgarity, I have never myself been able to detect a trace of moral impulse or real inspiration.' And the second—who, curiously enough, is by way of being an authority on mysticism—says: 'For myself, I would not touch psychical research with the end of a broom-handle, and any belief in immortality arising from such causes is not worth having.'

If these *obiter dicta* are not flowers of rhetoric, the kindest thing, surely, is to attribute them to lack of knowledge—or, to use a plainer term, to ignorance—of their subject.

Personal testimony, however, deserves a different reception. However unpalatable it may be to Spiritualists, they cannot complain of such obviously sincere statements as that recently made by the Rev. Dinsdale Young: 'Modern Spiritualism is extremely perilous. I have known friends of my own who have, by it, completely wrecked their nervous systems.'

It is not within my province, at the moment, to rebut—at any rate, directly—Mr. Young's attack or avowal. I propose to take a better course—to allow him to answer himself. In my previous article I drew attention to Dr. Frank Ballard's outspoken opinions as to the conceptions of the hereafter held

by many expositors of Christianity up to quite recent times. It so happens that Mr. Dinsdale Young and Dr. Frank Ballard are both prominent ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference—albeit the former is avowedly on the right wing and the latter clearly on the left. One evidence of this fundamental difference in outlook is to be found in comparing the following utterance of Dr. Ballard with the statement of Mr. Young as quoted above. Dr. Ballard says: 'Whether light comes from science or philosophy, from Spiritism or Theosophy, from apparitions or telepathy, matters not—so long as it is light.'

To return to Mr. Young, however; it will be difficult to believe that his condemnation of Spiritualism was uttered after a clear and outspoken testimony of his own personal experience of spirit communion and ministry—one of the fundamental positions of the 'modern Spiritualism' which he disavows so expressly. I quote his own words:—

It does not require a great exercise of the imagination to believe that those who are gone, those who know the realities of the other side, would vehemently plead with us as preachers to speak about the *first* things more urgently. With many preachers one of the greatest evangelistic impulses is the inward sense we have of the monitions of the dear ones who are gone.

I share the view that the dead hold communion with the living. Communion with the unseen has been a very real experience to me for many years. In preaching I constantly have a sense of the presence and influence of those who are gone, and I have had experiences in dreams, when I have been spiritually at my best, during which I am certain there has been a real impact of the spirits of the departed upon my own.

I think the dead know what we are doing. I have always had a strong conviction that they do, although, as Tennyson says, they see life with larger, other eyes than ours. I can never resist the feeling that in some degree they have a realisation of our personal experiences, and I would not surrender the feeling for worlds.

CHRISTMAS: ITS ORIGIN AND MEANINGS.

BY J. M. PEEBLES, M.D.

Years, with their sunshine, their shadows and festivities, come and go like sea waves. If the new is old, it is equally true that the old is new, a new realisation upon each returning Christmas. How the aged and the young welcome this festal day!

'I wish you a merry Christmas!' How these happy, inspiring words, all afire with good cheer, ring out from the lips of the million! How this anniversary takes the aged, whose hairs are silvered with the frosts of many winters, back to the dreamland of their youth! How it reminds them of those old family gatherings when the youth, the children, and the scattered relatives flocked back to the old homestead, and emphasises anew those tender words, 'Mother, Home and Heaven.' How it recalls that auspicious night in a far distant land when the star appeared in the East, and the angels sang to the watching shepherds, 'Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.'

In ancient times noted persons, kings and orators, after their death, were exalted, honoured, and worshipped as gods. This was especially true in Oriental lands and in so-called pagan lands. And it is evident that some of the Christian festivals were borrowed from the Pagans and held at or about the same time. For instance, Saturn (Chronos) was honoured as a god, and his season of festivity was called the Saturnalia—a Roman festival, and celebrated on December 17th and 19th. When this empire became powerful, this festival lasted for seven days.

Bunsen informs us that it was late in December when Gautama Buddha was born. His birth was celebrated, and is still celebrated, among the Buddhists of China. In Egypt, Horus, son of Isis, was born in December. And Greece, in the winter solstice, celebrated the birth of Dionysus, while Persia honoured the birth of Mithras, said to have occurred in December. That the Hebrew Christians, coming into racial relations with Greeks and Romans, adopted many expressions derived from the pagan philosophy and pagan ceremonies, no scholar will dispute; and Spiritualists, being eclectics, do the same thing.

From the mysteries connected with the Druids, or the Scandinavians, a strange ceremony was borrowed, relating to the yule-log. This was quite a long block of hard wood, placed across the fireplace, at which, when it began blazing, the candles were lighted; the holly branches were then waved and the songs of jollification commenced. In those quiet old days of our motherland, the English enthused far more over Christmas than they do now, and in a more material and jolly way. What changes since then! No railroads, no telegraphs, no telephones, no typewriters, no electric lights then. Those old times have given place to sunny social gatherings, beautiful floral decorations, and renewals of former friendships. Though those old scenes and the sermons and blighting dogmas of damnation of our boyhood years have vanished into an abysmal past, Christmas, with its merriment, its shoutings, its gladsome gatherings, its homestead festivals, still lives. Things rooted in principles and great characters, heaven inspired, never die.

Human life at longest is brief. We brought nothing material into this world, and we can take nothing material out of it; and it is of little consequence whether anyone is born in a palace or a peasant's hut. It is reported that Jesus, the Christ, was born in a manger; and yet, in a few hundred years, proud, imperial Rome trembled from her foundations because of the psychic forces concealed in that manger. Christmas points the thinking mind back to that humble birth, to that man, medium and martyr, who, while going about doing good, had not where to lay his head, and Christians in all enlightened countries honour that inspired exemplar. It is remarkable how this character strikes the minds of different people. To the uncultured and atheistic agnostic, Jesus never lived—he was a mere myth—while to thousands of others he is an incarnation of Deity. To the great German, Strauss, he was a wise Rabbi; to the great Jewish Rabbi, Akiba, he was a magician; to the illustrious Renan, a sublime moral teacher; to Fourier, a warm-hearted Socialist; to Fenelon, a most rapt mystic; to Thomas Paine, the most sincere of philanthropists; to Mueller, the harmony of all history; to Emerson, the transcendental prophet; to Parker, a fellow brother and self-sacrificing reformer; to A. J. Davis, the great Syrian seer; to Mrs. Cora Richmond, the messenger from heaven; to Colonel Ingersoll, he was one of the 'most generous and self-denying men, for whom I feel only admiration and respect.' These illustrious and highly unfolded thinkers express my conceptions of that Judean Christ, who, using the inspired words of that eminent speaker and author, W. J. Colville, is undoubtedly 'the reigning power of the moral universe.' To many Spiritualists and liberalists in America Jesus was a highly inspired man, begotten naturally, yet on a higher spiritual plane than the masses of mankind—that is to say, in the conception, the parties were governed by pure spiritual love. Every conception should be immaculate, having within the germinal possibilities of a forthcoming Christ—the word Christ meaning the anointed, the illumined, the heavenly inspired. Jesus was called The Christ, after being baptised and anointed. The world has had many Christs in the past ages; and as the world develops and unfolds, there will be more Christed souls as Saviours, such as Krishna, Gautama Buddha, The Christ, Lord Gauranga, &c. Give these saviours all the honour that is their due.

Finally, with heart warm with affection and a soul overflowing with love and kindness, I wish you, friends and acquaintances, A Merry Christmas. May peace and prosperity and the choicest blessings of heaven rest upon and abide with you.

5,719, Fayette-street,
Los Angeles, California.

WE cut the following lines from the Boston 'Spiritual Journal':—

'I thank the kind round-shouldered men,
And treat them with respect,
For teaching me to raise my chin,
And hold myself erect.'

It is well to cultivate a thankful disposition!

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Christmas and the New Year.

To all our Friends—and to our Foes as well, if we have any—we send hearty Greetings and good wishes. May they all be abundantly blessed in the coming year in all ways always.

CHRISTMAS GHOSTS.

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad:
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

This is the reason, perhaps, why Christmas time is so peculiarly the season for ghost stories. To a certain type of timid and superstitious mind uncanny things are not even to be spoken of with safety. But Christmas comes, the embargo is removed, the ghosts are temporarily chained up, the witches and imps find their malignant energies paralysed for a space (and serve them right!), the planets cannot 'strike'—even in an age of industrial discontent—and so we may discuss the weird things of life in ease and security.

Most of us probably have a warm place in our hearts for the Christmas ghost story even if only because it is associated with Christmas. It may many times have given us cold chills and sent us doubtfully to bed with a watchful eye for shadows, and nerves that jumped with every creak of the old-fashioned bedroom furniture, but it gave a new joy to the returning daylight and threw the Christmas revels into a higher relief.

Nowadays, of course, our spiritual science has been busy in reducing our ideas of the invisible world to reason and method. The ghosts have been 'called to order.' The 'twelve o'clock rule' has been suspended. The relationship of spirits to time having been called into question, the 'witching hour' has been found to have no special significance, nor has Chanticleer been shown, on scientific investigation, to have any real powers as an exorcist. Even the ghost's reprehensible habit of appearing in the garments of mortal life (as though there could be ghosts of clothes!) has been explained and shown to be quite in accordance with the laws of thought; and the objections of the scoffer—whose chief defect is want of imagination—scientifically settled. Again, it has been shown that ghosts have no special relationship to churchyards. Any self-respecting ghost, we imagine, would shun those unwholesome retreats even though the uninformed amongst his friends on earth regard the churchyard as his proper place of abode. For

the intelligent spirit soon learns that his connection with the grave is far less direct than that of the mortals who couple him with it in their minds, and he might very reasonably argue that it is *they* and not *he* who have most to do with churchyards!

Yes, we have 'rationalised' the ghost, and found him to be as truly man as when he walked the earth clad in 'this muddy vesture of decay.' He has been sorely misunderstood and villainously slandered by those who never studied his case with sympathy or intelligence. No wilder fancies ever clustered around some simple phenomenon of Nature than those which have taken the ghost for their centre. All kinds of fantastic legends have been circulated about him, and when the King's English broke down under the strain Oriental tongues supplemented the vocabulary of the mystery-mongers. He has been called a bogle, a sprite, a spectre, a phantom, a goblin, an astral shell and a pisacha (a fine effort that last—it sounds so mysterious). He rode on moonbeams, lived in charnel houses, came down chimneys, insinuated himself through keyholes, gurgled and rattled chains, took a mean advantage of dyspeptical or neurotic people by 'haunting' them—in short, performed such fantastic tricks before high Heaven as might make one despair of finding any reason in him. It took generations to strip off the accumulations of ancient tradition and reveal him in all his natural imperfections as a human being, neither demon nor angel. He had been trying to say so all the time, but very few people would listen to him with any patience, and these were roundly abused for their pains by persons who did not wish to contradict their grandmothers or defy that final Court of Appeal on all matters of religion and psychology—Antiquity.

And so to-day we recognise the ghost as a man and a brother, moving in worlds as yet unrealised by us but no less natural than our own, just a stage or two higher in the great process of evolution. We are not saying that the ghost may not in a measure have contributed to the grotesque ideas that were and are still held concerning him. He has probably been weak enough at times to adapt himself to the prejudices of his friends on earth, and may even have found a grim amusement in playing upon their fears and fancies. For the most part, however, he has been more sinned against than sinning. In an old Elizabethan play a jovial toper turns his dismal wife out of doors and refuses to admit her unless she sings a merry song. Seeing no other way of gaining entrance the weeping wife trolls (very dolefully) a comical stave, and is let in.

It has been so many times in the past with the ghost. He has had to play a part—to defer to the prejudice that he was a goblin, a 'familiar spirit,' an 'astral' or even a 'subconscious mind' in order to get a hearing at all. Only amongst the more independent and advanced minds could he gain a respectful audience and make himself known for what he is, and even amongst these he found himself, in some instances, limited by certain preconceptions as to what he might do and what he might not do. He was not compelled to rattle a chain or to speak in a sepulchral voice, but there was sometimes a feeling that he at least ought to be able to solve all the mysteries of existence, and his humble confession that he did not know everything was received with disgust.

In these matters we are more indulgent to superstition than to prejudice. There is poetry in superstition; there is neither poetry nor romance about prejudice. Like old Squire Bracebridge in Washington Irving's delightful Christmas sketches, we feel that a superstitious person 'must live in a kind of fairy-land.' And so we listen to Christmas ghost stories with rapt attention. We would

not rob the Christmas sprite of any of his ancient appanages. Let him have his suit of armour, his blue light, and his hollow groan, by all means. If he is represented as headless or as otherwise displaying his death wounds, and if he has a fascinating habit of changing into a dog or an owl at pleasure, we would not complain. It is all fairy-land, and gives a new relish to the nuts and the preserved ginger. Having our own hardly-acquired knowledge of the real ghost, we can afford to be tolerant.

From their abodes in other and sunnier realms of life our friends of the past (and of the future) look down with smiles on our merrymaking, or by the agency of those laws which link the two worlds together descend to visit us for a brief space, and take part—it may be an unseen and voiceless, but none the less a real part—in our reunions. They are the friends we know—superstition cannot colour nor prejudice cloud their undisguised reality. They live and love and do not forget. They are near akin to humanity. Fanciful philosophies, however learned in their own conceit, can add nothing to them and take nothing away. They are the true Christmas Ghosts.

GREAT PROBLEMS IN THE LIGHT OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY E. WAKE COOK.

An Address delivered to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday evening, November 28th, in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, Mr. H. Withall, Vice-President, in the chair.

(Continued from page 592.)

Evil is error, and essentially educative; we blunder that we may learn, and the sufferings attached to errors are the birchings which our stern schoolmistress, Nature, inflicts on her erring children to teach them the better way. Viewing evil from this standpoint, and regarding conduct as for time, education for eternity, we see that in this world our moral responsibility is personal and complete; we must suffer the legitimate consequences of our actions, and cannot be saved from them by any vicarious sacrifice of the innocent. (Applause.) But these educative punishments are strictly adjusted to the error, and are not the everlasting torments threatened by those ferocious Churchmen who punished 'heretics' by burning them at the stake as a foretaste of what was to come. So moral responsibility in this limited and reasonable form is real beyond all question. We are bound to assume that the legitimate and appropriate consequences will follow our activities here and to all eternity; but they will be of an ennobling and educational nature; and, as with the poets, the deepest sufferings here may inspire the sweetest song hereafter. These aspects of moral responsibility transform and lighten the problem of evil. Regarding it as educational, the suffering is but a moment in a sempiternal existence, and, however grievous it may be to bear, and however long and dreary it seems to us now, in retrospect it will seem but the nightmare-strugglings in a bad dream. More consoling still are the hints we get that the direst suffering is divided from highest bliss only by an ever-thinning veil. Sometimes the martyrs condemned to diabolical tortures and death have been lifted into ecstasy. In many cases of violent and of accidental death the human spirit is already in Paradise while the victim's body is still on the cross of suffering. There is another point. By the very constitution of our consciousness we could have no experience of happiness without experiencing its opposite; and our temporal sufferings give the necessary point of contrast without which we could have no sense of values. So for a future of *conscious* happiness, experience of its opposite is an absolute necessity. In addition to this, we see that evil tends to diminish, and good to increase on this stage of existence; and, as this stage is only one of an ascending series, we must think that the sum of all, which we call God, is

good, and that our ascending series of lives—phases of an eternal life—will be increasingly happy.

There is yet another point. We speak unthinkingly of an Infinite God, of our Infinite Father, and at the back of our mind there is still a vague idea of a fatherly relation; but the moment we identify God with the Universe and begin to realise something of its stupendous magnitude, we feel lost in the immensities, and seem fatherless and alone. This is another result of trying to realise God with the outer faculties. The approach to God on the outer plane, the plane of ordinary and scientific knowledge, means eternities of gradual progression. In this world anyone much above us in mental stature is incomprehensible to us, and we should be rather repelled than attracted by such a personality. Think of the reception the world has given to all the prophets, the light-bringers of all ages. The prophets have been stoned, our would-be Saviours crucified, and discoverers of new truths have been despitefully used. All these great men, these Supermen, were fuller manifestations of God, yet see how we treated them. So it is manifest that our approach to our Father on the lines of knowledge will be a slow and gradual approach, filling an eternity with the unrolling, the unveiling of the infinite glories. Only by this gradual expansion of our knowledge do we gain the lasting joy of continual discovery.

Then, again, our desire for communion with higher beings than ourselves, to whom we can look with uplifting adoration, will be met in the only way in which we could enjoy or be benefited by it. Throughout the coming ages there will always be spirits more developed than ourselves who will aid us according to our capacity to receive. These higher spirits will be fuller manifestations of God, and these will grade upwards until they are gods of such unspeakable splendour that were a man to suddenly look on them he would shrivel up as a moth in a flame. There is profound truth in the old saying that no man can look on God and live—that is, live in the earthly body. Thus everything will be suited to man's needs, adapted to his stage of growth. Revelation will be a continual process, bringing the maximum of enjoyment to our ever-expanding power of realising the wonders of existence.

But this is the outer, the scientific, and the artistic aspect of our growing knowledge of the existence of which we form parts, and while each moment may bring its satisfaction, we shall yet seem to be always striving for an infinitely distant goal. Turning to the inner, the spiritual aspect, we need have no ages of waiting for the realisation of our unity, our at-one-ment, with the Great Spirit. This relation is immediate, and it brings what has been so beautifully described as 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding.' This inner beatitude may be attained in varying ways and in varying degrees. It may be attained by purely intellectual pursuits, by scientific discovery, by exploration in all fields of research, and by all forms of artistic and creative activity. From the Pantheistic standpoint all these pursuits bring what Clifford well called 'Cosmic emotion'—a feeling of elevated joy and enthusiasm, because they are all means of discovering some new aspect of Deity. A still more elevated joy comes from the activities arising from love—the love of humanity. Happiness has been well characterised as 'the evidence and fruit of conscious usefulness.' The serenest beatitude of all comes from the exercise of the spiritual faculties, the cultivation of and the dwelling in the inner life, and that subtle communion of soul with soul—especially communion with living souls who have passed the glorious portals of so-called death—the inner realisation of the unity of all, the living in the 'spirit's light' in the region of the mystic's experiences, the highest of which causes the soul to swoon in ecstasy.

But as yet we are only on the threshold of the wonders implied in the All-ness of God. How little we realise our Divine Sonship, our actual Oneness with God. We are of the same substance, and have potentially all the qualities and attributes of Deity. In our subconscious and our supra-conscious minds, Divine powers are already operating, doing work immeasurably beyond man's highest conscious achievements. The subconscious mind, in ordering myriads of atoms and molecules from all the realms of Nature into the organised community we call 'our body,' is doing work that must be called miraculous compared

with anything our greatest genius can do consciously. The still higher mind we call the supra-conscious mind is probably the elaborator of the most wonderful phenomena of all, those of the inflowing thought, and of those flashes of insight which are the prerogative of genius. These powers are at present beyond our conscious control ; but they may yet be ours to command. The highest expression of Divine Manhood, Jesus, had powers far greater than his fellows, but he said we should yet possess them, and that the works he did we should do, *and greater works*. Evidences of the fulfilment of this promise are accumulating in man's increasing dominion over the forces of Nature, in mental healing, and in opening up communication with the next world. These things are being brought into the field of science. All history teems with testimony to the reality of strange occult powers appearing sporadically ; these will also be brought within man's conscious and systematic control, as will other powers great beyond poet's dreaming.

Such in roughest outline are some of the contents of that Pantheistic conception of existence to which we are driven by all logical thinking, and which is implied in the higher philosophy of Spiritualism. In all this I am only trying to show what Pantheism is to those tending in that direction. I do not call myself a Pantheist—I shrink from labels, and we need a better term, one unconnected with the old Greek god, Pan. When Andrew Jackson Davis, the greatest of all seers, was accused of preaching the doctrine, and was asked whether he was a Pantheist, he replied that while he was progressing, he feared he was neither large enough, nor good enough, to see the finger of God in everything everywhere. That is my case.

Another remarkable young seer, Bailey, the author of 'Festus,' says :—

Time there *hath* been when only God was All,
And it shall be yet again. The hour is nam'd
When seraph, cherub, angel, saint, man, fiend,
Made pure, and unbelievably uplift
Above their present state—drawn up to God
Like dew into the air—shall be heav'n :
All souls shall be in God, and shall be God,
And nothing but God be.

We are often told that the grand picturings of the future by the poets and the seers, which are sublimed in the philosophy of Spiritualism, are mere flights of fancy or vagrant wanderings of the imagination. Personally, I believe imagination to be the second-sight of the soul, a higher reason. But take it in its ordinary meaning. Cast your thought back a century and see what pictures of scientific discoveries in the future were given by the prophetic imagination of those days ; then remember what has actually happened : in every direction the dreams of the past are insignificant compared with present realities. Think of the marvels of electricity, of radium, and of wireless telegraphy, of which we have had such splendid results. Two great ships collide in fog, and when far from land ; in their dire peril lightning messages are sent to shore, and to vessels within a great radius ; lightnings blaze back their reply, and great ships race from all quarters to aid the stricken ones. But this is only one of the epoch-making discoveries which have been made within the lifetime of the youngest of us. Then there are all the mystic marvels revealed by psychical research. All these things are immeasurably greater than anything pictured by the imagination a century ago. So we are rationally bound to believe that our highest dreams of to-day will be just as greatly exceeded by the realities the pregnant future will reveal to us. (Applause.)

Let us glance, in conclusion, at the greatest of all problems, that of the reality of the after-life, which it has been the special glory of Modern Spiritualism to demonstrate, and to picture in such glowing splendours. What a solace for us in this tear-drenched world to have such a prospect to dwell on as a refuge from the turmoil of events ! To realise our oneness with the great life of the Universe, to be partakers in its potentialities and powers, to have the feeling of certainty of personal immortality. Here we enter the realms of religion, and although we regard religion as the flower, the crown and glory of science and philosophy, it is not high and abstract as they are, but it is the most intimate of all, is the inner life of all, and may reveal to

simple souls sublime realities which beggar the conceptive and expressive powers of science and philosophy, and which the inspired poet alone can utter. It is in this more mystic realm that the soul finds its higher powers and beatitudes.

With our conception of the after-life the whole purpose of our earthly existence is manifest : every effort, every experience, every sorrow finds its natural fulfilment and compensation on another plane. The purpose of this earth-life is to individualise spirit, to awaken consciousness, and this, once awakened, must progress through the coming eternities to a fuller comprehension of itself. Our half-awakened sense of the underlying unity of all conscious beings expresses itself through our love and sympathy for other beings in harmony with ourselves, impelling us to a realisation of this unity, as only in the life of others can we reach the fuller development of our own. The sense of the unity with the Divine life, when still more clearly realised, is the source of a peculiar and indescribable satisfaction, arising from the certainty that the boundless possibilities of existence will find their utmost fulfilment. Think for a moment what these possibilities are—the vast stores of knowledge yet to be explored, the realms of beauty yet to be enjoyed. Think of the delights of elevated love possible to us here. Love carries a significance which has been missed, even by the poets ; its delights are the drawing together in love and sympathy of isolated parts of the Great Life, and if this is capable of giving such joy, may it not be that our endless progress towards complete conscious unity with the Divine Life will give a series of exquisite joys, of which our earthly loves give us the merest foretaste ? Each step nearer will be a larger sympathy, a more burning love, a larger knowledge, an ever-growing sense of power to create, and to give fitting form to the soul-stirring thoughts struggling for expression. Exhilarating activity alternating with exquisite repose ; knowledge conquering error ; harmony conquering discord until life itself becomes a vaster music ! Each attained delight will be but an earnest of that to come, and each achievement a platform from which to view the ever-widening possibilities of achievements in the unfolding of futurity.

Beyond all the limits of thought lie the vast treasures of Infinite Love, and these are ours as we grow big enough to claim them ; and we may rest assured that our highest dreams, our picturings, our most breathless imaginative flights, give us but the dullest hints of the glories awaiting us as we realise more and more the essential divinity of man and the universe. (Loud applause.)

After a few questions, which were ably answered by Mr. Wake Cook, a hearty vote of thanks, on the motion of Dr. Abraham Wallace, was accorded to him for his high-souled and stimulating address.

WE regret to learn that Miss MacCreadie has had the misfortune to sustain a fracture of the wrist owing to a fall. In these circumstances she asks the indulgence of her clients and correspondents.

SOME day, we suppose, the fact will dawn upon the public mind that those who pass on are still 'people.' The vaguest and strangest ideas seem to be entertained by many persons regarding the state of the departed. A lady recently declared that she *could* not believe in Spiritualism, and exclaimed, 'Fancy being a spirit and not able to sit down !' That spirit people possess spirit bodies, which to them are real, tangible, and substantial, and that they *live* (not dream) in a world which is equally real and substantial, does not appear to have found a place in the fabric of thought of the masses. They do not seem to realise that personality and the sense of personal identity persist, that consciousness is continuous, and that the men, women, and children of the after-death world are actual, active, purposeful, intellectual, rational, moral, and spiritual beings, even more so than they were here. Communicating spirits have proved the continuity of identity, character, and consciousness, and they affirm that each one goes to his own place, profits by experiences, gains knowledge and power, manifests purpose and exercises will, grows in grace and goodness, and advances from sphere to sphere in an ever unfolding and deepening awareness and realisation of the great spiritual verities of the universe. The spirit man is no formless vapour, neither is the spirit world an unsubstantial illusion. Life over there is 'real and earnest,' sequential to the life that now is, and the evolution begun here continues there.

HUMAN EMANATIONS: INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS.

No. II.

Certain remarkable experiments in the mummification and preservation of the remains of plants and animals whereby the possession of a strange force on the part of human emanations appears to be indicated, having already received attention in 'LIGHT' (p. 579), it is of interest to learn that the reports first circulated have now been corroborated by the personal investigations of Dr. G. Geley, of the 'Société Universelle d'Etudes Psychiques,' and that the results of his studies, first given in the form of a lecture, have been reproduced in the October number of the 'Annals' of that society.

After testifying to the good reputation and scientific attainments of Dr. Clarac, the medical practitioner, and of Dr. Llaguet, the chemist, who were the first men of science to make observations on this case, Dr. Geley gives the following description of the simple process employed by Madame X. in operating on the various objects presented to her:—

She arranges the objects to be influenced (animal or vegetable) on the table. During my stay in Bordeaux we gave her as many as thirty specimens to influence at the same time. The objects being spread out, she places her hands over them at a distance of a few centimetres. Sometimes she performs passes with the ends of her fingers or the palm of her hand. From time to time she turns the objects over to influence them on every side, but even this treatment does not seem to be necessary; the objects placed near her, simply in her immediate neighbourhood, appear to be just as much influenced without her putting her hands over them.

The sittings last about a quarter of an hour; she holds one, sometimes two, a day.

After each sitting she folds the objects in a sheet of paper, and puts them away under lock and key in a cupboard where no one can come near them.

During the sittings she is, from the psycho-physiological point of view, in an entirely normal state. She converses quietly on any subject. She experiences no subsequent fatigue. She operates indifferently in daylight or by artificial light, in summer as in winter, whatever the atmospheric or climatic conditions may be. *She stated to me that she had never experienced a failure.*

I carefully observed with Drs. Clarac and Llaguet the course of the phenomena.

This is what takes place:—

The plants appear to be very rapidly sterilised. They retain their colours while they become desiccated; the leaves (an important fact) always remain very adherent to the stem.

The small animals do not exhibit any signs of putrefaction. They gradually dry, and then remain in a mummified condition without further appreciable modification, even after several years.

That is what takes place in the case of the small fish, the little molluscs or crustaceans, and even in the case of the small birds.

The larger animals, the big birds, the little mammifers, &c., are preserved in a fresh condition for a very long time. Then when normally they should be in a state of complete putrefaction, they still exhibit the appearance of recent death, and do not emit any odour. Gradually, however, at the end of ten, fifteen, twenty days, or more, according to the time of the year and the size of the animal, the situation changes, and a new phase makes its appearance. A commencement of putrefaction is observed. But this putrefaction is only faintly outlined, and is manifested solely by a very attenuated odour. There is no distention of the animal, no internal generation of putrid gases, *no liquefaction*. The cutaneous tissues—those, that is to say, which have been most exposed to the influence of Madame X.—do not suffer any modification. Then very quickly there arrives the third phase, namely, that of desiccation; the tissues contract, the odour disappears, the mummification commences. It is complete generally at the end of two, three, four or five weeks. After that the animal seems capable of being preserved for an indefinite period. The fur, the feathers remain very adherent; the colours are retained; the animal is preserved just as well as, if not better than, a stuffed one. When the animal is 'done,' to use Madame X.'s expression, she leaves it on one side and does not trouble any more about it.

What is still more extraordinary is that, if a body that is already in a complete state of putrefaction is submitted to Madame X., the putrefaction is arrested after two or three sittings, the odour disappears and desiccation commences.

When the dead body contains parasites, such as the larvæ of flies, these parasites seem no longer able to live in their usual

quarters. After the first sittings the larvæ are seen to hastily abandon their host and collect around, to perish rapidly while the latter enters into a mummified condition.

The fermentative process of putrefaction is not the only one influenced and hindered by the emanations of Madame X. Results of a comparable character have been obtained in the case of other fermentative processes: the acetic fermentation of wine is prevented; the alcoholic fermentation of glucose is retarded.

In the course of his lecture Dr. Geley projected photographic reproductions of some of the specimens on to a screen. Among the more striking objects exhibited were *fishes*: carp, red mullet, sardine. It is noted that the red mullet undergoes putrefaction very rapidly.

Heads of chicken containing the brains. 'The feathers are very adherent.'

Birds not eviscerated: Canary, goldfinch. 'Their colours are admirable, as fresh as those of stuffed birds, but the forms are without the appearance of life which the art of the taxidermist imparts.'

Mutton cutlets: 'Complete mummification, very hard.'

Viscera: 'Spleen, liver, lung and windpipe, one heart, two kidneys, one neck, one liver, very old; on the liver are traces of the parasitic worms which were present before the action of Madame X. took place.'

Weasel killed four years ago. 'It was already in a high state of putrefaction when first subjected to the influence of Madame X. . . . However, it turned out a complete success. The mummification is absolute, and the preservation perfect. The colouring is intact. Not a hair is wanting.'

Head of a rabbit: 'Hardly completed, was done under my own eyes.'

Dr. Geley next discusses the problem presented by these observations:—

In the first place, are these phenomena really the result of some influence emanating from Madame X., or are they of an independent and spontaneous character?

Dr. Geley decides in favour of the theory of personal influence, and for the following reasons:—

1. The mummification occurs invariably, without the intervention of any chemical or physical agent. In this connection Dr. Geley remarks:—

It is both a conceivable and an observable fact that a small fish will become mummified however little it is protected against flies. But that viscera, blood, that relatively large animals, like a weasel, should *always* experience the same mummification, that is something that is quite inconceivable.

2. The experiments of Drs. Llaguet and Clarac were conducted in conjunction with those of a controlling character, in which the 'control' specimens were kept away from the influence of Madame X.:—

These 'control' objects, however, experienced complete putrefaction, although placed in the same physical and general conditions as the others. The 'control' oysters, for instance, became liquefied, then, so to speak, gaseous, and disappeared, leaving only their empty shells behind, while the oysters subjected to the 'influence' became mummified.

3. The arrest of the putrefactive process:—

This is decidedly not a spontaneous phenomenon. No one has ever seen a dead body, in a condition of complete putrefaction and full of parasitic worms, become preserved and mummified without the intervention of extremely active chemical or physical agents (and even then I doubt if this intervention would be successful).

4. The comparison with other fermentations.

The acetic fermentation of wine is prevented (while the 'control' wine is transformed into vinegar). The alcoholic fermentation of glucose is retarded.

Such are the considerations which appear to be conclusive in favour of the attribution of these phenomena to a personal influence emanating from Madame X.

Dr. Geley goes on to give a scientific description of the two mutually opposing tendencies which struggle for mastery upon the death of an animal or vegetable organism. They are, of course, on the one hand, the process of dehydration or desiccation, and, on the other, that of putrefaction.

He points out how of these two processes the first is the less powerful, but remarks that it is frequently successful in the

case of a certain number of small animals, such as starfish, certain beetles, &c. It will also succeed, though much more rarely, in the case of other animals, however little they are sheltered from fungi and larvæ. Certain small fish (such as Hippocampi) are mentioned in this connection. The desiccating process will even be successful with respect to larger animals, but only on condition that it is assisted by the action of one or other of three well-known agents. These latter comprise solar radiation, certain soils of a still not fully determined composition (and the action of which in this manner is of very rare occurrence), and finally the antiseptics usually employed for the preservation of dead bodies.

From the nature of these agents it will be seen that there is nothing extraordinary in the fact of desiccation or mummification in itself. For the latter 'is the process that naturally takes place when that of putrefaction is prevented.'

Experiments were conducted in which the desiccation was artificially prevented. In these cases putrefaction made its appearance, simply retarded, but its progress could be interrupted at will on allowing the process of desiccation to continue.

It would appear, then, that the action of Madame X. is of a sterilising nature; and in Dr. Geley's opinion it acts not directly on the parasitic organisms concerned, but indirectly on the tissues of the dead body, rendering them refractory to the attack of the putrefactive agents.

Lastly, we are given to understand that the experiments will be 'repeated, varied, and multiplied,' and that this scientific method of treating the phenomena will be facilitated by the fact that they do not call for any of the 'complex and delicate conditions' which are involved in dealing with those of a mediumistic nature.

G. S. C.

ASTROLOGICAL.

A glance through 'Zadkiel's Almanac and Ephemeris' for 1913* shows that the coming year has many portents for the astrologer. It is to be a memorable year—a year of change, strife and prosperity. Throughout, foreign affairs are to cause much anxiety, and war—in which Britain may be forced to take part—an ever-lurking possibility. For the Government, trying times are predicted; it will become increasingly unpopular, a member of the Cabinet will be in personal danger, and a General Election is not unlikely. Epidemics and earthquakes are threatened, and serious collisions or shipwrecks in the North Atlantic are probable. On the other hand, it is to be a good year for trade, financial affairs will flourish, the public revenue increase, and the harvest be a fruitful one. As regards the weather conditions generally, Zadkiel is cautious. 'The winter,' he tells us, 'will be severe at times and mild and stormy at others,' and the summer is 'to have spells of heat followed by cool and rainy intervals,' with more rain in the north than the south of the kingdom. A special reference is made to the 'Titanic' disaster, and the horoscope of the ill-fated steamship is shown. At the launch, Mercury, it appears, was the chief ruler of the figure, but as that planet was badly afflicted the time selected was most unpropitious. In this connection it would be of interest to know if the nativities of those of the passengers who were lost all signified death by drowning. Other articles deal with 'Drake' and 'Paracelsus.' There is the usual list of fulfilled predictions, 'Horoscopes of Sovereigns,' and 'Times to plant and sow.' The present is the eighty-third yearly edition.

A prominent feature of 'Modern Astrology'† for December is a thoughtful and suggestive essay by Bessie Leo entitled 'The Value of an Ideal.' Mr. F. C. Dutt contributes an instructive reading of Sri Chaitanya, the great Hindu reformer and divine. The personal horoscope (with portrait) for the month is that of Mr. D. Graham Poll, an ardent Theosophist. The map for the winter quarter—sun's entry into Capricorn—is critically considered by the Editor, and we note that his judgment of the figure agrees in the main with those of other well-known astrologers. We may expect political unrest and change at home, and diplomatic troubles, if not war, in our foreign affairs. The weather during the same period will be windy and changeable, with one or two very cold 'snaps.'

B.

'HOW THE CHILDREN MET THE THREE KINGS,' by Maude Egerton King (wrappers, 4d., Vineyard Press, 13, Clifford's Inn, E.C.), is a very pretty little Christmas play for nine actors—six elder children, or adults, and three little ones. It is suitable for home or school performance.

* 'Zadkiel's Almanac and Ephemeris.' Simpkin, Marshall. Price 6d.
† 'Modern Astrology' for December. L. N. Fowler & Co. Price 6d.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Our name gives rise to strange misapprehensions on the part of people who know nothing more of 'LIGHT' than its title. Whenever there is a private exhibition of some new illuminant we seem fated to receive an invitation. Now we have to acknowledge the receipt from a German publishing house—R. Oldenbourg, Verlag, Munchen—of a handsome New Year's calendar and pocket-book, issued at M. 5.50, which appears to be packed with information and calculations connected with the various uses to which those very useful agents, gas and water, can be applied. Gas and water engineers who are also German scholars (if any such there be among our readers) will, no doubt, find the calendar valuable. We regret that we are not in a position to appraise its merits.

A correspondent, writing from St. Leonards-on-Sea, says: 'We have just lost a very celebrated preacher at the age of seventy, namely, the Rev. Forbes Winslow, whose transition took place on the 5th inst. He knew about our great truths, but did not accept them. He was a great friend of mine, and I used to have many conversations with him on the grand truths of Spiritualism. He now knows the truth. He was a very interesting personality and is a great loss to St. Leonards. He took "LIGHT" for a time.'

'The Christian Commonwealth' Christmas Number (price 2d.) consists of forty pages, in which there are eighty-eight illustrations, in addition to seasonable articles, a sermon by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and many other interesting features, including two 'personal experiences of the unseen,' and 'Voices of Progress,' illustrating 'the spirit of goodwill towards freedom and unity all over the world.' It is a noteworthy production, and should have a large sale.

The contents of the December issue of 'The International Psychic Gazette' are varied and interesting. Mr. Frederic Thurstan, M.A., has the place of honour in the 'portrait gallery,' his photograph, in profile, being given side by side with that of King Sethi I., taken from a mummy at Boulak Museum, to show the 'close personal resemblance' of the two, regarding which Mr. Thurstan says: 'As the above two portraits show, I am that said person—viz., King Sethi, who lived some three thousand two hundred and fifty years ago.' As regards reincarnation, Mr. Thurstan has his own interpretation of the doctrine, which needs to be read in full, and therefore we do not attempt to summarise it here.

In a recent address, Mr. Martin Harvey suggests that the involuntary flashes of expression which actors experience when, in the performance of a certain rôle, suddenly and without rehearsal, without premeditation, they make a movement, utter a sound, or use a modulation which, though unprepared, yet belong essentially to the character that they are presenting at that moment, may be due to the fact that 'in the interpretative work of the actor the whole conceit he had forced his own soul to would strike flashes from the lower consciousness, of which the interpreter was himself at the moment ignorant.' It is more than probable that at such times the actor is indebted to the influence of some spirit friend, who finds him most amenable to suggestion when he has 'most thoroughly lost himself in his part.' Clairvoyants, when at the theatre, have frequently seen instances of such inspirational overshadowing.

One would hardly look for an article on psychic problems in a magazine devoted to 'The World's Work,' yet in the December issue of the journal bearing that title we find an interesting contribution, by Mr. J. Arthur Hill, on 'The Science of the Soul.' Mr. Hill says that as the result of his investigations he has been 'forced to a belief in both telepathy and occasional communication from disembodied minds.' He also gives a useful general idea of 'what sort of a state we shall survive into' as indicated by what such minds have communicated from the other side. 'The returning spirits,' he says, 'speak slightingly of dogma. They teach that the heart is more than the head. There is no immediate ascent to eternal bliss or plunge to eternal torment at death. The next stage will be a next stage—a higher class in the cosmic school. And our condition will depend on our character and efforts, not on our beliefs. They confirm the saying of One greater than themselves, that the whole duty of man is love towards his God and his neighbour—particularly the latter because he is in need of it and God is not.' We cannot, however, altogether agree with Mr. Hill, for we are inclined to believe that God *does* need our love.

'The Christian,' reviewing a work by Evan Roberts on 'Our Adversary, the Devil,' after admitting that there are many Christian people who take a delight in delving into the occult, makes this amazing assertion: 'Of all the supposed or real manifestations of the spiritual world, none have been proved to effect any useful purpose in the guiding aright of human lives.' Why then, if this be true, does 'The Christian' accept the Bible records of spirit manifestations? How does 'The Christian' know that not *one* manifestation has effected 'any useful purpose in the guiding aright of human lives'? Since when has 'The Christian' been omniscient? We have known of hosts of instances in which spirit manifestations have been most effective in guiding aright the lives of men and women. What a pity it is that well-meaning people permit their prejudices to blind them to the truth and to cause them to make untrue assertions such as the above. The fear of the devil seems to be more powerful with these people than their faith in the love of God.

According to 'The Family Doctor' it is a mistake to suppose that dieting implies the eating of unpalatable food. 'Foods that taste good are more apt to digest well than unpalatable articles, but the individual is also more liable to be tempted into dietary excess by the former than the latter. This is all the truth there is in the notion. Dieting means simply that the individual shall refrain from eating things that are known to disagree with him and shall limit the amount which he eats, while judicious medication and rest to the digestive organs are restoring normal tone and activity. Usually the necessity for dieting means debility or abuse of the digestive organs, and dieting alone, while it will ensure a measure of comfort, will not cure the original trouble.'

A correspondent writes, drawing attention to the duties of the presiding officers at Spiritualist meetings, and deploring the tendency displayed by some chairmen either to deal fully in their opening remarks with the subject chosen for the occasion, and so 'cut right under the feet' of the speakers who are to follow, or to make a long speech at the close, thus extending the meeting beyond the usual time and exhausting the patience of the audience. Our correspondent says that cases such as these are far too numerous, and cites one instance in which a member of the audience had actually to ask who was to be the speaker. We trust that in this matter a hint to the wise will be sufficient.

'The Daily Citizen' on the 16th inst., in a report of an address by Professor A. W. Stokes, states that the lecturer declared that ghosts 'had never existed.' Only an indiscreet man will affirm a negative in this way. It presupposes that Professor Stokes knows the absolute truth, and is able to declare authoritatively that all the testimony, both past and present, to the reality of spirit appearances is untrue and untrustworthy. Among those who will agree with Professor Stokes there are doubtless many persons who believe, or who think they believe, that Moses and Elias appeared to the disciples, that a man, or angel, as he is variously styled, appeared to Cornelius, and that Jesus appeared after his death to Mary Magdalene and to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus; but if these manifestations occurred as stated, then Professor Stokes is mistaken.

As Professor Stokes said that 'As a rule a ghost was only seen by one person at a time,' perhaps he may be interested, if not impressed, if he will read the testimony of James Barr, who, in an article in the Christmas number of 'The Red Magazine,' states that although he does not believe in ghosts, he has seen one! The ghost appeared and spoke not only to Mr. Barr but to a friend who was with him, and both gentlemen in turn spoke to the ghost. Other friends have related to Mr. Barr their experiences, which he includes in his article—'personal friends, each of them quite ordinary, and level-headed, and sane.' In one case 'four people at different times had seen the same ghost.' The stories are well told, perhaps a little *too* well told, but they form an interesting addition to the immense number of more or less fully-authenticated cases of the kind, and are worth reading, especially in view of Mr. Barr's closing words, 'I here tell only what I believe to be absolutely true.'

'We do well to hail the Birth of the Child. For the Child is the hope of the race. Vain is it, like ancient Greek or Jew, to watch the heavens for the advent of some superhuman deliverer. That is not the divine method. It is the God immanent in humanity, and not some transcendent deity who will enable us to realise our aspirations and reach the city of our dreams. That does not mean that we are independent of all resources other than our own. For every moment of our existence, for every breath we draw, we are dependent upon the Unseen.'—'CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.'

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 at Alexandria, Egypt.

SIR,—Kindly permit me to ask if among your numerous readers there are any who could give me some information regarding Spiritualists in Alexandria, Egypt. A dear friend of mine who is deeply interested in Spiritualism has lately taken up residence there, but up to the present he has been unable to find anyone interested in the subject. I should be delighted to receive replies and forward them to my friend.—Yours, &c.,

BELFAST.

'Ought We to Pray for Rain?'

SIR,—The correspondence on the above subject recalls two amusing Scots stories: An elder of the Auld Kirk (*i.e.*, the Established Church), called on the Free Kirk minister and asked him to put up a 'peeteetion' for rain on the following Sawbath. 'Why do you come to me,' was the natural query, 'instead of to your minister?' 'Hoots, mon,' was the reply, 'div ye no ken that he hasna' gotten his hay in frae the glebe yet?' In the second, the 'meenister' was praying fervently for rain, and just at the moment a wild clap of thunder came, accompanied by a deluge. The petitioner paused and looked out of the window at the downpour, and then in an aggrieved tone he remarked, 'O Lord, this is fair reedeclus!' The two stories are illustrative of the familiar way in which the Scottish peasantry treat the Deity.

What we term 'the laws of Nature' are not divine, but they are divinely ordained, and as such are immutable. If they were not so, we should be landed in chaos, and the Deity would stand convicted of falsehood. Therefore, to pray for rain approaches perilously near to blasphemy.—Yours, &c.,

R. H. F.

SIR,—As your editorial note has pretty well answered Mr. A. C. M. Jones, I will just comment on two points of his letter which have been left untouched. Mr. Jones asks why, as rain can sometimes be caused by the firing of big guns by man, it should be deemed incredible that God can also produce rain in spite of unfavourable meteorological conditions? I do not fancy that Mr. Sharpe, or anyone else, denies the power of God to produce rain, but the whole contention is that this world is governed apparently by certain set laws, and that God, who created those laws, is not going to upset them at the request of man. As for firing big guns, man takes good care not to do so till there are heavy clouds overhead. He knows that the vibrations set up by the explosions may rend the clouds and cause them to give up their precious contents. Man is astute enough not to fire big guns for rain when the sky is cloudless.

The next point is that Mr. Jones quotes with evident satisfaction and approval the view of a clergyman of a church in the Midlands that the floods and rotting crops were a national punishment, and an indication of national wrong-doing. But why should God select the farmer as the vehicle to show His displeasure at a nation's wrong-doing? Droughts and floods undoubtedly cause a rise in the prices of foodstuffs, but so slight as not to be felt as a punishment by the community at large, so they fail in their purpose if that be their object. But the farmer is ruined both by a drought and also by a flood.—Yours, &c.,

F. R. B.

Breathing Exercises.

SIR,—I should like to reassure 'Breather' as to the value of breathing exercises properly carried out. At this time of day it is astonishing to find any sane person condemn the habitual practice of full breathing as injurious to the general health and well-being of the organism. A little consideration will make this clear.

The body is made up, in whole and in part, of cells, which may be looked upon as the bricks or units from which the house we live in is built. These cells are composed of a substance called 'protoplasm,' the basis of life. Protoplasm is a compound of water and proteid, with certain inorganic substances, such as calcium, phosphorus, &c.

The enormous importance of full breathing constantly maintained is shown in the fact that protoplasm must have an incessant and sufficient supply of oxygen; otherwise each individual cell throughout the organism begins to feel the want, and eventually to deteriorate. All disease, without exception, is cell disease of the various organs, and all disease can ultimately be traced back to withdrawal of oxygen from the cell itself.

Life or vitality or nerve force of the organism as a whole is the sum in addition of the life of the unit cell.

The person who fails to take in a sufficient quantity of oxygen through breathing fails to supply the cells of his organism with what is a vital necessity for them. Hence there can be no doubt as to the value of full deep breathing, properly carried out. On this last proviso, however, a great deal depends; unless the breathing is easy and entirely free from strain, it should not be done to any large extent, for it involves an undue expenditure of nerve force. In fact, it may be put down as an axiom that the value of breathing is in proportion to its fulness and ease. This is due in turn to condition of nose, throat and chest.—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR LOVELL.

94, Park-street, Grosvenor-square, W.

Pantheism and Prayer.

SIR,—Mr. E. Wake Cook's splendid address incites both wonder and admiration. As regards Pantheism, does not its merit largely consist in the fact that it recognises Nature as above us—not inert and passive—obeying laws? Man, in spite of his free will, is one with Nature, and the perfect life comprehends humanity with all its failings and defects. To affirm that all is good is to assert the goodness and supremacy of God, and this is the true side of Pantheism, for thus He is nearer to us; not an object of intellect, but the One greater than we can discern, desire, deserve, or bodily approach.

Personally I can vouch for the unfailing efficacy of prayer, and am convinced that it is not the worthy but the trusting one who obtains the blessing. The publican prayed, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' and he went home justified. Acceptable prayer is a petition to be delivered from the self (note the Lord's Prayer). He who truly prays is appealing to covenant grace, seeking Divine guidance, testing the strength of 'the everlasting arms,' and while thus abjuring self will find the eternal God not only a present help, but a sure covert in all the storms and vicissitudes of this transitory life.—Yours, &c.,

E. P. PRENTICE.

Sutton.

Spiritualists' National Fund of Benevolence.

SIR,—Kindly permit me, in submitting my report for November, to thank sincerely all who have helped in any way, either by subscriptions or through their society, and to ask your readers to look carefully down the list to see if their names or those of their societies are included. The list is as follows: 'A Friend,' per Horace Kay, 2s.; postcards (Belfast), 'A. V. P.,' 10s.; Mrs. Birrell, 5s.; 'A Friend' (Madras), 2s. 6d.; 'A Friend' (Canada), 4s.; Miss Boswell Stone, 5s.; Mr. W. Davies, 5s.; 'S.N.U. Members,' Barnsley, 8s.; Mrs. Stell, 5s.; Mr. Gainsby's Circle, 1s.; Mr. Givens, 1s. 6d. Societies: Exeter, 15s.; Longton, 16s. 6d.; Sutton-in-Ashfield, 3s. 6d.; Grovedale Hall, £2 12s. 6d.; Batley Carr, 10s.; Castleford Society and Lyceum, 12s.; Stockport, 10s.; Southport (Hawkshead), 10s.; Ulverston, 10s.; Chesterfield, 10s.; Nottingham (Gladstone Hall), 7s. 6d.; Accrington (China-street), 7s. 6d.; Dundee, 15s.; Whitley Bay (per Mrs. Clark), 16s.; Eden Spiritual Church, 10s.; Tottenham Church, 10s.; South Shields Mission, 16s. 6d.; Leeds Psycho, 6s. 8d.; Brixton, £1 1s.; Bournemouth, £3 4s.; Huddersfield (Ramsden-street), second donation, £1; Heeley, 10s. 6d.; Parkgate, 2s. 9d.; Halifax (Alma-street), 10s.; Wombwell, 4s.; Hull Psycho, 19s.; Darwen, second donation, 10s.; Barrow Psycho, £4; Brighouse (Commercial-street), 10s.; Nottingham (Spiritual Evidence), 15s.; Liverpool (Star of Progress), 10s.; Warrington, 5s. Total, £28 8s. 11d.

We are a long way from the desired £100, and I should like to ask that others will kindly contribute to this Fund of Benevolence, and that the wished-for sum may be in hand before the end of the month. Permit me to send happy Christmas greetings to all your readers, and to wish sincerely that health and joy may be theirs in the coming year.—Yours, &c.,

MARY A. STAIR.

14, North-street, Keighley, Yorkshire.

As Ella Wheeler Wilcox shrewdly remarks: 'It is a matter of regret that the most benevolent of human beings are usually more easily moved to reclaim vice than to protect virtue; to bury the dead with pomp than to sustain life comfortably; to cure disease than to promote health; to repair wrong than sustain right.' Oh, the pity and folly of it!

We heartily congratulate 'The Progressive Thinker' on its twenty-third birthday, and its present Editor, Mrs. M. E. Cadwallader, on the success that has attended her strenuous labours during the past two years. The issue of the 7th inst. contains many portraits of American Spiritualists, who contribute birthday greetings and good wishes.

SOCIETY WORK ON SUNDAY, DEC. 15th, &c. SPECIAL NOTICE.

Owing to the Christmas Holidays, the next issue of 'Light' must be sent to press THIS week. We shall therefore be unable to print any Society Work in that number.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION—*Shearn's Restaurant, 231, Tottenham Court-road, W.*—Mrs. Imison gave well-recognised clairvoyant descriptions and spirit messages.—15, *Mortimer-street, W.*—9th, Mrs. Neville gave successful 'descriptions.' Mr. Leigh Hunt presided at both meetings. Sunday next, see advertisement on front page.—D. N.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.—ASSEMBLY ROOMS, HAMPTON WICK.—Mr. A. J. Neville gave an address. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Jamrach, address and 'descriptions.'

CHATHAM.—553, CANTERBURY-STREET, GILLINGHAM.—Mrs. Mary Gordon gave a splendid address and 'descriptions.' Sunday next, 7 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. W. Rainbow.—E. S.

BRIGHTON.—MANCHESTER-STREET (OPPOSITE AQUARIUM).—Mr. Frank Pearce gave forceful and convincing addresses. Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., public circle; at 7 p.m., address by Mr. James Macbeth Bain.—H. J. E.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—SURREY MASONIC HALL.—Mr. Long gave addresses on 'Advent' and 'The Communion of Saints.' Sunday next, Mr. Long. Morning, spirit teaching; evening, address on 'The Birth of Christ.'—M. R.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—Mrs. Miles Ord gave an address. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., séance; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Harvey, address and 'descriptions.' Circles: Monday, 7.30, ladies, public; Tuesday, 8.15, members'; Thursday, 8.15, public.

HACKNEY.—240A, AMHURST-ROAD, N.—Mrs. Mary Davies spoke on 'Seeking God,' and gave 'descriptions.' Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. R. Boddington. Monday, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Sutton. Thursday (members only), 7.30 p.m., healing, Mr. H. Ball; at 8.15, circle.—N. R.

BRISTOL.—144, GROSVENOR-ROAD.—Mrs. J. S. Baxter gave able addresses on 'The True Meaning of Redemption' and 'The Power of Influence,' subjects from the audience. Sunday next, at 6.30 p.m., special Christmas service; also on Wednesday, at 7.30. Other week-night meetings as usual.—B.

BRIGHTON.—HOVE OLD TOWN HALL, 1, BRUNSWICK-STREET WEST.—Mrs. Alice Jamrach gave excellent addresses and 'descriptions.' Sunday next, at 11.15 a.m., public circle; at 7 p.m., Mr. Karl Reynolds on 'Man Physically and Spiritually Considered.' Tuesday, at 3 and 8, Mrs. Curry, clairvoyance. Public circle at 11.15, Christmas.—A. C.

SEVEN KINGS, ILFORD.—45, THE PROMENADE.—Mr. Karl Reynolds spoke on 'God's Revelation to Man,' and answered questions. 10th, Mr. H. Wake gave an address on 'Phenomena and Spiritualism,' and answered questions. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., study class; 7 p.m., Mrs. Webster. Friday, 8.30, circle, Mrs. Briggs.—H. W.

STRATFORD.—WORKMAN'S HALL, 27, ROMFORD-ROAD, E.—Mr. J. L. Macbeth Bain's thoughtful address on 'Love, the Great Healer,' and Mr. C. P. Stanley's reading from the lecturer's prospective work, 'The Christ of the Healing Hand,' were much appreciated. Mr. George F. Tilby presided. Sunday next, 7 p.m., Mrs. Sigall, address and clairvoyance.—W. H. S.

PECKHAM.—LAUSANNE HALL, LAUSANNE-ROAD.—Morning, Mr. Jackson spoke on 'The Eternal Good'; evening, Mr. Sarfas gave an address on 'The Harmony of Being' and good 'descriptions.' Sunday next, morning, Mrs. Still; evening, Mr. and Mrs. Connor. 29th, morning, Mr. G. Brown; evening, Mr. D. J. Davis. Tuesday, 8.15, healing. Thursday, 8.15, circle.—S.

HOLLOWAY.—GROVEDALE HALL, GROVEDALE-ROAD.—Mr. Richard Whitwell gave spiritual addresses on 'The Inward Christ' and 'Life's Secret,' and Mrs. Pulham 'descriptions.' 11th, address and psychometric delineations by Miss F. Clempson. Sunday next, 11.15 a.m., Mr. H. M. Thompson; 3 p.m., Lyceum; 7, Mr. G. R. Symons. 25th, no meeting. 29th, Mr. J. L. Macbeth Bain.—J. F.

STRATFORD.—IDMISTON-ROAD, FOREST-LANE.—Morning, impromptu speaking; evening, Mr. Horace Leaf spoke on 'Spiritual Evolution,' and gave 'descriptions.' 12th, Mr. J. Wrench, address and 'descriptions.' Sunday next, at 11.45 a.m., Mr. W. G. Willmot, on "'The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" and Spiritualism'; at 7 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Hayward. 26th, several speakers.—F. H.

CROYDON.—ELMWOOD HALL, ELMWOOD-ROAD, BROAD-GREEN.—Mr. E. W. Wallis's helpful address on the 'Natural and Spiritual Significance of Christmas' was much appreciated. He also performed the ceremony of naming a little child in an impressive and beautiful manner. Sunday next, at 11 a.m., service; at 7 p.m., Mr. Horace Leaf, address and clairvoyance. The proceeds of the Building Fund Social amounted to £3 5s., a most encouraging result.