

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATSOEVER DOTHS MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!"—Paul.

No. 2,032.—VOL. XXXIX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1919. [a Newspaper.] **PRIOR TWOPENNOR.**
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PRICE TWOPENCE.

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The Christmas Holidays.

The offices of "LIGHT" and the London Spiritualist Alliance will close on the evening of the 24th, and re-open on Monday, the 29th inst.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

The world is a greyer place than it used to be, and even the coming of Yuletide is powerless to do more than distract our attention for a time from the tribulations of a war-worn humanity. It is possible we shall never win again to the old boisterous moods. Even before the war a poet wrote of "modern melancholy," and saw something hectic and unnatural in the gaieties of the time. What he would say of the jazz dance and other feverish exercises of the jaded souls of our day we can imagine. He would probably find something ghastly and sepulchral in its mirth. To us such orgies are merely evidences of reaction—something transitional, for we never believe the world is going down the hill. We are merely passing through a kind of fermentation period. By and by—it may be a long time to wait—we shall pass to a more settled condition. But just now let us unbend the bow and bid even "divine philosophy" make holiday. There are some roses to mingle with the rue—Christmas roses—and we select, as the appropriate rhyme to holly, the word "jolly," leaving folly and melancholy alone. "So now is come our joyfulest feast," sang George Wither centuries ago. We salute his memory, and will be as merry as we can.

* * * *

"Christmas links us up again," not only with each other, but in some sort with Nature herself, as shown, for example, in the garnishing of our walls with evergreens. That rite was, in ancient days, a kind of ceremonial tribute to the Nature-spirits—the elves of wood and meadow. We have no sympathy with those prosy pedants who tell us that Christmas is celebrated at the wrong time of the year—that the Great Event which we commemorate could not possibly have occurred in the winter season, for then the shepherds would not have been watching their flocks by night—that, in short, Christmas is simply a survival of an old heathen festival. The "Pagan suckled in a creed outworn" might well have had glimpses that would make him less forlorn than many a modern viewing the Christendom of to-day. And as for its being the wrong time of the year, the remedy is a simple one; it would be to dedicate the whole year to the Prince of Peace and the spirit of good-will, and the exactitudes of dates would matter nothing. But this, simple as it is, must be for the present a counsel of perfection. But if joy can be "unconfined" only once a year, let us be content for the time. Hang up the holly and the mistletoe. They

will make welcome for more than the Nature-spirits—for the invisible guests who revisit from the homes of the hereafter those homes that they have left behind but never forgotten.

* * * *

In LIGHT of the 6th inst. we referred, in common with many other journals, to the predictions of Professor Albert Porta, the American astronomer, that great cosmic disturbances would follow on the appearance of a sun-spot arising out of a conjunction of planets, which it was alleged would exercise a disturbing influence on the sun. The prophecy had no disturbing influence on us. We have seen too much of the fallacy of these wholesale prophecies in the past. On several occasions, in former days, we printed astrological predictions at the earnest desire of astrologers who desired to give a test and demonstration of their powers. The results were always unfortunate for the prophets, and indeed if we had had nothing else by which to form a judgment we should have lost faith in prophecy. On many occasions we have cruelly kept out some fond prediction which the prophet wished us to publish beforehand, and as nothing happened to justify the forecast, we felt we really deserved the thanks of the person concerned—we never received them! We are told of the impending "end of the world" (to occur this week), and that many people have been frightened. They must be extremely credulous. Here is our own very safe prophecy (made some days before the fatal date). The world will go on very much as at present, and LIGHT will come out as usual at the end of the week.

* * * *

Many years ago we heard a spirit communicator say that disease was Nature's punishment for man's own faults of ignorance and stupidity. He was speaking of the untimely deaths of children, and deploring the theological cant which comforted the parents with the idea that it was the will of God. It was not God's will, he said; it was man's folly. And lately we saw in an evening paper a letter from a medical man who described how at the bedside of a sick child the child's grandmother said, "It is God's will," to which the doctor replied, "No, it is not God's will that things should be so. It's *man's folly*." The writer of the article applauded that statement, which reproduced almost exactly the comment made by the spirit communicator. So the "mischievous drivel" which is notoriously all that spirits ever utter is creeping into our midst insidiously. The Church and the Press must really protect us against this kind of thing—if they can. It opens the door to a quite appalling amount of revolutionary sentiment.

AT CHRYSTEMASSE TYDE.

Two sorrie Thynges there be—

Ay, three,—
A Neste from which the Fledglings have been taken,
A Lambe forsaken,
A Redde leaf from the Wilde Rose rudely shaken.

Of gladdé Thynges there be more,—

Ay, four,
A Jarke above the olde Neste blythely singing,
A Wilde Rose clinging
In safety to a Rock, a Shepherd bringing
A Lambe found, in his armes, and Chrystemasse Bells
a-riking.

LORD RAYLEIGH AND SIR WM. CROOKES.

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES BY SIR O. LODGE AND SIR WILLIAM BARRETT.

Two former presidents of the Society for Psychical Research were honoured at a notable gathering of the members of that Society held on December 9th in the Steinway Hall, the Right Honourable GERALD BALFOUR presiding.

The CHAIRMAN said: "Within the last few months we have lost two of the most distinguished members of our Society—Lord Rayleigh and Sir William Crookes. Both were stars of the first magnitude in the scientific firmament. We meet together this evening to listen to memorial addresses on them from two of our distinguished members. I will call upon Sir Oliver Lodge to speak on Lord Rayleigh."

SIR OLIVER LODGE, in the course of a noble tribute to his brother scientist, described him as one whom posterity would regard as in many respects the greatest of those who had occupied the presidential chair of the Society. Referring to Lord Rayleigh's occupancy of the high office of president of the Royal Society, Sir Oliver spoke of his close connection with the National Physical Laboratory since its commencement, as well as of his acting as adviser to the Government on scientific questions, and adviser to Trinity House. In 1904 he was awarded the Nobel Prize. He was a member of the Legion of Honour, and of many foreign societies, holding a number of honorary degrees at home and abroad. Lord Rayleigh's varied research illustrated in a marked degree the diversity of his genius. All his investigations were marked by the same characteristics—a severe grasp of principles and a fearless facing of obstacles. His researches, carried on for more than fifty years, covered almost every branch of physics, and there was not one of these in which he did not raise the level of our knowledge; whatever the difficulty of the subject it was never increased by any obscurity on the part of this author. Another feature of the papers which he contributed to the Royal Society was their catholicity. Whatever the subject of the paper the same characteristics were presented. He had the power of stating concisely the essence of his subject, and any subject acquired clearness after passing through his mind. It was like a filter. Another characteristic was the soundness of his judgment. "I question if in this respect," said Sir Oliver, "he has ever been surpassed." Lord Rayleigh did not shy at anything because it was new. Neither did he think that the new was necessarily better than the old. He was a man whose judgment was never influenced by contemporary opinion. The speaker referred to Lord Rayleigh's discovery of the new gas, Argon, in the atmosphere, and to his brilliant elucidation of the blue of the sky (caused by the atoms of the air), the twinkling of the stars, and the colour of opal. All manner of unsuspected discoveries were revealed by his genius, and insignificant things ceased to be insignificant after he had dealt with them.

Coming to his connection with the Society for Psychical Research, Sir Oliver Lodge remarked that Lord Rayleigh was more impressed with "physical phenomena" than with those that were purely psychical. Things that he could see and handle impressed him most. Given irrevocable evidence of Telepathy between the living, he saw no objection to its existence between the living and the dead. He was non-plussed by the results obtained with physical mediums. He never gave way to the easy temptation of condemning things wholesale. Caution he possessed to a remarkable degree. But he was cautious in rejecting as well as in believing. "It is easy," added Sir Oliver, "to obtain credit for robust sense in the scientific world by ridiculing unorthodox phenomena." It was a good thing for the progress of knowledge that some pioneers were willing to run the risk of harbouring strange guests in the shape of new facts. If Lord Rayleigh was absolutely convinced of any fact he would stand up for the truth in any assembly in the world. (Applause.)

ADDRESS ON SIR WILLIAM CROOKES.

SIR WILLIAM BARRETT followed with an address on Sir William Crookes, in which he traced the events in the life of that distinguished scientist and spoke of his many epoch-making discoveries. Turning to the psychic side, the speaker referred to Crookes's passion for exact data, a fact which suggested that he would look with scorn on the loose phenomena observed by psychic investigators. He held the view, however, that it was the duty of a scientific man to examine such phenomena to see if they could be confirmed, and if not to expose them. And yet in the face of such explicit statements of his views Crookes was ostracised by the bulk of the scientific world when he made his announcement of his belief in the truth of the facts he had investigated and proved. The speaker quoted from Sir William Crookes's published testimony that seven or eight of them had seen at the same time in his laboratory the materialised form of Katie King and the medium Florence Cook. The statement was made not by a careless simpleton, but by one of the greatest men of science of the age. Well, what were they to say about it all? No such perfect demonstration of a transcendental character had been seen before. It suggested to the speaker's mind a reverent comparison with the re-appearance of our Lord after His

crucifixion. Mr. F. W. H. Myers predicted that "in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it."

How came it that Sir William Crookes obtained such wonderful results, while others failed to secure them? They must recognise that much of what he achieved was due to his patient skill in research, and then he had the good fortune to experiment with the most gifted mediums.

It was quite possible that Sir William Crookes's knowledge of psychic phenomena, coupled with his original genius, would enable him to devise some fresh tests and methods of communication, some proof of survival more convincing than any they now possessed. It was so in the case of Myers. Was he not in very truth trying now to communicate with them in order to prove that his personality had survived the dissolution of his body and brain?

With this dramatic prelude Sir William Barrett proceeded to relate an incident of great interest. He proposed, he said, to return to this and other incidents more fully on a later occasion when more time was available.

With a friend, continued Sir William, he had investigated a very remarkable case of mediumship by a lady of culture, the daughter of a judge, a lady whom he would call Mrs. W. She was one who knew nothing of mediumship, Spiritualism, or of Sir William Crookes, yet extraordinary messages had been received by her by means of automatic writing, messages of a scientific character connected with Sir William Crookes's researches into the composition of diamonds. He and his friend did not witness this, but they saw the lady in a trance and got messages through her purporting to come from Sir William. In them there was a reiteration of the word "KLIPDAM." None knew what it meant. It was taken down at the time by his friend and a distinguished King's Counsel who was present. The members of Sir William Crookes's family were appealed to but they could throw no light on the word. Finally, Mrs. Cowland, Sir William's eldest daughter, on going over some photographs left by her father, found two taken in diamond mines in Kimberley in South Africa, and on them, marked in his handwriting, was the word "KLIPDAM."

At that interesting stage Sir William Barrett left his most suggestive disclosures, promising to return to them at an early date.

COMMENTS BY SIR WILLIAM BARRETT.

The "Daily News" (December 11th) writes:—

The story told by Sir William Barrett to the Psychical Research Society on Tuesday of a medium having received a message from Sir William Crookes in which the word "Klipdam" occurred is considered of very little value by those seriously interested in psychical research. "Supposing," said a student of psychic phenomena yesterday, "that Mrs. W. (the medium) is perfectly honest. What happened was probably this. She had read, or heard, at some time or other that Sir William Crookes had visited the Kimberley mines, and she had also read or heard of the words Klipdam or Klipdrift. All conscious memory of this had passed away. But the sub-conscious memory is far more tenacious.

"In dreams, in a state of trance, or in conditions of fever, the earlier impressions become for the moment visible. The amazingly retentive sub-conscious memory is tapped; or, to use the jargon of the psychics, the threshold is lowered. That is all."

To this Sir William Barrett replied in the "Daily News" (December 13th) as follows:—

At the close of an address on the life and work of Sir W. Crookes, O.M., which I gave at a recent meeting of the Society for Psychical Research, I briefly related an incident which, after careful investigation, appeared inexplicable except on the assumption that Sir W. Crookes was attempting to give some definite proof of his survival in the unseen. Commenting on this you state that this evidence (and therefore my opinion) "is considered of very little value by those seriously interested in psychical research." It would be interesting to know who is your authority for a statement which, so far as I am aware, is absolutely unfounded.

No serious student of psychical research—and I suppose after over forty years' experience I may be called such—would dream of forming any conclusion in this difficult region of inquiry on a few lines in a newspaper report; or even from the brief reference I made to this incident in my address. When the whole evidence is published criticism, however severe, if well-informed, will be both welcome and necessary.

Meanwhile, your own inquiries have remarkably confirmed the evidential value of the particular test word, insistently repeated by the soi-disant Crookes through the accidental mediumship of my friend Mrs. W., when she was unconscious and deeply entranced. Such plausible explanations as your psychical student gives have of course been adequately considered and rejected.

In an interview in the "Daily Mail" (December 15th), Sir William said:—

"I cannot give the lady's name, but she is a personal friend of mine who never met Sir William Crookes. She is not a professional medium. The communication took place

at a private séance. Mrs. 'W.' was in a trance on a couch when Sir William Crookes purported to speak through her mediumship.

"During the trance Mrs. 'W.' kept muttering something which at first sounded unintelligible. Those present, however, made out the words 'Tell them Klipdam.' This, however, conveyed nothing to those present, but later Mrs. Cowland, Sir William Crookes's daughter, showed me some old lantern slides, two of which, taken by her father, bore the inscriptions: 'Klipdam Diamond Mine No. 1 and No. 2.' The photos were of a number of small huts."

Lieut Saunders, writing from Rendlesham-road, Clapton, states: "Klipdam is surely the name of a small settlement on the Vaal River occupied chiefly by diamond diggers."

"A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND A WARNING."

V. C. D., who reviewed Mr. Coulson Kernahan's book on Spiritualism (p. 368) writes:—

Mr. Coulson Kernahan states that his book is to be taken seriously, which he thinks I have not done. He has, he says, attended one, and only one, séance; and this, of course, entitles him to speak with authority. (!) At this séance, to take him seriously, (1) he heard a voice "which he believes to have been the medium's" which told him a fact known only to himself; (2) another voice, which he admits to have been supernormal, which gave him the excellent advice not to meddle with what he is evidently unfitted to deal with; (3) he saw in front of him a "luminosity out of which looked a singularly beautiful and sensitive face," seen not only by himself but by all present.

This gentleman seems to be one of those who think that their "convictions" can take the place of reasoning. If his warning is, as he says, to be taken seriously, will he kindly inform us:—(1) On what logical grounds he infers the first voice to have been the medium's; (2) what *experimental* grounds he has for his theory that the medium read his thoughts amid those of a number of other sitters; (3) what experimental verification he has for the theory that a memory-picture can be "seen upon stilled waters of the mirror of my own mind, and thence projected, subconsciously, or all unconsciously, upon the darkness." This theory, *substantiated*, would be most interesting, but Mr. Kernahan's "convictions" are beside the mark; (4) how, after admitting the second voice as supernormal, he can "seriously" say that tables, etc., are required to establish communication when he had just given an instance to the contrary; and finally (if they were) why the clicks of an electro-magnet are a reasonable mode of conveying intelligence and those of a table unreasonable.

He is "bitterly opposed to Spiritualism as a creed." Will he kindly tell us what this "creed" is? We do not know it. We know certain facts, and we draw certain scientific and moral inferences, but we profess no creed; and some of us think that if the Divine Power had "locked a door," it is reasonable to suppose that human powers would be quite inadequate to force it. As he considers it his duty to warn us against these things, will he confer a great benefit on us by explaining why the "discerning of spirits," trance communications, and physical "powers" were legitimate in St. Paul's day and illegitimate now?

Mr. Kernahan is welcome to his opinions, which seem to Spiritualists quite illogical, but when he gravely undertakes to warn us, on his own theological prepossessions, against what we know to be both objectively and morally true, he must be prepared with scientific evidence to support his inferences if he wants to be taken "in all seriousness."

"BEAUTY which is without any use may not be explained by natural selection. . . . The most gorgeous beauty is lavishly distributed even among the lowest animals; such as marine shells or polyps, where no such explanation is possible. The process by which such beauty is originated and intensified is wholly unknown to us."—JOSEPH LE CONTE.

ARTIST AND MORALIST.—Rodin, the great French sculptor, has called Kahlil Gibran, the poet painter of Lebanon, "the William Blake of the twentieth century." He has just been introduced to English readers in a small volume entitled "The Madman, His Parables and Poems" (Hutchinson and Co., 5/-). The delicacy of the three drawings which illustrate Gibran's pencil-work, and which are rather more reminiscent to us of Flaxman or of Rodin himself than of Blake, is matched by the delicacy of touch in the stories—the perfection with which they often convey or suggest in a very few words a beautiful or profound idea. In some the idea is easily understood, as, for instance, when the eye says it can see a mountain, and the ear and nose and hand, not being able to distinguish any mountain, agree that there must be something seriously wrong with the eye! Others, such as that of the man (identified with the writer's self) who is accounted mad because he appears in public without a mask, or that of "The Perfect World" wherein all emotions are measured out and regularised, are exquisitely veiled satire—such satire as "like a polished razor keen, wounds with a touch that's neither felt nor seen."

THE SHINING PRESENCES.

(REPRINTED BY REQUEST.)

Through all the myriad shapes of pain, and fear, and misery that dog the steps of mankind to-day, shines the presence of beauty. Behind that mask which we call the human face—no matter how seared by vice, how wrung by suffering—smiles the spirit serene and stainless, beyond all peril of scar or blemish. The "clanging rookery" of the world never mars its peace, there are no riddles which can perplex it, no delays vex its patience. It has no disquiet or doubt, but dwells in eternal light and bides its hour.

Our roads, however tortuous, made difficult by darkness, or tangled with failures, lead at last to loveliness. It peers in like a climbing flower at the barred window of a dungeon at the captive within. It meets us in a thousand shapes at every step of our way—the beauty of holiness in a human life, the inspiration of a great idea, the glance of kindly eyes, a snatch of music, a glow of colour, a blue sky, a sunbeam, a mass of floating cloud.

The clear-eyed amongst us awake early to a knowledge of the secret, and for them the revelation comes full soon, and the divinity within recognises with joy its fellowship with the divinity made visible in the life around it. They win soon to that maturity which is really the youth of the soul. But others—and these are the great majority—remain for the time ignorant or fearful. They deny the realities of which they have no knowledge, or, assuming their possible existence, quake at the thought of "prying into mysteries." Nothing is to be unveiled for dread of the terrors that may be behind the veil. We must not look too closely at the star lest it fall. There are goblins abroad—let us avert our gaze. They view the excursions and discoveries of the more alert and progressive mind with apprehension, and utter many a warning and denunciation. To see them then is to be reminded of the homely parable of the hen frenziedly clucking as she watches the ducklings amongst her brood taking fearlessly to the water.

To the spiritually discerning increase of knowledge brings increase of faith. For them every step into the unknown is a step nearer to the realities—the truth that makes free, the beauty that endures, the wisdom that is simple beyond all speech. For them every veil withdrawn shows the face of divinity more lovely, more august, more filled with eternal benignity. Behind each grey and ghostly shape they behold the abiding angel.

Everywhere for them are visible the shining presences of the immortal world guiding the destinies of men, and distilling the essential good from all forms of crudity and misdirection, however squalid and unlovely. And if haply they doubt and hesitate before the menace of evils that threaten at times to whelm the world, another step forward banishes the fear, and they learn that true safety lies in constant advance, that the things unknown may be clearly discerned, and their beauty interpreted and understood, and the things already achieved built into the great fabric of life as a foundation for higher and yet higher revelations.

Everywhere the shining presences—ministering to their brethren on the roads of earth, patient of mockers, smiling at doubts, turning the strength of enemies to weakness, and making their weakness a cause of compassion and a means of help. They clasp hands with those who see them and seeing, march breast forward to join their radiant bands, and their faces for ever shine upon us as we go.

D. G.

GLASTONBURY AND THE GATE OF REMEMBRANCE.

Mr. F. Bligh Bond, F.R.I.B.A., lecturing a few days ago before the Taunton Field Club, described the results of the resumed excavations at Glastonbury Abbey in August last, including the discovery of the Loretto chapel, built by Abbot Bere, the last Abbot but one of Glastonbury. Mr. Bond reminded his audience that in his book, "The Gate of Remembrance," published early last year, he had given a plan of the chapel obtained in the course of psychological experiments which he had been carrying on for a considerable time. There were material differences between this plan and the chapel which they had found as a result of the communications he had received, but these differences were due to the fact that his mind interpreted the plan in a certain way which was literally right, but actually wrong. "There is," said Mr. Bond, in conclusion, "very fruitful study for us all in this psychological business. We cannot help feeling we are in touch with a much larger life and memory than we can see around us, and in a much larger company of those who have gone before us. It is a feeling that makes one full of hope and happiness. It is to me a great happiness to be able to say that I have succeeded in finding that the details I obtained in this way are true."

INDEX TO "LIGHT."—We find it again necessary to follow the practice of recent years and print the index separately for the use of those (relatively few) readers who bind their volumes. It will be ready early in January, and can be had on application, price 6d., post free.

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THE SPRITES OF YULE.

At a time when our thoughts are turning to such possibilities of feast and revel as the war has left to us, it might well seem that spirits of the remote, ethereal type depicted by poets would find the world a more than usually repellent place of abode. One can easily imagine, for instance, those fair sylphs, whom Shelley described in "Adonais," turning away in disgust from a humanity made additionally gross by an increased attention to the pleasures of the table, and by what they might consider a coarse and unseemly mirth, even when it fell short of the "jazz dance." We say this without any desire to disparage the idealised type of spiritual beings which the poetic imagination has bodied forth. Far from it. We love to think and read of the wondrous elfin world, with its starry splendours and its delicate fantastic beauty. We are even charmed with Lamb's quaint idea of the invisible realm as a kind of shadow-land:—

We willingly call a phantom our fellow as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world, and we think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being.

There is a mood in which one can enjoy these fanciful pictures of the unseen world as limned deftly by the great writers of the past. True, such writers were far from human standards as we conceive them, but then it is to be remembered that their appeal was really made to the fancy and imagination. They asserted no claim to be seers and revealers of interior realities. They left that (rather unfortunately) to the theologians, who, as a rule, failed miserably, their revelations having all the extra-human atmosphere with none of the kindly play of fancy and ideality.

And this brings us to a consideration of the only great imaginative writer who ever handled the subject of ghosts in a warm-hearted and natural fashion—Charles Dickens, he of whom it was said that he invented Christmas! In his exuberant humanity he pictured the Christmas ghost as returning, not to affright the revellers or to rebuke their mirth, but to open the hearts of selfish and gloomy ones amongst them to all the cheerful and kindly influences of the festal season. And how near to the truth the intuitions of the great novelist carried him! Witness his description of Marley's ghost in "The Christmas Carol":—

The same face, the very same. Marley in his pig-tail, usual waistcoat, tights, and boots, the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pig-tail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail, and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.

That picture of the fetters which Jacob Marley wrought for himself in his selfish money-grubbing life on earth will have to none so vivid a significance as to Spiritualists, who know that there is more than imagination in it, and that the creative power of the spirit in certain states is quite capable of projecting externally such a symbolic chain as that which Marley dragged and Scrooge saw.

Even the goblin in "The Chimes" is a wise and beneficent spirit:—

"The voice of Time," said the Phantom, "cries to man, Advance! Time is for his advancement and improvement; for his greater worth, his greater happiness, his better life; his progress onward to that goal within its knowledge and

its view, and set there in the period when Time and He began."

Whether it is the ghost of Marley, the Spirits of Christmas, Past, Present, and To Come, the Goblin of the Bells, or the awesome spectre that attended the solitude of "the Haunted Man," all have their mission of goodwill—to turn the thoughts of men, not from the earth, but only from its baser things. Hear the words of one of the spirits to Scrooge:—

There are some upon this earth of yours . . . who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived.

This is one of the glories of Dickens. Who, more than he, realised the spiritual nature of the human affections? The sour moralist, the gloomy ascetic, preached in vain to him their doctrine of the soul as a cold abstraction—he would have none of it. He saw too deeply into the heart of things to be beguiled by ideas of metaphysical angels or aimless wanderers from "the vasty deep." His were ghosts that could point the true message of Christmas and even lament when, by their own follies in the flesh, they were barred from its atmosphere of love and joy and fellowship. "My spirit," wailed the ghost of Marley, "never walked beyond our counting house . . . and weary journeys lie before me." It is most true a picture. The ghosts that Dickens describes, like the spirits we know, "walk" for their own highest good or for that of others, and never merely to affright the senses of mortals and add new terrors to the grave. His phantoms and spectres, while presented in some of the conventional trappings, taught the lessons of the soul, and showed how in the simple joys and sorrows of poor humanity were concealed the deepest springs of its divinity. It is good to think that the influence of the great novelist in this direction is still at work leavening the thought of the world, for there are still many spiritual philosophers of the Laputa type who discourse of the next world with their eyes on the clouds, and to whom the soul is a "meagre essence." And now that the spirit of Christmas is abroad, and the ghost story of the olden type gives a pleasing thrill as we gather amidst the holly and mistletoe about the Yule fire, it is good to think that nothing of our innocent merrymaking is alien to the true life of the soul. For love and joy are amongst the fruits of the Spirit, and if they were as manifest all the year round as at Yuletide, the world would indeed be a happier place.

DONATION OF £1,000.

A SPLENDID CHRISTMAS GIFT.

D. M. C., after contributing a hundred guineas to the Memorial Endowment Fund (acknowledged at the time) has now most generously sent a cheque bringing up the amount of his donation to £1,000. The offering is made in memory of his son, Lieut. I. M. C.

This fresh example of munificence is very encouraging. We are grateful for all contributions, however small, to the Fund—from each according to his means—but large sums like this bring us by more rapid strides to the goal.

VERSE, GRAVE AND GAY.—Two booklets of verse have been sent us by their authors for notice. Margaret O. Lancaster's "Poems of Consolation" (Partridge and Co., 9d.)—two or three of which have appeared in these columns—are marked by simplicity, brevity (they seldom occupy more than a page) and a grave sweetness, harmonising with the writer's full confidence in the Love which "over and around us lies." Her prayer is, she tells us, that these little poems may be the means of bringing peace to sore and troubled hearts, and they are well-fitted to fulfil that end. Elise Emmons' "Winter Songs Among the Snows" (John M. Watkins, 2/6 net) are both more numerous and more varied—ranging from serious reflections, delicate fancies and humorous skits, to the most light-hearted liltings expressive of the healthful joy of living, and an untiring delight in the ever varied beauty and bounty of Nature.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

Mr. William Marriott, at Mortimer Hall, on Saturday evening last, proved to his own satisfaction how spirit photographs such as those shown by Mr. Hope in the same hall on the previous Saturday might be produced. The hall was too small for the large number of people who attended.

After Mr. Marriott had exhibited his futile pictures he invited discussion. The Rev. Walter Wynn, Miss Stead, Mr. Hobbes, Miss Scatcherd and Mr. Hewat McKenzie spoke. A committee of six from the audience was appointed to conduct a test with Mr. Hope.

Mrs. Susanna Harris, at the Steinway Hall last week, while blind-folded, executed a painting in oils and nearly completed a second painting. The process took over two hours, during which time music was going on continuously. Many of those who understood what was really taking place were strongly of the opinion that such exhibitions should not be presented as public entertainments.

Mrs. Philip Ch. de Crespigny's story in the Christmas number of the "Premier" deals with the phenomenon of the Direct Voice. "The Voice," as the story is named, relates an episode in the life of a man who, somewhat as in Mr. Anstey's novel, "The Giant's Robe," has published in his own name the novel written by another man, after the real author had died. The "voice" leads to a confession of the fraud on the part of the offender, after he and a friend had separately consulted Norton Vyse, the psychic expert. The story is not only interesting and skilfully told, but will prove a liberal education on Direct Voice phenomena to uninitiated readers.

Concerning Mr. W. H. Hurndall's offer of £1,000 for absolute proof of the reality of psychic phenomena, the "Evening Standard" makes the following sapient remark: "It is significant that Spiritualists should continue to maintain the attitude that honest doubt is a state of mind inimical to any successful psychic demonstration." The conclusive reply is that thousands of honest doubters have been convinced of the reality of psychic phenomena, in spite of their honest doubt. Honest doubt, as has been stated many times before, is no impediment to the production of evidential manifestations.

On the other hand, we have known cases of persons who were not troubled by doubts and were friendly disposed to the subject who could yet get no wonders produced in their presence. This leads us to believe that there is some obscure chemical element in the matter such as that hinted at by Professor W. E. Benton, who remarked that mediumship seemed to him analogous to the chemical process called catalysis, whereby some element brought into a group of elements caused them to fuse, while some other element rendered all combination impossible.

Lady Conan Doyle was presented with a beautiful bouquet by the miners of the Rhondda Valley on the occasion of her husband's lecture. Considering that she had ventured forty-eight miles on hill roads in a tempestuous night, the compliment was well deserved. The Spiritual movement owes a great deal to this lady, whose grace and charm win hearts for the cause wherever she goes, a fact which repays her for her frequent absences from her children and her household.

E. C., a scientific contributor, writes suggesting that sceptics and other cranks connected with the psychical movement should have a special decoration. He adds, "I would suggest a medal made of Osmium (that being the densest known metal), in the shape of a mobius surface (that is, one-sided), and bearing the figure of an ostrich, for obvious reasons."

Miss Lind-af-Hageby was one of the speakers at the Queen's Hall last week at a meeting in aid of the "Save the Children" Fund, devoted to the saving of infant life. She referred to the half a million fatherless children in Serbia suffering from malnutrition, and the misery existing in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Armenia. Miss Lind made an eloquent appeal for public aid. Lord Weardale presided.

We observe the announcement of the decease of Mr. Henry Clay Frick, the American steel magnate, who was a partner of the late Mr. Andrew Carnegie. It is recalled amongst us that Mr. Frick followed the subject of psychic investigation many years ago through the mediumship, amongst others, of Mr. William Eglinton, the famous physical medium. Mr. Frick's fortune is estimated at £40,000,000.

Sir A. Conan Doyle has a letter in the "Daily Mail" this week calling attention to a wonderful head of Christ, drawn under inspiration by Mrs. Spencer, daughter-in-law of Viscountess Churchill, and exhibited in the Walker Galleries, New Bond-street (admission free).

Sir Arthur writes, "It is, indeed, a most marvellous production, with all the inner soul which is so lacking in the old masters, whose Christs and Virgins appear to me to be very often the quintessence of materialism and vulgarity." There are other suggestive remarks in his letter which we intend to reproduce in our next issue.

An American correspondent writes: "Our stores are flooded and the columns of our magazines filled with all sorts of psychic stuff, but nine-tenths of it is faked and offensive." Other correspondents in the United States have told us of the sham communications and stories by bogus mediums and experts now being published there. It was only to be expected. We have a little of the same thing here.

In reply to inquiries regarding the "Quest," for January, which is to contain an article on "Spiritualism: Its Position and Its Prospects," by the Editor of *LIGHT*, the magazine, which is edited by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the author of many books on mystical philosophy, is published by Mr. J. M. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, W.C.2, price 2/6.

"Only dolts would deny that sometimes there is ever such a tiny jerk of the curtain which covers the window looking into the Beyond," is a statement we are surprised to find in the "Daily Express" (December 15th). It is the prelude to a story which is described as "a pleasantly baffling little study in the occult."

The story is of a girl sitting in a Kensington drawing-room after dinner—a young English girl, cynical of the occult and emotional, who adores Mr. Robert Loraine. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, she is present at a rehearsal of "Arms and the Man." She has never seen the play nor read it, nor has she seen the "Chocolate Soldier" travesty. But she sees the whole first act and part of the second played, with all the halts and the traffic on the stage and repetitions which attend rehearsals. She describes the setting accurately—Raina's bedroom lit by two candlesticks and the window looking on the Balkan peaks. She repeats the dialogue.

The next night she goes to the theatre and sees the play exactly as she saw it in the drawing room. The writer states that he can personally vouch for the accuracy of the facts.

Mr. W. N. Beaver, in his "Unexplored New Guinea," just issued, says that the bane of the country is the dread of sorcery. If a man wants a love charm, he goes to a sorcerer; if he wants to rid himself of an enemy, he goes to a sorcerer. Often, it appears, the mere suggestion that he had been bewitched is enough to kill the enemy; we are not told if it suffices to inform the object of one's affection that she has been charmed. Mr. Beaver tells of a "very renowned wizard named Baii . . . a little wizened dried-up old man with a crippled leg and one side of his face horribly distorted with lupus." Baii was implicated in an attack on a party of police, but the case against him broke down. "As witness after witness came in, Baii, leaning nonchalantly on his stick, gave the unfortunate Papuan one single look, and that man simply fell in a fit on the floor. I saw this happen time after time till even the interpreter became affected and the epidemic began to seize the police."

There is a story which concerns a very positive gentleman who, taking out his new chronometer one day, announced that if the sun had not descended below a neighbouring hill in the next ten minutes, it would be late! His mental attitude is matched by that of some other very confident persons who regard Spiritualism as considerably higher in the social firmament than it ought to be according to their "time of day." It has not yet dawned upon them that it must be their chronometers that are wrong.

The cobbler, in one of Gorki's novels, is described as saying, "I make shoes to live, and I live to make shoes. What is the sense of that?" That cobbler put into a sentence a very deadly indictment of that Materialism which darkened the life of millions. When Spiritualism has had time to prove and not merely to preach the larger meaning of life we may find some later cobbler saying, "I make shoes to live, but I do not live to make shoes. There would be no sense in that." Truly a happy life is a matter of common sense as well as of high ideals.

MR. MARRIOTT ON SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

A CONJURER'S "EXPLANATIONS."

Mr. William Marriott gave a pleasant entertainment at Mortimer Hall on Saturday night last, when in the presence of a very large audience he exhibited a number of lantern slides showing how certain psychic phenomena might be explained. Mr. Marriott has had a long connection with the conjurer's art, and his efforts were a tribute to his resource and ingenuity. As serious attempts to account for phenomena which trained psychic investigators have witnessed they were merely childish.

He challenged Mr. Hope to produce an "extra" on any one of the photographic plates in a box sealed under his direction, and Mr. Hewat McKenzie accepted the challenge on behalf of Mr. Hope. A committee to supervise the arrangements and conduct the test was elected as follows: Miss Stead, Miss Scatcherd, Dr. Ivor Tuckett, the Rev. Walter Wynn, Mr. Sydney Moseley ("Daily Express"), and Mr. Marriott.

During a discussion which took place Miss Stead, Miss Scatcherd, Mr. Hobbes, Mr. Hewat McKenzie and the Rev. Walter Wynn spoke, testifying to what they had seen.

What we were chiefly impressed with was the utter futility of the proceedings. It is of no moment to the world whether Mr. Marriott be convinced or unconvinced.

MYSTICAL NUMBERS.

Mr. Frederick Bligh Bond's latest book takes us into regions of a nature abstruse to the ordinary reader. It is entitled "Materials for the Study of the Apostolic Gnosis" (Blackwell, Oxford, 15/- net). The Rev. Dr. Simcox Lea, in the apologia to the book, points out that it presents a very large number of indisputable facts illustrating a parallelism of meaning and of numerical values in the equivalent of the letters constituting words and phrases employed in the Greek texts of Scripture and other documents of the apostolic or sub-apostolic period. The fact that the Greek alphabet was used to denote numerals is of course well-known. But the idea that the sum of the letters of a word or sentence could have any bearing on the literary meaning is a matter of dispute amongst scholars. Yet there is considerable evidence that these concealed meanings were deliberately aimed at by the ancient writers. Some of the facts are given by Mr. Bligh Bond in the chapters which follow, but consideration of these esoteric meanings is naturally one for experts.

The example that will most naturally come to the mind of the uninitiated reader is the fact that the "Beast" of the Apocalypse is mentioned as 666, "which is the number of a man." Mr. Bond points out that it is now accepted by many conservative scholars that the "Beast" was the Emperor Nero, for his name in Hebrew, NRVN. QSR. (Neron Kaisar), enumerates at 666. Further, if the Roman spelling of "Cæsar" be followed the Greek gives us ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ = 1332 = 666 + 666. We give that as an example that will be most familiar to the average reader.

It is a work for the scholar skilled in Biblical exegesis or interested in the more concrete evidences of mysticism underlying the written letter. We have small doubt that the book of Revelation at least was written "within and without," i.e., that it had an esoteric meaning and an exoteric one. Meantime, we agree with Dr. Lea that it is by facts men learn, for "theories may be wrong but specimens are facts." And Mr. Bligh Bond gives many specimens in support of his thesis, of which we expect to hear more. There are many doors yet to be unlocked in the great storehouse of spiritual knowledge.

A FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath unto the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, the sum of £——, to be applied to the purposes of that Society; and I direct that the said sum shall be paid, free from Legacy Duty, out of such part of my personal estate as may legally be devoted by will to charitable purposes, and in preference to other legacies and bequests thereout.

THERE is nothing so great that I fear to do for my friend; there is nothing so small that I will disdain to do for him.—PHILIP SIDNEY.

SPIRITUALISM AND CHRISTIANITY: A SCIENTIST'S TESTIMONY.—Spiritualism rightly investigated and appropriated should stimulate the social, moral, and religious advancement of humanity. Spiritualism has a high purpose: it is no more the result of chance than the stars, nor more properly fitted for commerce than Christ, nor more intended for idle chatterboxes than the library of the British Museum. Spiritualism undefiled may even rediscover Christ; may absorb the "dusky veil" of His glory, silence the bickerings of the creeds, and shame vice as if in fact He were to "return in like certainty as that in which He went." Spiritualism could not oust Christianity. . . . Christianity awoke a sleepy faith in immortality, as Spiritualism is awaking a sleepy faith in Christianity.—From "Man-making," by W. E. BENTON.

"THE BRITISH MAN AND WOMAN."

SIR O. LODGE ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIUM.

The first issue of "The British Man and Woman," a monthly magazine, reaches us from the Kingsley Press. It contains many bright and interesting features, among them a contribution by Sir Oliver Lodge, entitled "On Communication with the Dead," in the course of which some timely warnings are given. Sir Oliver says:—

My contribution must be of the nature of a caution. Communication with the discarnate undoubtedly occurs, but always through some physical medium or instrument. . . . Pure and unadulterated communion can hardly occur. An inspired message or a thought has to come through an earthen vessel, and the result is to deface it to some extent, to confuse or to sophisticate or to modify it somehow. Occasionally, in moments of extreme lucidity, the medium appears quite transparent, but there is always a trace of opacity, and sometimes it is badly coloured. Those who judge of a scene by looking at it through coloured glass, without making allowance for the sophistication of the medium, will be deceived. They can be deceived without the slightest semblance of fraud. Fraud is not common, but misinterpretation is.

It is nearly as rash to take everything that is said—whatever means is used—as coming straight and perfect from our departed friend, as it is to claim that he has no part or lot in the communication, and that it is all self-generated and nothing but deception and automatism. Truth lies between these extremes. . . . All this may sound depressing to enthusiasts who feel that they have got through to their loved ones as clearly as they did when here. It should not be depressing, it is inevitable, and is characteristic of the genuineness of the process. With patient use of opportunity, the clearness of communication sometimes becomes extraordinary, but it cannot always be so. They themselves are often aware of confusion when we tell them what we have received, and sometimes, though not always, are able to explain the cause of the error and to set it right.

The Rev. Walter Wynn has a striking article, "Is William Ewart Gladstone Living?" concerning which there has been a good deal of publicity in the daily Press. Mr. Wynn describes at length a sitting with the Crewe Circle at which he obtained a photograph (reproduced) with psychic extras claiming to be pictures of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone.

We congratulate the publishers of "The British Man and Woman" on the first issue of their new magazine.

THE CREATIVE POWER OF THOUGHT.

"Herdal" writes:—

I believe it is one of the principles of Spiritism that thought is a creative force. Mr. R. A. Bush further speaks of this as a proven fact.

F. B., in an interesting article on psychic photography (p. 390), says: "There is good evidence to show that conscious thought has been photographed."

These two statements appear to postulate the interaction of psychic or bound ether and material or loose ether.

The writer of the illuminating explanation of the Modern Theory of Relativity ("Times" Educational Supplement, December 4th, 1919), speaks of the form of radiation known as light as the quickest travelling thing hitherto known or conceived of.

But is not the velocity of thought as great as, or possibly greater than, that of light?

Little is as yet known of the creative possibilities of thought-force. Nor perhaps will it ever be possible to test its velocity. But may it not be within the bounds of practical future possibilities that with increased knowledge of the properties of psychic ether and of spirit conditions thought may, so to speak, be focussed under the burning glass of science, and "harnessed" as a mighty force in ways as yet undreamed of by man on the earth plane?

Is not this, in fact, the theory of creation as expressed in John i., 3, 4, "All things were made by him" (i.e., the word, thought expressing itself in creative act) . . . and "in him was life, and the life was the light"?

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "It is often supposed in some quarters that Spiritualists wish to dethrone Christ and Christianity, and that they have no interest in good Christian work. There is not a word of truth in this, and the Rev. Walter Wynn, in a recent sermon at the Chesham Union Free Church, defended the Spiritualists known to him. I asserted that they were kind, sane, intelligent, good people, whom he had found most anxious to help any good cause. Mr. Wynn is anxious to pay off his church debt, and erect a hall in which lectures could be given to the people, problems of the hour. He proposes to raise the money by sales of work and rummage sales, which will be a help to poor at the same time. Saleable articles or cast-off clothes will be gladly welcomed if sent to the Rev. Walter Wynn, Chesham, Bucks."

THE FLAMING HEART.

A MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AT THE SACRAMENT.

I was kneeling one morning in front of the Altar, at early Celebration. I have always felt, through the Encharist, the possibility of great spiritual development, and often there comes to me at such moments a mystical response to the inner mysteries of the Sacrament. I have ever looked for supernatural happenings, hallucinations, psychic excitements, but my spiritual instincts are always alive and craving satisfaction. This they have never before received in any really lasting degree.

Now came a new Divine illumination. Two clergymen were officiating at the celebration. I had just received the bread from the one, and had raised my head and hands to receive the cup from the other, when suddenly I went quite blind.

The Vicar, who was moving towards me, was blotted out. I stared at a black veil utterly impenetrable, and I was aware of a tremendous internal dislocation. My heart beat tumultuously, and felt as if thrust out of place. Then my sight was restored.

I saw before me, not the man, bearing in his hands the chalice, but a flaming heart of fire, from which radiated glowing, scintillating streams of golden light. They filled the background with their quivering radiance, and I was unconscious of shrinking back, and bowed my head as the spiritual vision approached me and enveloped me in its aura.

The cup had been transmuted by Divine alchemy into the flaming Heart of love's sacrifice, and I was given to taste the living waters of Life.

For a few minutes I was quite unconscious of where I was. I had been, indeed, caught up into the seventh heaven. I know now that I acted mechanically, and to outward semblance I behaved in the orthodox manner, but when I raised my head again the Vicar had passed on and the vision had vanished. Nothing had happened to distract the attention of others.

I returned to my seat, conscious that I had been taught the meaning and marvellous significance of the Flaming Heart. I understood the words of the great mystic, St. John:—

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.
"And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness overcame it not.

"There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world."

I knew that the Flaming Heart of Divinity dwells in the breasts of all humanity, that the soul is no empty shell, but the shrine of the Divine Presence, and that Presence the Guide and Light of Life.

I had seen revealed the inner mystery of the sacramental feast. Through a rift in the veil of the material, the hidden life of eternity was symbolised for me in the Flaming Heart, the true Encharistic Mystery.

--From "Ghosts I have Seen," by Violet Tweedale

MR. WM. HOPE'S LECTURE.

"Psychical Researcher" writes:—

Your report and the letter from Mrs. Barbara McKenzie on your issue of December 13th overlook, I think, some facts connected with the lecture at which I was present.

No one deplored the "subsequent proceedings" more than did; but it should be borne in mind that the lecture was a public one and that, as Rev. Walter Wynn stated, Mr. Marriott and Mr. Maskelyne had been invited, or—unless my memory fails me—had been "challenged" by him to attend the meeting.

I would also suggest that in public lectures of this kind, which are of course quite distinct from demonstrations, the giving of prayers and the singing of hymns are out of place, and only tend to make the critics more hostile.

I would also suggest that it might be helpful to the cause we all have at heart if, at future public lectures of this kind, a statement were made at the beginning of the lecture that, whilst the lecturer will be happy to answer questions, he does not expect his critics to accept his statements without further examination on their part, which can only be done by personal investigation.

I think that if more allowance were made for the honest difficulty many people find—and there are always beginners—in accepting, or definitely accepting, the spirit explanation, our statements would appear more reasonable and carry more weight.

My own experience has been that it is better at first to point out the arguments on both sides, with the view to making people think the matter over and possibly come back for further help. After all, for whose benefit is the object of our propaganda? Not for the convinced, but for the unconvinced or uninitiated.

HUSB FUND.—Mrs. Etta Duffus, of Penniwells, Elstree, Hert., acknowledges, with thanks, the following donations: Friend, £3; Mrs. Green, £1; J. S. B., 5s.; Miss C. F. Hall, 2s.

THE SAME MESSAGE THROUGH TWO MEDIUMS.

Mr. W. T. Waters, of Tunbridge Wells, writing as a mere novice in the study of Spiritualism, narrates the following remarkable experience:—

In July last I had a sitting with Mr. J. J. Vango, in the course of which the control suddenly told me that there was standing by me a young soldier who was most anxious that I should take a message to his mother and sister who live in this town. I replied that I did not know any soldier near to me who had passed over. However, the lad would not be put off, and as my own friends seemed to stand aside to enable him to speak, I promised to endeavour to carry out his wishes.

At once came an exact description which enabled me instantly to recognise in this soldier lad the son of an acquaintance of my family. He told me certain things by which I was made doubly certain that it was he and no other, and he then gave me his message of comfort and assurance to his mother and sister (his father had died when he was a baby), who, for over two years, had been uncertain as to his fate, as he had been posted as "missing." He described how he had been badly wounded and captured by the Germans in a retreat, and that he had died about a week afterwards, and he implored me to tell his dear ones that he was often with them and that the only bar to his complete happiness was the witnessing of his mother's great grief and his inability to make himself known.

I fully intended to keep my promise, but knowing that the lad's people favoured the High Church party and would most likely be absolutely sceptical, I was puzzled how to convey the message, as I felt they would only think that my own loss had affected my brain. I ventured to approach his aunt, but what I told her only called forth the remark: "It cannot be," and I therefore decided to await an opportunity of speaking to his mother direct.

Before this looked-for opportunity came, a young lady of this town, having lost her mother about two years ago, and hearing from my daughter that I was investigating these matters, called to see me, and I lent her my books. One of these books is "Rupert Lives," with which she was particularly struck, and she eventually arranged a sitting with Miss McCreddie, through whom she received such convincing testimony that she is now a firm believer. During this sitting, the soldier boy who came to me came to her also. He repeated the same description that I had received, mentioned in addition his name (Charlie) and begged her to give a message to his mother and sister—the self-same message which I had failed to give. So anxious was he in the matter that at the close of the sitting he came again and implored her not to fail him.

Now, these events happened at different dates—July and September—the same message exactly being given through different mediums to different persons, and yet people tell us it is all a myth and that mediums simply read our thoughts.

When my friend told me of her experience I at once asked her to go with me to the lad's mother, and I am pleased to state that this double message convinced both his mother and his sister, and that his aunt is almost brought to the truth, if not quite.

CHRISTMAS.

This happy thought-picture of Christmas, from the pen of Dr. Peebles, appeared in *LIGHT* some years ago:—

"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, 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."

MYSTICISM AND REINCARNATION.—The Christian mystic is concerned with the problem of reincarnation only to the extent of learning how to avoid that calamity. And in so far as his knowledge of that subject is imperfect, as perforce it is, his faith is that in whatsoever state or plane of existence he may be, so long as he preserves within him the seed of Life Eternal, God will give that seed a body as it pleaseth Him; but whether that be a body terrestrial or a body celestial is of no moment to himself. His whole aim is to ally his will and to unify his desire with that Will whose desire is to shape all to a perfect end; in which Will is our only peace. For him who is in conscious conversation with God there is no inquiry, no preference of desire, as to the form his embodiment may hereafter take, or the place to which it may be assigned. For him no form of vesture will be of less consequence or greater value than another so long as it serves His purpose; and to wish it otherwise would be to violate the harmonies of the Cosmic Order.—W. L. W., in "The Seeker."

BURIED MEMORIES.

O Memory, fond Memory,
When all things fail, we fly to thee.

Anticipating the blessings which await the advanced soul in its evolution towards perfection, a recent correspondent included among them the fact that it will never be troubled with the recollection of the trivial and useless details of its past career.

We might sympathise with this mental attitude if the perfection of memory meant that all the events of the past, trivial and important alike, were present to our consciousness all the time. But of course it doesn't. It only means that in no case are they entirely lost—that they form links in a chain, some of which are above the surface of consciousness and some below, but all dependent upon one another.

One objection to the theory of rebirth is that this continuity (according to our Reincarnationist friends) is destroyed. The whole chain of our previous life either snaps off short and slips away from us into complete oblivion, or is swept bodily into the subconscious—sunk so deep that it is seldom, if ever, that anything which can be recognised as a possible detached fragment of it floats up to the surface. With its vanishing must necessarily go all the benefit which the memory of past events brings to us. Even the so-called trivial incidents and experiences which go to make up so much of the common round of daily life may add their quota to this benefit. We cannot afford to dismiss them. In the building of our lives, as Longfellow reminds us,

"Nothing useless is or low,
Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest."

It is the way in which we regard events that makes them trivial or otherwise. A meal may be a sacrament or a mere indulgence in selfish gluttony; and selfish gluttony is not confined to things physical. It is not of the body alone. It is not necessarily confined to those who love this fair earth and do not give themselves airs of exalted superiority to the school in which their Father has placed them. It will be little good for any of us to be removed to another unless we can retain in our consciousness the lessons we have learned in this one.

The fact is, life is a whole; its parts are dependent upon one another. You cannot separate bodily experiences, bodily appetites and needs, from mental and spiritual culture, and say exactly where one ends and the other begins. All are necessary to each other. No life, whether here or hereafter, can be made up of water-tight compartments. The phenomena of the senses—whether of the physical or of the etheric body matters not—are necessary for intellect and emotion to play upon. And it is not by any means a bad thing that the seemingly trivial events of our lives refuse to let themselves be buried past resurrection. In moods of depression we are cheered by the recollection of little kindnesses we have received or witnessed, and we think the world isn't such a bad place after all; in moods of self-gratulation we are shamed and humbled by the sudden flashing up, out of a past which we had hoped was as dead as Queen Anne, of some little foolish deed or thoughtless word. Some people appear to think it would be a good thing if the memory of such trivial details could suffer eternal extinction. For my part I echo the prayer in Dickens's "Haunted Man," "Lord, keep my memory green!"

GERSON.

AT YULETIDE.

"LOVE NEVER FAILETH."

Christmas once again approaching o'er the hills of time
Calls to earth to make her welcome with a merry chime;
But the poor old earth is bruised and sore;
She cannot rise as heretofore
To greet the morn with Yule-tide mirth;
She feels so strangely old. O stricken Earth!
Be not too sad, for there are those upon the other side
Who fain would make thee glad: they still love Christmas-tide,

And in the waiting silence before morn,
In the still hour when Jesus Christ was born,
They will draw near. The Love once cradled in a stall
Is yet the Conqueror of all.
No gates of death can bar his way,
He comes again this Christmas day,
Bringing yet further tidings of great joy,
And those in Love's employ
Will surely follow in his train,
O sad old Earth! awake again
To hope, and joy, and peace
And Love which cannot cease.
Be not too sad, for mists of sorrow rise
And dim the longing eyes,
And dull the listening ears.
Lift up thy heart, forget thy fears,
For in the silence they will surely come,
Each to some well-loved home:
And Love can make his presence known
In coming to his own.

—E. M. S.

THOUGHT-READING AND SPIRITUALISM.

I read with some amusement a paragraph on page 373 concerning Mr. Capper, the "thought reader," and his alleged "showing up" of Spiritualism.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Capper in France several times at the breakfast table, and I found him a most pleasant, genial, and rather voluble gentleman, very full of the excellent performances he was giving to the soldiers.

I gathered that while he disdained any idea of reading people's thoughts, he did genuinely claim that his "thought reading" feats were not due to muscle reading, and that he did receive and translate into action impulses from the mind of those "willing" him. He seemed, however, but little interested in the *modus operandi* and disinclined to try any experiments in new forms of "thought-reading," apparently from a fear lest they might affect adversely the performance of the acts he now does so well.

I have seen Mr. Capper perform at least four times at wide intervals of time, and I noticed at the last performance that he introduced Spiritualism into his patter—not as relating to his "thought-reading," however, but merely as a prelude to the conjuring feats with which he invariably commences his performance.

Two of these feats are "rope tying" tricks, and very clever and mystifying they are. In the first one, he has his wrists very securely tied with thin black tape by two persons from the audience, and he frees his wrists instantaneously and reintroduces them into the loops. I have been on the stage myself and have helped in the tying; from my position I was actually able to see him withdraw his hand from the tape I had tied round his wrist and reinsert it, but I confess I could not see how it was done. The loops and knots showed no sign after the performance of having been tampered with.

Of course, Mr. Capper knows little or nothing about Spiritualism, and probably cares less, but it forms a good subject for his patter, in view of the general interest in the subject, and especially in view of the physical phenomena produced recently by mediums "controlled" by being secured with ropes.

The moral is that such performances by mediums are rather harmful than beneficial to the Spiritualistic cause, and only tend to throw discredit on Spiritualism generally. The public naturally relegate the whole matter to the realm of conjuring; they have often been pleasantly mystified by the performances of rope-tied conjurers, and see no reason for supposing that the performances of rope-tied "mediums" belong to any other category.

For the study of physical phenomena, especially, what we need in London is an Institute similar to the Meta-psychical Institute just started in Paris under Dr. Geley. Is there no hope of ever getting it?

C. E. B. (Colonel).

DECEASE OF MISS MACK WALL.—The thoughts of the older London Spiritualists will be carried back many years by the news of the transition on the 10th inst. at a nursing home at Hendon of Miss Mary Mack Wall, only daughter of the late John Wall, M.D. Miss Mack Wall, who had reached a ripe age, will be remembered as a woman of strongly marked personality, widely read, and possessing a keen intellect and retentive memory, loyal in her friendships, and a firm and convinced Spiritualist. The funeral took place at Hendon Park Cemetery on the 15th inst.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF MYSTERIES.—In "Mysteries of Life," by Stanley de Brath, M.Inst.C.E. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 5/- net) we have another contribution towards reform of Bibliolatriy—so sorely needed. The book is designed for boys and girls, whose requirements would perhaps in general be more effectively met, the welfare of the work itself promoted, if in its next edition the latter half of the volume were artistically reduced in bulk. The reviewer is always reluctant to offer any criticism of the plan of any book, and is constrained to do so only upon compulsion of regard for the common good. Boys and girls of all ages may read the Preface and most of what follows both with pleasure and profit—those who have passed their meridian of life, as well as those to whom this is yet far in the future. "Twenty years have shown me," acutely observes the author, "that the average boy is nearly, if not quite, as capable of appreciating principles as the average man." A fine observation, truly, beautifully demonstrative of the essential spirituality of human nature. Admirable, too, is this expression of truth: "The idea of the Unseen Power and the Unseen Friend is the foundation for all real and durable religion." Few readers, of any age, will plumb the depths of meaning in the curt statement that "the instrument and means of Evolution is Death." The mysteries here expounded are these: The Mystery of Nature, the Mystery of Sex, the Mystery of Pain; subordinate to them are expositions such as the Mystery of the Body, the Mystery of the Heavens, the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven. The word *mystery* is used in its attractive sense: that of something we would love to understand.—W. B. P.

TO-MORROW'S SOCIETY MEETINGS.

These notices are confined to announcements of meetings on the coming Sunday, with the addition only of other engagements in the same week. They are charged at the rate of 1s. for two lines (including the name of the society) and 8d. for every additional line.

Marylebone Spiritualist Association, Ltd., Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W.1.—6.30, Mrs. Wesley Adams. December 28th, Mrs. E. A. Cannock.

The London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke Place, W.2.—11 and 6.30, Mr. Percy Street. Wednesday, 24th, No Service.

Lewisham.—The Priory, High-street.—6.30, Rev. Susan Harris.

Croydon.—96, High-street.—11 and 6.30. Thursday, 8 p.m., members' circle.

Peckham.—Lausanne-road.—7, Ald. D. J. Davis, J.P. 28th, 7, Mrs. Jennie Walker.

Walthamstow.—342, Hoe-street.—7, Mr. P. Smyth, address and clairvoyance.

Shepherd's Bush.—73, Becklow-road.—11, public circle; 7, Mrs. Stenson. Thursday, 11, public circle.

Church of the Spirit, Windsor-road, Denmark Hill, S.E.—11, Rev. A. J. Waldron; 6.30, Mrs. A. Jamrach. 28th, 6.30, Mrs. A. Boddington.

Woolwich and Plumstead.—1, Villas-road, Plumstead.—7, Mrs. Brownjohn, address and clairvoyance; 3, Lyceum. 28th, Mr. R. G. Jones.

Brighton.—Athenaeum Hall.—11.15 and 7, Mrs. Crowder, address and descriptions; 3, Lyceum. Wednesday, at 8, public meeting, Mr. R. Gurd.

Battersea.—45, St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction.—11.15, Circle Service; 6.30, Dr. W. J. Vanstone. 25th, 8.15, Mrs. Bloodworth.

Brighton Spiritualist Brotherhood.—Old Steine Hall.—11.30 and 7, Mr. A. Maskell, addresses and clairvoyance; 3, Lyceum. Monday, 7.15, and Tuesday, 3, Mr. Maskell. Christmas Day, 11.30, public circle. Forward Movement see special advertisement.

Wimbledon Spiritual Mission, 4 and 5, Broadway.—11, Mr. E. J. Lofts; 6.30, Mr. Horace Leaf. Wednesday, 24th, 7.30, public circle. Mrs. Orlowski. Healing: Daily, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday only. Advice and information given freely on the subject of Spiritualism. Apply to Hon. Secretary, 10, Evelyn-road, Wimbledon.

Holloway.—Grovedale Hall (near Highgate Tube Station).—To-day (Saturday), 7.30, Lyceum social; special attractions. Sunday, 11 and 7, address and clairvoyance by Mrs. Jennie Walker, of Canada. Wednesday, Christmas Eve, No Meeting. 28th, 11, Mr. T. Davis; 7, address by Mr. Campaigne; clairvoyance by Mrs. Budd. 31st, 7.30 till 12 p.m., Special Grand Social.

SOCIAL MEETING.—The Little Ilford Society of Christian Spiritualists held a most enjoyable social and dance on the 18th inst., at the Carnegie Library, Manor Park, in aid of the New Church Fund. Our thanks are due to the Manor Park Spiritualist Church for the help rendered by their Lyceumists, known as the "Some-Its" Concert Party, and consisting of Mr. Leonard Burr, Mr. Phillip Crawley, the Misses Grace Dyson, Hilda Rayment, and Miss Larking. Their items were greatly appreciated. Mr. Watson and Mr. Burrow also contributed songs. The dances went with a swing, and great praise was due to the pianist, Mr. Harry R. Hayden. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the organiser, Mrs. Jamrach, and all who assisted by gifts or service to its success.—A. J.

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*Brixton, 143a, Stockwell Park Road	7-0
Camberwell, People's Church, Windsor Road, Denmark Hill ...	11.0	6-30
Church of Higher Mysticism, 22, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W. ...	11-30	6-30
*Clapham, Reform Club, St. Luke's Road ...	11-0	7-0
Croydon, Harewood Hall, 96, High Street ...	11-0	6-30
*Ealing, 5a, Uxbridge Road, Ealing Broadway ...	...	7-0
Forest Gate, E.L.S.A., Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove ...	...	7-0
*Fulham, 12, Lettice Street, Munster Road ...	11-15	7-0
Hackney, 240a, Amhurst Road ...	...	7-0
Harrow, Co-operative Hall, Mason's Avenue, Wealdstone ...	...	6-30
*Kingston, Assembly Rooms, Bishop's Hall, Thames Street ...	...	6-30
Lewisham, The Priory, 410, High Street ...	...	6-30
*Little Ilford, Third Avenue Corner, Church Road ...	...	6-30
London Spiritual Mission, 13, Pembroke Place, Bayswater, W. ...	11-0	6-30
*Manor Park Spiritual Church, Shrewsbury Road ...	11-0	6-30
Marylebone, Steinway Hall, Lower Seymour-street, W.1. ...	...	6-30
*Peckham, Lausanne Hall, Lausanne Road ...	11-30	7-0
*Plaistow, Spiritualists' Hall, Bræmar Road	6-30
*Plumstead, Perseverance Hall, Villas Road	7-0
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