

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research

"Light! More Light!"—Goethe.

"Whatsoever doth make Manifest is Light!"—Paul.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE ISOLATED CASE.

Among the large volume of correspondence which reaches the editorial offices of LIGHT from all parts of the world, there is usually to be found a certain type of letter describing incidents of a real, or supposedly real, psychic experience, accompanied by the request that we will express an opinion as to the events described, stating whether the experience set out is the result of spirit intervention or otherwise. These letters vary in detail, but their general purport does not alter. The correspondent describes a dream, or a waking vision, in which, say, a tall, bearded man walks across the room, opens the door, and passes out of sight; or perhaps we are told that our correspondent, while sitting in a crowded tube train, hears a mysterious voice saying, "Go home at once!" Or it may be we are informed that our anxious enquirer, while driving a motor-car along a lonely lane sees a solitary figure ahead, standing motionless in the middle of the road; loud warning "toots" on the horn fail to move this figure, which, when the car approaches within a few feet of it, mysteriously disappears. LIGHT is asked to decide whether these were psychic experiences! And, of course, we have to answer that there are no means of knowing. A single isolated experience, unrelated to any previous or subsequent happenings—standing, as it were, in mid-air—is not a matter upon which judgment can be passed. It is only when these experiences are supported by some corroborative evidence, or where they arise out of, or lead up to, certain circumstances of a striking nature, that their significance can be determined. Isolated events such as we have described may be, and no doubt frequently are, of purely subjective origin.

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THE REINCARNATION PROBLEM.

LIGHT has in the past dealt very exhaustively (not to say exhaustingly) with the question of reincarnation. The fervour with which the question was originally debated has in the meantime died down, which rather suggests that nowadays people have not the leisure to devote to controversial matters which are not of the first importance. A correspondent, H. C. P., in a recent letter against reincarnation, points out that in the order of Nature there is no backward movement, and elaborates his point by

reference to geology, zoology, and other branches of science which relate to physical evolution. That is true enough in the large aspect. Things are carried forward all the time—with continuous improvement. But probably the reincarnationist would meet the objection by the argument that reincarnation is a form of spiritual evolution, and that the soul progresses all the time by successive embodiments, so that there is no real retrogression. We have always seen that there are certain transcendental explanations of the reincarnation idea which touch the spiritual rather than the physical side of things. When one is dealing with "the abysmal depths of personality," however, it is difficult to be definite, and the fact that appearances are deceptive may apply to the arguments on both sides. It is a question on which we prefer to keep an open mind for the present amid a welter of opposing opinions. As we all know, there are spirit-communicators who affirm and others who deny the doctrine. But there is no dispute amongst them over the question of survival after death—they are all certain of that! The fact that they show no such unanimity on the question of reincarnation indicates that it is a very speculative matter.

* * * *

AN OLD-TIME EXPERIMENT.

Some fifty years ago, at the office of a Spiritualist paper long defunct—the *Medium and Daybreak*—in Southampton Row, Bloomsbury, a series of seances was given by Mr. J. J. Morse, the trance medium, at which messages from "strangers" were received. These "strangers" were for the most part quite ordinary people, who, having passed from earth, were permitted to come back and give some account of themselves. They gave their names and other particulars about themselves, and these were published every week in the *Medium and Daybreak*. In many cases the communicators were recognised by friends or acquaintances, or their statements were verified by inquiry. The results were curious and instructive. Some of the friends and relatives of the "strangers" who heard of the matter were gratified by the messages and impressed by the evidence afforded. In other cases the recipients were annoyed at the publicity and denounced the messages as impertinent and sacrilegious! An angry local journal, commenting on one case, spoke of the affair as fanatical and pointed with indignation to the fact that the deceased was a "highly respectable" person, the inference being that no respectable person would ever send a message from beyond the tomb. In one instance, too, legal proceedings were threatened! It is very interesting to look back on these things and compare the past with the present, although even to-day we imagine that an experiment of this kind would provoke a certain amount of opposition and ill-will, although nothing like that which it stirred up half a century ago.

This flesh is but the visible outshowing
Of a portentous and a mighty thing,
Whereof, each mortal knowing,
Becomes a king!

—ANGELA MORGAN.

MENTAL AND MORAL DISSOCIATION

By J. Rutherford.

Let us live. Let us have the true joy of life, which is the joy of the poet in pouring himself out in his poem. Let us express our infinity in everything round us—in works we do, in things we use, in men with whom we deal, in the enjoyment of the world with which we are surrounded. Let our soul permeate our surroundings and create itself in all things, and show its fulness by fulfilling needs of all times. This life of ours has been filled with the gifts of the Divine Giver. The stars have sung to it, it has been blessed with the daily blessing of the morning light, the fruits have been sweet to it, and the earth has spread its carpet of grass so that it may have its rest. And let it, like an instrument, fully break out in music of its soul in response to the touch of the infinite soul.—

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*We need a New Revelation—not of Heaven or Hell, but of the spirit within ourselves.—*Dr. CHANNING.

It is agreed on all hands, I believe, that natural knowledge is not an undesirable thing for the medium to possess. If John of "Revelation" had had some acquaintance with the faculties of the human mind, it is probable he would not have recorded a "war in Heaven," as in Heaven we cannot imagine entrance of souls possessed of dominant, destructive, and combative propensities. John, it is set forth, wrote these extraordinary words: "There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their peace found any more in heaven. And the dragon was cast out—that old serpent called the devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." A higher critic has pointed out that John, when he saw this, was not in true spiritual perception, but suffering from some kind of "mirage vision." Obviously John must not be taken literally.

Truth acts like electricity on old beliefs, old creeds, dissolving them, and religion is a different thing from creeds, and its great words are aspiration, fraternal love, justice, and love to the neighbour more than self. The absolute religion teaches that the man—body, soul, and spirit—must live in unity and harmony in order to realise a full and healthy and religious life. "Spirit, the inmost and eternal," says our seer, A. J. Davis, "is the source of sanity and power. Force is animal, and is liable to exhaustion and insanity. Power never reveals exhaustion, never desponds, never 'gives up the ship.'" If, then, mediums become reliable channels for their own spirits, we may look forward with confidence to their being aided beyond "a mortal pitch." Davis further elucidates spiritual psychology by pointing out that "spirit travels over and through the soul in two directions at the same moment, and thus the physical body is under spirit influence every second of time." "Man," he continues, "in this world is compounded of spirit, soul, and body, united into one organisation by many golden links, and in a connected chain of animating and energising elements. These elements are not embodied independently of the physical organs until after death." It is not correct, therefore, to infer that mediums can leave their bodies, hop about on the threshold of Hades, and act as missionaries to the "unsaved." The magnetic or "spiritual" body

exists in fluid form, unorganised, and when its elements are, through disease or accident, dissociated from, say, the region of "conscientiousness" in the moral brain, the want of moral principle is seen. Dissociation may come through excitement or vibrations in the brain in excess of its natural movements, or exertions continued beyond the natural capacity. Alcohol is a potent cause of dissociation, and the true personality is, by its influence, often drowned. There are, consequently, persons moving about in the world who, to all intents and purposes, are dead. A. J. Davis gives a case he observed, while in the "superior condition," of a gentleman past middle life, of undoubted intellectual capacity and much cultivation, who for years was an exemplary churchman, but who became at times half-imbecile and sometimes exceedingly shocking in the use of vulgar and profane language. The coronal parts of his brain appeared to clairvoyant perception *white*, because of blood destitution and exhaustion in the due proportion of phosphorus. Consequently, he was at times without the ennobling feeling of conscientiousness, and deficient in power derived from the sentiments of self-respect, hope, and sublimity. In such a case the spirit could not legitimately act and declare its true nature through the organism.

This unhappy cause—dissociation—operates unfortunately in the modern theological world. There is a difference between the professed faith of the community and its actual life—between the prevailing religious belief and its outward manifestation. It is observed in the losing of the sense of immediate accountability; neglect of conscience; betrayal of trust; insensibility to the claims of our fellow-men; a want of conscientiousness carried into the daily affairs of life. We have evidence of fraud in all classes of the community, daily suicides, murders, taint in every department of Christendom—Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Protestant, Liberal Protestant. This implies that the faith of the day—under whatever form professed—has lost its connection with life; not necessarily that it is untrue, but the couplings are loosed, the connection with the innermost divine essence, the spirit, broken. Men no longer feel the validity of the faith they profess. Is it possible that individuals should have faith in themselves, faith in their own consciences, faith in the qualities that adorn, beautify, and sustain their nature, faith in their capacity to make this world better, when all the time they are professing not to believe in themselves; when all the time they are disavowing their own virtue, flinging themselves at the feet of an external "redeemer," and trusting that he will save them from the consequences of their own misdeeds?

Is it possible that such a religion, based on these opinions, should do otherwise than lead to just such things as we see—weakness, imbecility, fraud, neglect of duty, contempt for moral obligation?

The Higher Spiritualism addresses itself to the evolution of spiritual qualities. Its whole aim is to make persons—men worthy of their manhood, women worthy of their womanhood. It never attempts to build up men and women after the fashion of "society." The Higher Spiritualism aims to bring about a reign of justice, truth, brotherly kindness. True Spiritualism (not phenomenalism) demands that people should expand themselves to the utmost measure of their nature, should acknowledge their intrinsic

greatness, live out of themselves in universal ideas, purposes, and aims. When the skylark sings in the morning at the windows of Heaven, his song is a sweet suggestion that Nature is full of music, and that the objects and aims of life should be above all grovelling and earthly things. It is indeed wonderful to think that at the core of things there is a principle of perpetual renovation. As human nature is endowed with this principle, we comprehend its grand possibilities in the path of ascent; of its intrinsic capacity ultimately to grow over a wasted life and to adorn with loveliness a stunted and perverted nature. Let us all seek and pursue that which ennobles and dignifies, and avoid all low sarcasm about each other's knowledge or want of knowledge, knowing full well that in the final sense we know actually nothing. The public eye is watching to see if Spiritualists are really on a "higher plane," that we love worthily and exalt the highest love above the lowest, and hunger after moral and spiritual elevation and perfection.

"OH FOR A BOOK!"

A NOTE ON THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY F. E. LEANING.

Are there fewer book-lovers than there used to be? Those of the Old Brigade often think so, but that may, of course, only be part of the general delusion that when we were young, all sorts of things were better than they are now. But it is, without controversy, a hurrying age, and people write, and read, with less attention and care than is quite good for the soul. It is true that there is a vast output of books, far too many for any one reader to read with that slow, quiet enjoyment which goes with genuine assimilation. Few of us follow the advice to "read for five minutes and think for ten": we cannot afford the time. And there are other excuses. Some people know so much that they have nothing to learn. But we cannot all begin where they are leaving off, and it may be noted that the chiefs among us do not set the example of despising the printed word. After the exposure of a certain Continental medium, Prof. Thirring tells us, "I began studying the literature." The late Professor Flammarion and Prof. Bozzano must both have been prodigious readers of our own literature. But it may be argued that, as they are themselves prolific authors, they had to be. Perhaps so, but what is the use of authors if people will not read for themselves? They become like the king in the parable, who had all things ready for a banquet except the guests for whom it was prepared. And since we have not the handicap, which they had, of having to learn a most difficult foreign language first, there is the less excuse for ignorance.

With a view to putting the *menu* of our subject before the public, two Bibliographies have recently been issued by the National Book Council, both of which have been drawn up and approved of by the bodies concerned. They are not intended to be exhaustive, but are rather purely selective and representative. That on Spiritualism consists of about sixty to seventy volumes, all in print, and priced. Anyone who should read the whole series would find himself very well informed on the best and most authoritative sources of every branch of our subject. It is not a big library, and its total cost would come to just £25. Of course, if he added the short list of classic and standard works now out of print, and the series of *Proceedings* which form the bulk of the S.P.R. Bibliography, it would be more. The prices range from one shilling upwards to two guineas and more, but I was rather surprised (on having the curiosity to examine into it) to find that fully seventy-five per cent. of them are under ten shillings.

As, for reasons which I cannot analyse here, but which are clear to anyone who reads Mr. Stanley Unwin's book, *The Truth about Publishing*, all kinds of books tend to go out of print much more rapidly than they did before the war, it would be wise for readers, even at some sacrifice, to possess themselves of as many of the books on this list as they can. And, more, let them follow the old Hermetic maxim, which I was pleased to see a reminder of in *Psychica* recently: *Lege, lege, lege, et relege*—Read, read, read, and re-read—not so much many, as a few wisely and well, for reading of this kind "maketh a full man." It is better, for instance, to read one large book such as Myers' "Human Personality," which Prof. Driesch told us he had read over again lately very carefully, than a dozen slighter books which make no demand, but also make very little for edification. It is by too much easy and "popular" reading that I have known a Spiritualist come to forsaking *Light* because "it was getting too transcendental"!

AT THE MENIN GATE.

BY HELEN ALVEY.

"I'll start," said Mr. Ponsonby fussily. "I must be in good time this morning; you'll follow when you're ready, Mother!"

"I'm not going," his wife replied.

He hesitated for a moment in the doorway. "Of course, dear, you're listening to the wireless. I wish I could stay also. It's unfortunate that the Bishop comes this particular Sunday, and, as Churchwarden, I must be there: the Vicar asked me specially. . . ."

He took a step forward. His impulse was to pat his wife's shoulder, to assure her that he, too, would desperately like to stay and listen. One look from her would have caused him to waive his sense of duty, and leave the Vicar in the lurch. But she had drawn her chair close to the loud-speaker, and was gazing stonily at the wall opposite. He merely said, "Good-bye, dear," and trotted off.

She forgot him completely as soon as he was out of sight, and gave herself up to the Service, and to memories of the past.

It was during the dedication of the Memorial that her son came to her. He stood in the doorway, just as her husband had done, hesitant, and half-uncertain of his welcome. She raised big, startled eyes at him, whispering his name. He came then, and stood close to her, smiling down at her, as he used to do in the old happy days.

"You see, I've come back," he said. "Lots of the fellows are back to-day; some of them have gone to see their names written on the Gate. But it's only for your sake that I'm glad to have mine written there. I knew you would be feeling proud, Mother, to think of 'our' Memorial being unveiled in this grand manner. It atones a little for your disappointment in me."

She made a little murmur of dissent.

"Oh, I know, I always knew, that you had hoped such great things of me. And then I turned out just an ordinary fellow—like Father—and you couldn't help being disappointed in me, as in him. Then when I died, you began to think again of all the splendid things I might have done if I'd come through the War. But, Mother, even now there are opportunities to do splendid things, and I'm often conscious of your ambitions for me, and try to live up to them still—upstairs. Your thoughts are such a help to me. But you're not to think of what I might have done, only of what I still may do. And the same with Father. Don't be disappointed in him. Encourage him—as you did me, that last time I went back to the Front. He misses me, as much as you do. Let him share your sorrow—and your joy in my return."

Then he went, and the next time Mrs. Ponsonby looked up, her husband had taken his place.

"What, you didn't turn off the wireless!" he said fussily; "the Service must have been over some time ago."

But, unexpectedly, she only laughed, and kissed him. "Never mind the wireless," she said, linking her arm in his, "come into the garden. I have something to tell you."

TOWARDS UNITY.—You must know that, when people first come out of the earth life into the first stage of their life eternal on this side, they are as they left the earth. This much you know. They who have any serious religion at all continue their worship and manner of life and conduct according to that religion as to its main and leading principles. But as they progress there is a winnowing, and the chaff is blown away, one fistful after another, as they go on from sphere to sphere. Yet, while some shoot ahead, the bulk linger and go more leisurely onward; and those who have left them behind come back to them, from time to time, to instruct them. So they go on from age to age, from realm to realm, from sphere to sphere; and all the while they approach nearer to the Universal idea of the All-Father. Brethren they still are together; but they learn to welcome, and then to love, brethren of other modes of religious thought and belief; as these others do also. And so there is a constant and increasing intercourse between those of varying creed. But it is long before most will merge together in absolute unity.

"ZABDIEL" ("The Highlands of Heaven").

"HAD I A PREVIOUS EXISTENCE?"

By J. A. N. C.

Mr. James Tinling's "Reflections on Reincarnation," which appeared in *LIGHT* of July 30th, interested me greatly, and I have ventured to set down here a few of my own reflections on the same subject, which I hope may prove of interest.

Motoring near Beauvais a year or two ago, I passed through a small village bearing the extraordinary name of "FitzJames." (Let me say at once that I seek not to "pull the leg" of the reader, and that the name actually is "FitzJames"; the natives pronounce it in a weird and wonderful manner, making it "Feet-jharm," though I cannot reproduce the sound with meticulous exactness.)

I may here add that FitzJames has a population of 1,200 souls, and is distant about two kilometres from Clermont (Oise).

Now, the thing which struck me about this village (after I had recovered from the shock occasioned by its grotesque name) was the fact that it seemed uncannily familiar. I said mentally (and involuntarily): "By Jove! I know this place!" Actually, I possess no recollection of ever having been within even fifty miles of the spot before. One cannot visit a place called "FitzJames" and then forget the incident!

This kind of experience is not entirely unfamiliar to me. On many occasions at a dinner-party, or some similar function, I have had a strange sensation that everything around me forms part of a panorama the details of which are already stored away in my consciousness. I know also, in these moments of abnormality, exactly what will take place in the next few minutes.

That bald-headed gentleman, for instance, who is swallowing his turtle-soup with enormous gulps will (I know) put down his spoon, emit a throaty cough, crumble his bread, address a remark to the lady seated on his left (who will, in her turn, nod and smile politely), after which he will lean back in his chair and gaze with a fish-like stare at the bowl of chrysanthemums in the centre of the table.

When he actually puts down his spoon, emits the throaty cough, crumbles his bread, addresses the remark to the lady on his left (who dutifully performs her nod and smile), and finally leans back in his chair, gazing at the chrysanthemums, according to schedule, I am conscious of feeling no surprise whatever. The whole scene appears, to my momentarily disoriented mind, like a twice-told tale. I seem to be gazing at a cinematographic film which I have seen once before.

Possibly this phenomenon may be put down to the effects of the good red wine. I grant the hypothesis. But why should red wine act in this manner? Why on earth should a generous alcoholic beverage have the effect of enabling me to foresee correctly the events of the next few moments, and give me the sensation of having lived through the scene on some past occasion?

In any case, there was no alcoholic element in my "FitzJames" experience; and I am left to ponder on my past incarnation, if any, when I was (or was not) associated in some manner with a French village bearing a name which staggers the credulity of an English visitor, and is disturbing to the vocal utterance of the Gallic inhabitant. Was I, perchance, the original FitzJames who bequeathed his ill-fitting title upon this helpless hamlet?

With a slight effort of imagination I can picture myself as the doughty knight FitzJames, clad in the antique garb of English knighthood, circa 1420 A.D., and pricking my way over the fair lands of France with my trusty squire, accompanied by a handful of retainers. I have wedded a charming and high-born lady, daughter of a French nobleman; among other possessions which she has brought me as her dowry are the broad acres which will later become a village—

to be known by subsequent generations under the stunning title of FitzJames, the name of its former lord!

Something like that is the picture painted by my idiotic imagination. I'm afraid to dwell on it too long, otherwise I shall end by believing it. It seems, anyhow, to be a very satisfactory explanation to account for the uncanny sense of familiarity with which I first caught sight of the village of FitzJames. (The name fascinates me.)

But coming to the broad issue, has all this any bearing on the question: "Had I a previous existence?"

A lady told me recently that she recalled perfectly her previous existence as a member of the household of Rameses II of Egypt. She is perfectly clear on the details. Cross-examination fails to shake her. She is certain. Moreover, I am convinced that she is sincere.

But what is her testimony worth as evidence on this question of reincarnation? I say (with the greatest respect for the lady), "Nothing!" Her experience might reasonably be placed under the general heading of "Mental States"—those obscure conditions of mind which baffle the doctor and the psychologist, but as to which there are probably some perfectly normal explanations.

On logical grounds, it is difficult (for me, at least) to see any necessity for the Reincarnation Theory. My reincarnationist friends urge that there is no other satisfactory explanation for these innumerable instances of memory of previous lives.

My reply is that mind is a vast and complex thing, and there may be dozens of explanations to account for its vagaries other than the somewhat mechanical theory of reincarnation.

When we have explored further into that dark and obscure vault of mystery known as the human consciousness (of which we have as yet but the smallest shreds of real knowledge), perhaps we may discover the process by which the mind seems, on occasion, to flash back into the misty past and dart forward into the dim future.

Among my friends I number quite a fair sprinkling of Reincarnationists. Some of them occasionally recount to me various events in their past lives. They assure me solemnly that they recollect these happenings with perfect clarity. When these things are told me in good faith I accept them.

I notice, however, a certain similarity in the tale and manner of telling. To begin with, most of my friends who have these startling memories all seem to have occupied positions of eminence during their past incarnations—but not of the greatest eminence. I mean that they were not Kings, Emperors, or Pharaohs, but rather Kings' daughters, Emperors' favourite physicians, or Pharaohs' high priests.

I have often pondered on this phenomenon. Why always one of the court-cards, and never the ace? (Always, you will observe, somewhere near the top of the pack, and never among the "deuces" and "treys"!)

I observe also that my friends exhibit great satisfaction when they tell me stories of their past lives. I am sometimes led to reflect that (possibly quite unconsciously) they want to believe in a previous existence. They seem, also, to take an impish pleasure in contemplating their former misdeeds. Perfectly respectable, upright, moral, clean-living ladies and gentlemen of the twentieth century seem to be able to recollect past lives of startling luridness and incredible atrocity.

Are they romancing? Not consciously, I feel sure. I do not seek to enquire too closely; they are my friends, and what they tell me I would fain believe!

* * * *

I have just been informed that the village of FitzJames was probably called after a prominent French banker who flourished during the French Restoration.

Confound it! I had quite settled in my mind that I was the original FitzJames!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. THE HELLENBACH CENTENARY.

(The Editor does not necessarily identify himself with the opinions expressed by Correspondents.)

AN ANALOGY.

Sir,—The correspondence started by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's suggestion of adding another to the Seven Principles of Spiritualism seems only to emphasise the contention which *LIGHT* has, I think, always upheld, viz., that Spiritualism is *not* a religion, but might and should be its greatest mainstay, and on this point an analogy may neither be out of place nor perhaps unuseful.

When the art of printing was invented it was welcomed by earnest thinkers as a valuable help to religion, but the official Church by no means joined in this welcome. To put the Bible into the hands of the common people would be dangerous! Only its professional interpreters should be allowed to take advantage of this new process, which could be used for evil propaganda, and might indeed be a device of the devil!

To-day this attitude has, of course, long since passed. It is recognised that printing has indeed been one of the most valuable of the handmaids of religion, and the modern organisation of the Church can scarcely be imagined without it; yet no one would maintain that the art and practice of printing is a religion—though it has, I believe, its “formes,” if not its ceremonies!—since it is used for every secular, every trivial object, and indeed for many worse and even “devilish” purposes, but we do not find that the Church fights shy of it on that account.

May we not see an analogy here? Is not the Church treating this new “discovery” as it did the old one? Instead of welcoming its aid, it would leave it to the scientist or the researcher, and more than hints at its “danger,” and possibly evil origin.

On the other hand, are not some Spiritualists helping this very opposition by attempting to make into a religion a science which has no more claim to be so called—on account of its serious bearing on our future destiny—than has the art of printing on account of its valuable aid in making the Bible known to the world?

Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR M. HEATHCOTE.

Compton, Winchester.

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

Miss Lilian Whiting writes:—

As we live so largely by our appreciations and our ideals, the great and fairly world-wide appreciation of Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the notable influences in contemporary progress. The *Boston Transcript* (the classic in Boston journalism) has this word of Sir Oliver in its issue for June 18th, 1927:—

It is certainly no small thing in these days when a man of the highest scientific standing bears witness to the reality of a spiritual order and the certainty of a glorious Beyond, and speaks as a humble follower of Jesus Christ. Sir Oliver uses his scientific knowledge, at once so minute and extensive, to support and enforce the essentials of Christianity.

In the same issue a correspondent of the *Transcript* writes:—

If I were to make a list of the nineteen immortals, it would read something like this:—Abraham, Moses, Plato, Socrates, Pericles, Christ, St. Paul, Galileo, Columbus, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Lincoln, Dickens, Franklin, Langley, Emerson, Edison, Marconi, Sir Oliver Lodge.

The great scientific work and the great leadership in Spiritualism for which we are indebted to Sir Oliver Lodge are signal aids in lifting humanity to a higher level.

Major-General H. P. Enesy, of Budapest, writes:—

Hungarian and German Spiritualists will celebrate on September 3rd the centenary of the birth of Baron Lazar de Hellenbach. Born of an aristocratic family which has produced many famous men, he became an economist and politician, later taking up the study of philosophy and occultism, which he continued with ardour during the last thirty-four years of his life. He was a rich man. He was a great friend of the renowned Hungarian medium and authoress, Baroness Adelpa de Vay, and visited and corresponded with many prominent English and German psychical researchers.

During his lifetime several famous psychical mediums visited him by invitation for long or short periods, among them being Eglinton, Bastian, Fowler, and Slade.

In the realm of scientific occultism he was in advance of his age, particularly in respect of his views on the ether, on vitalism, and psychic phenomena.

The older Spiritualists may recall that in February, 1884, in Vienna it was reported that H. Bastian was “exposed as a fake” by the Crown Prince Rudolphe and Archduke Johann Orth—both of whom later met a doleful end. Bastian had been the medium for the materialisation of four different figures at a test seance, but after the “exposure” no dresses or articles of clothing were found on him. The Archduke Johann, although a highly intelligent man, in his booklet, “Glimpses into Spiritualism,” ridiculed the whole movement, and especially singled out Hellenbach. The latter defended Spiritualism with a fine book, “The Logic of Facts,” in which the Archduke's attacks were skilfully met in the manner of a chivalrous fencer countering an opponent. He considered it necessary to approach the Emperor Francis Joseph for permission to publish this. The Emperor's reply was: “He is the attacked; let him defend himself as he likes. He need not make it too subtle.”

Hellenbach produced many valuable writings on very different themes, most of them in the German language. His classical work is “Birth and Death,” others being “The Magic of Numbers,” “On the Ether,” etc. He well deserves the title given him by his admirers: Hellenbach, the champion of truth and progress.

LIGHT AND MATERIALISATION.—The detrimental action of light on ectoplasmic forms is not surprising. Light is well known to be fatal to many micro-organisms, and seems even to hinder the organisation of primordial forms of life. Germs in process of development are usually shielded from its action more or less by the natural conditions. The early stages of embryonic life take place in relative or complete darkness. One of the functions of chlorophyll in vegetation seems to be the protection of delicate tissues against light, and it is a common observation that vegetable growth takes place mainly at night. . . . If light hinders the biologic process in the first stages of organic growth, considering that this process is very slow, it is easy to conceive that it should actually paralyse the same processes during materialisation, when the rapidity of vital action is greatly accelerated. The human embryo, for instance, requires weeks to be built up in the womb, shielded from light; in a seance a quasi-human or a human organ is completely formed in a few seconds. . . . The injurious action of light, therefore, is only natural and logical.—From *Clairvoyance and Materialisation*, by Dr. GUSTAVE GELEY.

LIGHT.

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FROM THE WATCH-TOWER.

SOME REFLECTIONS BY THE WAY.

Whenever any invention or discovery, however marvellous, has been seen and used a sufficient number of times by the world at large, it ceases to be regarded as wonderful. It becomes ordinary—it passes into the dull catalogue of common things. Probably when it was first announced, as a rumour, it was disbelieved and made a matter of popular ridicule. As it progressed towards acceptance, it may have been the subject of fierce hostility, especially if it threatened any vested interests. But, in the end, it bore down all opposition except amongst the very backward and benighted, and when a new generation came on the scene it had the appearance of something that had always existed—the memory of the young people would never have known a time when it was not.

It is probable that no discovery has ever had to run such a gauntlet as spirit communication. Yet it is only natural that so great a thing should have to undergo an ordeal proportionately great. It has now emerged from the worst of its obstructions, but its way is still stubbornly disputed. Sometimes it seems as if its detractors were more numerous than of old; but that is only because it is more conspicuous than it was. Many are now vocal who before were silent, because they were not aware of it. But its friends and supporters are now a great and growing host, where, forty years ago, they were a little struggling group of "voices crying in the wilderness."

There are still, as we know, hostile forces engaged in decrying and resisting the new thing. But before he condemns them, let any Spiritualist of mature years remember his own record. Can he lay his hand on his heart, and declare that from the first he believed in aviation or wireless or some of the other discoveries that, in their beginnings, were scouted in the Press and in the market place as things improbable and impossible? Can he say that, when he heard men jibing at the notion of aerial flight, he did not join in the ridicule? But, in any case, let him be tolerant of sneering and sceptical remarks about spirit-communication, and remember that what is so familiar a thing to him is not so familiar to those who scoff at it. Let him rather congratulate himself that he is amongst those who are first in the field.

Another thing to be remembered is that communication with the next world of human life is still in its very early stages. There is an immense amount of

ground still to be covered in finding out the laws of communication, and by repeated experiments eliminating the sources of error and confusion. The wonder to us is not that our progress is slow, but that so much has already been accomplished. It is the silent, careful investigators who are doing the best work, setting down their discoveries quietly, and never shouting every new fact that they come across, or making prematurely public all they have learned. These people do not answer the ignorant critic; they are not excited or vexed about the misstatements circulated regarding the subject, because they know those falsities will answer themselves in due time, and that, although a lie travels much faster than the truth, it has no staying power—it does not last.

Another reflection—it is one we have offered before—is that nothing that is real and true and of the last importance to humanity can be too severely tested. An error is as fragile as porcelain. It cannot endure rough handling. But the truth can be pounded in a mortar and suffer nothing.

The time will come when communication with our friends who have passed from mortal life will be so familiar a thing that our descendants will find it a source of amusement to read what was said and thought about it by their forefathers, just as we laugh to-day over the denunciation and ridicule that were at first excited by the idea of steam travel and aerial flight.

Meantime we can look back on the struggles and sufferings of the pioneers of Spiritualism not so many years ago, and hold in honour that little band of heroes who held on grimly through a storm of execration and ridicule such as we of to-day can scarcely realise. They bore the brunt of the battle, and broke the back of the opposition, and our ordeal is light in comparison. Let us be grateful for their work, and not put them to shame by our indifference, fear or unworthiness.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN PARIS.

The Third International Congress of Psychical Research under the presidency of Professor Charles Richet, will take place in Paris, September 26th to October 2nd next, in continuation of the previous Congress held in Warsaw in 1925. Lectures will be given at the Sorbonne (Amphithéâtres Richelieu and Descartes).

The questions for discussion fall under six heads:—

1. Supernormal action of the human being upon matter. (Telekinesis, teleplastics, etc.)
2. Supernormal knowledge. (Telepathy, clairvoyance, fore-knowledge, etc.)
3. Physics and metapsychics.
4. Psychology, physiology, biology and metapsychics.
5. Laboratory practice.
6. Terminology.

Only such scientists and psychic students as have been invited by the national committees, or by the French organising committee, will be considered as full members of the Congress. Only such members who have been delegated by the national committees will have the right to deliver addresses and take part in discussions.

Reports and communications will be made in German, English, or French. Generally the verbal addresses are limited to twenty minutes, personal discussions being limited to about five minutes for each speaker.

Visitors will be admitted to the lectures and discussions if in possession of a card of admission, the cost of which is twenty francs, to include the whole series, and which also includes a printed report of the Congress. Admission to single lectures is five francs. Cards of admission can be obtained at l'Institut Métapsychique, 89, Avenue Niel, Paris. (17e.).

An office will be opened at that address for information and assistance from September 20th onwards. This will be open from 9 a.m. to 12, and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Details, programmes, résumés of lectures in three languages and cards of admission, will be obtained at that office.

FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

From the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* we extract a paragraph of some correspondence on Spiritualism and Christianity:—

Men seem to have come to the conclusion that what is essential in religion is that spiritual insight which will enable them to live clean and vigorous lives. Men have found that this is possible to well-intentioned men of all, or no creed; that the most important thing about life is the living of it. Here I claim that Spiritualism gives one that insight much clearer than either the Church or Wesleyanism, and this seems to be where people are getting the satisfaction of the soul.

The *Graphic* has an excellent article by Dr. Harold Dearden on "The Fear of Death." Having seen a great many people face to face with death in various forms, both in peace and war, he writes:—"It is perfectly true to say that, in the vast majority of cases, the imminence of their death was accompanied by no degree of fear whatever." Curious to know the state of mind of criminals awaiting execution, the subject was referred to an experienced prison warden:—

His reply, delivered with a *naïveté* which carried conviction, was, in fact, as follows. He told me that during the trial it was often very difficult to get the prisoner to talk or settle down to anything, but after the trial and sentence there was, if ever, rarely any trouble of this sort.

"Of course," he said, "we do our best to take their minds off it. We play draughts or cards with them, and they generally get along pretty well."

Writing in the *Referee* on "Our Wider Vision," and showing that "the average layman to-day is a larger personality than when first permitted to read the Bible in his native tongue," the Rev. G. Vale Owen thus concludes a thoughtful article:—

He is a traveller who has grown in stature as one after another of the glories of the universe has dawned upon his soul. We left him resting—but thinking and aspiring still. He is but awaiting the further revelation of the glories which he senses just beyond the hills towards the East from which the light is streaming.

He waits to see if a well-instructed guide will chance that way. He would prefer to make the ascent in such company. But the sun mounts higher steadily. He cannot wait for long. Even now he is stirring uneasily. I think he is about to arise and shake himself, and essay the ascent alone.

From a postscript to the articles in the *Church of England Newspaper*, by Sir Oliver Lodge, touched upon in the preceding issue of *LIGHT*, we take the concluding passage:—

The notion of an etheric body is attracting wide attention, as a more definite form of the theory of a spiritual body which was mooted nearly 1,900 years ago. The idea is supported by communicators from the other side; and, though the notion is still only in its infancy, and requires much verification and elaboration, it is possible that in this direction problems which have seemed insoluble may ultimately be attacked by future science, and gradually brought down from the atmosphere of faith into the region of knowledge.

Referring to the release of Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the *Empire News* says:—

Mr. Bottomley's promised journalistic venture is to be entitled *The Other Side*, and will deal strongly with religious matters in which the future editor has recently been taking a great interest.

It is not yet known whether the promised publication will have a Spiritualist or an Evangelical basis.

A correspondent of *Reynolds's News* writes to that newspaper about the "extraordinary growth of Spiritualism, noted by all observers," and asks a question which every Spiritualist can easily answer:—

Hundreds who never enter a church at all flock into the halls where Spiritualistic lectures, etc., are delivered. The real question seems, are people comforted by this teaching, or is it pure curiosity?

The following item is from the *News of the World*:—

The Queen of Rumania, her daughter-in-law, the Crown Princess, and the Queen of Serbia, are all keen crystal-gazers, and some weeks ago summoned a famous seer from this side to give them prophetic information about the death of King Ferdinand. She dated it almost to the moment. Queen Marie has herself a wonderful crystal ball, which was once in the possession of Napoleon himself.

The *Daily Express* gives us an interesting bit of news about General Paget's niece, Miss Dorothy Paget, "one of the greatest heiresses in England":—

She is tall and slim, and cares not a jot for the opinion of anyone.

Miss Paget has recently taken a house in Kent, so as to be near her sister at Leeds Castle. She is, I hear, having considerable trouble with ghosts, which, however, do not worry her any more than ordinary beings.

In an article on "Early Spiritual Workers," by P. A. Jensen, in *Reason*, he writes:—

The prominent writers who, independently of one another, formulated the text of the religion of Spiritualism, during the first decades, were really only six in number, three men and three women. These were: Andrew Jackson Davis, Hudson Tuttle, Maria M. King, Cora L. V. Richmond, W. J. Colville, and Mary T. Longley. Emma Hardinge Britten was among the immortals, but she was an English woman, and she is claimed by the English Spiritualists.

Mr. Jensen gives a little sketch of those six workers, who "wrote by the touch of inspiration."

APPRECIATIONS OF "LIGHT."

"—your valuable and helpful paper. I may say I have to convey the grateful thanks of Mrs. ——— for the splendid articles you give us."—B. C. (Halifax).

"I have much appreciated the numbers of *LIGHT* which have reached me."—A. C. O. S. (Raiatea, Society Islands).

"Your paper is most inspiring. In your paper we find many items of interest, of happenings in America which are never mentioned in our own papers."—B. W. (New York City).

"I find it most interesting."—E. M. H. (West 138th Street, New York City).

"I should like to add my expression of appreciation for your most interesting and helpful paper."—R. J. M. (Gateshead-on-Tyne).

"Thank you for your splendid paper. I read it every week, and then post my copy abroad."—R. F. A. (Northwood).

"I am one of your old subscribers, and a constant reader of your excellently conducted paper."—W. H. (Coronado, California).

A STRIKING MATERIALISATION.

BY E. W. DUNBURY.

The account of the following remarkable example of materialisation phenomena I have translated from Professor Bozzano's recent book entitled "A Propos de l'Introduction à la Métapsychique Humaine."

I now proceed to relate an example drawn from my own experience, and which I have inserted in my book, *Ipotesi Spiritica e Teoriche Scientifiche*, which appeared in 1903. This incident occurred in the course of a long series of experiments with Eusapia Palladino, arranged by the "Circolo Scientifico Minerva," of Genoa, in which took part, as well as myself, Professors Morselli and François Porro, Dr. Joseph Venzano, and Louis Arnaud Vassalle, editor of the "Secolo XIX."

At the sitting of the 10th February, 1902, there were present with myself four members of the Circle, namely: MM. Félix Avellino, Evariste Testa, Jerome Pastorino, and Joconde Faggioni.

I extract from the report of this sitting, drawn up by myself, the following essential passage:

"To the left of the medium M. Evariste Testa is seated and M. Joconde Faggioni to his right. The room is feebly lit by the light of a candle placed in the ante-room.

"Suddenly we perceive movements of the curtain of the mediumistic cabinet behind M. Testa. Afterwards a hand, the form of which is outlined and visible to us all, reaches M. Testa, touching and caressing him, only to withdraw rapidly after this. After which the curtain is agitated anew, swells out, and adheres to the face of M. Testa. The latter declares that he feels himself in contact with a completely materialised head. He has not yet finished his sentence when we all hear the sound of a kiss given to his face. M. Testa requests the personality who is manifesting to be good enough to make known its name. We hear then (from behind the curtain) inarticulate sounds, having, however, the "timbre" of the human voice, as if behind this curtain there were someone who was making superhuman efforts to succeed in articulating words. These sounds end, in fact, by constituting a human voice—a frail, toneless voice which utters, by spelling the syllables, these words in Italian: 'I am your mother. My child!' There follow other kisses, other long and affectionate caresses, with the interposition of the curtain. M. Testa, more than ever anxious to obtain some decisive proof of identity, asks the materialised personality to show itself to him visibly. An affirmative reply is obtained; and then the curtains open in the middle, and at the height of about forty centimetres above the head of Eusapia a woman's bust presents itself, which sometimes advances and sometimes retires with a slow and alternating movement. Given the position which I occupy relatively to the door from which the light comes, I only succeed in discerning in a confused manner this materialised form; it is the same with MM. Testa and Avellino. But MM. Faggioni and Pastorino, better placed, and quite close to the materialised form, declare that they perceive clearly the profile of a woman's face, the features of which they distinguish very well. Their observations in this respect are quite concordant. M. Testa, building on the description which the two witnesses above-mentioned give, minutely, of the features of the phantom, is more and more convinced that it really concerns his mother; so he insists with ardour, he begs and exhorts the materialised form to advance, in order that he may succeed in seeing

it. In view of these solicitations M. Faggioni, with the accent of one who only resolves with reluctance to rob another of his illusions, remarks to him: 'No, no, dear Monsieur Testa, the form I perceive cannot be your mother. I clearly discern its features, and I can tell you that it is quite a young woman.' 'Yes, yes,' replies M. Testa; 'my poor mamma died at the age of twenty years!'

"This coincidence of fact, so surprising and so unexpected, did not fail to produce a deep impression on all present. None of us could have suspected that M. Testa's mother had been so young. M. Testa was, moreover, a new acquaintance for us all, having only joined our Circle a few days previously."

Here ends the report of the sitting. But this incident was to have a very interesting sequel on the morrow. M. Testa had the idea of proving subsequently the authenticity of the incident which had so impressed him. For this purpose he took a photograph of his mother and added other portraits of young ladies, being careful to choose them exclusively from those which related to the same epoch. He afterwards called on M. Faggioni, requesting him to indicate which of these portraits most resembled the form which he had perceived. M. Faggioni then examined these photographs carefully, one after the other; when he reached the last he cried: "That is the form which I saw!" It was, in fact, the portrait of Mme. Testa.

It must therefore be agreed that M. Faggioni had observed well, and that the incident described implies an excellent proof of the personal identification of deceased persons; and this, so much the more, in that the portrait of M. Testa's mother, which I have seen, had not the most distant resemblance to her son, and that in the collection of photographs presented to M. Faggioni there was that of an aunt of M. Testa, which bears a fair resemblance to the latter.

Such are the conclusions to which the incident here described rationally leads, be it understood, for those who keep the mind free from the mist of prejudices; and especially for those who possess a vast knowledge of mediumistic cases, and, in consequence also, the necessary competence to circumscribe, within legitimate limits, certain naturalistic hypotheses, the real compass of which is extremely narrow, but which to opponents having little acquaintance with these cases appear to be, on the contrary, illimitable.

THE VISION SPLENDID.

Mr. J. McDonald, of Johannesburg, sends us the following fine sonnet which he quotes from "Memories of a Hostess," by M. A. de Wolfe Howe. (Fisher Unwin.) It is by Mrs. Fields (wife of the publisher), a woman of remarkable insight—a friend of Emerson and other famous men of the time.

I stood alone in purple space and saw

The burning walls of the world, like wings of flame,
Circling the sphere; there was no break nor flaw

In those vast airy battlements whence came
The spirits who had done with time and fame
And all the playthings of earth's little hour;

I saw them each, I knew them for the same,
Mothers and brothers and the sons of power.

Yet were they changed; the flaming walls had burned
Their perishable selves, and there remained
Only the pure white vision of the soul,

The mortal part consumed, and swift returned
Ashes to ashes; while unscathed, unstained,

The immortal passed beyond the earth's control.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF CACTUS JUICE.

Under the heading, "Magic in Cactus Juice," by which a series of visions was produced, the *Daily Express* recently published an interesting article by Douglas Grant Duff Ainslie. It was the Mexican Cactus of which Mr. Ainslie wrote, and the experiments he related took place at Tangier. The choice of subject was determined by the fact that he disclaimed possession of any kind of clairvoyant gift. We now quote from Mr. Ainslie's article:—

Our friend the engineer took the first pill about midday in the presence of half a dozen of us, men and women, grouped round the arm-chair in which he sat.

Nothing occurred for half an hour, when he swallowed a second pill, this time with a cup of black coffee. Almost immediately after he had his first vision (the clairvoyance came later): the Christ lay visible in the tomb in the Garden, and in the heavens revolved three immense suns, which contracted as they drew near, and finally became balls of golden fire encircling the tomb and revolving round it.

Soon the vision changed to a calm midnight sea, illumined by the moon, which "created a magic pathway of silvery light" down to the visionary, and along it came a figure with extended and pierced hands of blessing, the head surrounded by a dazzling halo that obscured the features. Again the scene changed, this time to a modern street in Paris, "with hurrying crowds in front of the Opera and the Rue de la Paix."

The narrative continues:—

He continued to absorb the pills at intervals of half an hour, and at two o'clock partook of his usual luncheon, still surrounded by friends writing down every word he spoke. By five o'clock quite a mass of notes testified to his unwonted activity and to the potency of the cactus. He complained of slight nausea, and lay down on the sofa, continuing all the while, however, to describe the visions that appeared before him.

It was then decided to test "cactus-clairvoyance" further, and the clairvoyant was asked to concentrate his attention on a lady who at the time was not well, confined to her bedroom. The rest of the story may be given in the narrator's own words:—

Our friend was silent for two minutes after our request, and then said, "I see the bedroom quite well; I am moving round it."

"Try to find the album from which she read us a poem the other day. It must be on the bookshelf or on the table at her bedside," somebody said.

A moment's pause, and he said, "I cannot see the book."

"Do you see the lady lying in bed?" he was asked.

"No," he replied. "She does not seem to be in the room. I see her silver-backed brush on the bed, but she is not there. There is nobody in the room."

He persisted in his declaration, and we were practically convinced that he was wrong, so a messenger was sent to the lady's house, about a mile distant, at the other end of the town.

The messenger returned, saying that the lady had felt better that afternoon, and had moved to the sofa in the adjacent room. The silver-backed brush was on the bed, as described by our friend the engineer.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

The curious investigator and historian who studies the periodical literature of Spiritualism in its earlier days—say fifty or sixty years ago—has some "fine confused feeding" before him. He lights on admirable essays and records by capable writers and thinkers, intermixed with a great deal over which he will laugh or groan, according to his temperament. It is queer stuff, some of it. There are long "messages" from historical characters, showing not the slightest evidence that they actually proceeded from any of the great personages whose names they bear. John Bunyan and John Wesley, Hypatia and Socrates, Sir Isaac Newton, and a multitude of others purport to speak. They discourse little pious homilies, insipid and colourless, but the simple-minded and unlettered Spiritualists of those days received them with huge satisfaction.

* * * *

I remember a series that ran for a long time in one of the journals of those days—a publication long since defunct. The communications, to each of which was attached the name of some historical character, were in the nature of essays, all so much alike in style that they struck one as being all the compositions of the same person. The people concerned in publishing this stuff—which a critic of the period described as "verbiage"—were very honest and well-meaning, however credulous and lacking in discrimination. Any good literary artist—like Andrew Lang—could have produced messages so exactly like the actual writings of some of the famous people concerned that they would have stood the severest tests. Andrew Lang indeed did produce a volume of essays closely imitating the styles of ancient authors, but of course they appeared under his name—he was a wonderful literary artificer. Had there been any money in spirit messages, I doubt not some clever craftsmen could have produced communications infinitely more like the real thing than the dreary compositions which were put forth in the journals to which I have referred.

* * * *

In these matters it is very difficult to get a criterion of evidence which would apply to the actual message. We all know that famous authors and orators rarely talk or write in private as they would do in public. Dr. Samuel Johnson is a notable exception, and I know one famous writer of to-day who can imitate Dr. Johnson with life-like fidelity. If he were a medium, and the "great lexicographer" gave us a message through him, I wonder if it would be in real "Johnsonese"? If it were, I fear I should suspect it for that very reason!

* * * *

The difficulty in this matter is that "literary" spirit communications are of such a mixed character, ranging from the authentic message, through communications of various grades of colouration, down to the veriest sham and shoddy—the product of the medium's own mind. I have known a considerable amount of fine literature and real art obtained through mediums who were normally quite incapable of producing such results. But the great bulk of the productions could not pass muster with people of trained minds who applied the usual standards of judgment. It appealed only to those who had no experience in such matters. The simple, homely spirit message is in a different class altogether. It is often evidential to the last degree.

* * * *

The career of many a new idea or discovery may be thus summarised: "It is impossible—let us dismiss it!" . . . "It is dangerous—let us oppose it!" . . . "It is a great blessing—It is strange how we could ever have got on without it!"

D. G.

SPEED AND PSYCHIC COMMUNICATION

CONTRIBUTED BY MISS ALICE E. WHITE.

(THROUGH MISS C—, ON THE OUIJA BOARD.)

I have been exploring here in connection with the poor old world and its future. I have seen the way it is turning—all the "speeding-up," as you call it, in the material sense, which has a psychic meaning.

Firstly, man must find out all the devices for speed in the physical sense. Everything is getting faster and faster for one great purpose—the discovery of the soul! The secret of life and death is this: that when we die we simply pass from one speed to another. I could be seen by you now if it was not that my body is finer. I am travelling at a different speed from yours.

The secret that the scientists will find through exploring speed will be a system of communication by measuring the speed of vibrations to us. They will in time then make a kind of receiving apparatus that will take the very fine and rapid vibrations we send out, which contain our messages, and are now only received by mediums. You see, it will be simply a question of speed to be evolved mathematically that will at last reveal the secret of life and death.

That does not sound very spiritual. Will it not open up very undesirable channels?

No, because only a few spirits here who have made great mental progress will be able to concentrate sufficiently to control such vibrations.

Everything is so fast already. There is no peace or quietude anywhere; will not that make it worse?

Not worse, because it is simply the idea of the speed that will suggest the idea of psychic communication being due to a series of very rapid vibrations, of a delicate kind, being given out. After a time, when men can get more in touch with the teachers here they will, at their dictation, build up a world that will care more for peace and quiet, because they will realise that the secret of health and happiness lies in going slower on the material plane. All that comes in the great religion of the soul which Spiritualism will evolve.

MRS. WICKLAND'S UNIQUE MEDIUMSHIP.

THE CURE OF OBSESSION.

A large audience assembled at the British College of Psychic Science on the 19th ult. to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Carl Wickland, of Los Angeles, whose previous lecture to the London Spiritualist Alliance, which was reported in *LIGHT*, had roused the curiosity of many students and enquirers.

To illustrate something of the methods of their work, which for thirty years has centred round the treatment of "obsessed" persons, Mrs. Wickland, who is a trance medium, kindly consented to allow a demonstration of her gift. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who took the chair, described the character and the meaning of the demonstration of which he had seen something in Dr. and Mrs. Wickland's home, when on a visit to America. He was followed by Dr. Wickland, who intimated that among Mrs. Wickland's guides was a band of about a dozen strolling players, who had attached themselves for the particular purpose of giving, through her, a kind of morality play.

A space was cleared in the middle of the room with a large audience gathered round, and Mrs. Wickland went under control. For well over an hour a dozen different characters were portrayed: Love, Truth, Selfishness, Frivolity, Justice, etc. Mrs. Wickland became in turn each of these characters, taking each part in a "Ruth Draper" fashion, with dramatic forcefulness and emotional power. The words, as Dr. Wickland had intimated, poured forth in a language believed to be an old Russian or Ruthenian dialect. Whatever this language may have been it certainly had power and even beauty.

It was truly an amazing evening, and a demonstration of a class of phenomenon which has probably never before been seen in England. At the close, Mrs. Wickland came out of control, apparently in full possession of her normal vigour, as if all the energy which she had poured into the play had been fully restored to her. She is not known to have any conscious histrionic power; it was therefore remarkable that she should be able to run the whole gamut of dramatic emotion with most striking fidelity under very difficult and restricted conditions.

The next evening a group gathered at the College to assist a case of occasional obsession, the medium being entranced in a somewhat similar manner as described above; the results were satisfactory to the subject, and we trust that the benefit will be permanent.

M.

CASUAL VISITORS.

Some little time ago a contributor in *LIGHT* pictured a homely scene wherein a young girl came back from the spirit world to the bosom of her family, stayed a short while with her father and mother, partaking of a meal with them, and afterwards returned to the realm of spirits; it was just a casual visit from one world to another. Needless to say the story was purely fanciful, and was not intended to be taken with too much seriousness. Nevertheless something approaching such an experience has actually happened, as all seasoned Spiritualists are aware, although it may be doubted if the returned visitor would be able to partake of such food as we earth-dwellers subsist on. True, there are reported cases where a spirit-form has been seen apparently eating, though whether such was actually the case is a matter of some speculation. The point, however, is not important at the moment.

What struck many of our readers was the suggestion of ease, of effortlessness, of informality in the manner in which the visit was effected in the story to which we have referred. There was no seance, in the accepted sense of the word; none of the usual preparation that is the general prelude to an attempt at materialisation.

Here is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The possibility of stray visitors "dropping in" from the next world, is one to which some of us would look forward with the greatest eagerness. Whether the visitors would stay to partake of a meal before returning to their celestial homes is a question on which one can only speculate. It would certainly be an occasion for rejoicing if the stage were reached where departed friends could, without the necessity for seance-room methods, appear among us for a short space, to share a portion of our daily life, to chat over old times and make preparations for new. In other words to "drop in."

That stage is no doubt a long way ahead. At present we must content ourselves with such means of communication as have been granted to us—hands groping towards each other on either side of the veil; whispers; at rare intervals the manifestation of the materialised forms of our loved ones who have passed on—experiments of a comparatively primitive kind, which will surely lead to developments of a vastly greater scope.

Our present methods of communication are at a crude and elementary stage. We do not say this in the slightest sense of disparagement; on the contrary we fully realise how great is the privilege even to touch the hem of the Unseen. Nevertheless we may look forward to the time when our present seance-room methods will be as out-of-date as, let us say, the tricycle or the paddle-steamer are to-day; a time when inter-communion between the two worlds will be enormously simplified; when messages between earth-world and spirit-world will pass with as little expenditure of time and effort as are now needed for ordinary conversation by telephone.

That day may be long in coming, but it will, of a certainty, arrive. And it is not putting any great strain upon the scope of reasonable prediction to go a little farther, and to picture a time when the Casual Visitor from the next world will be a welcome addition to the home circle, not as a rare and phenomenal event, but rather by way of a pleasant everyday occurrence.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"An Anthology of Mysticism and Mystical Philosophy." With Notes by the Compiler, William Kingsland. (Methuen & Co., Ltd., London. 7s. 6d. net.)

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Nearly a hundred primary and secondary subjects are touched upon; Mr. Kingsland's occasional notes are illuminating and I would fain have had more of him. A fine book, not only to read, but to pick up again and again for inspiration; a perfect bedside book, and well worth buying.

A. HAROLD WALTERS.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MISS G. R. GUELPH (Northwold).—We thank you for your letter. We have devoted some space to the subject of fairies, and shall be referring to them again. At the present moment we are unable to give very much space to an extension of the discussion.

E. ROBERTS (Kensington, Liverpool).—We are regretfully unable to find space for your letter. We note your statement that you know of ten people saved from a premature grave by the Cardigan cancer cure. Of course it would be evidence of infinitely greater value if some of these people so cured would testify personally, as second-hand evidence is rarely convincing.

MRS. M. C. MERRITT (St. John's Wood).—We thank you for your letter. Protracted correspondence on this very contentious subject is not desirable. We fear your suggestion that one Spiritualist organization should be formed that should be empowered to speak for Spiritualism at large is impossible of realisation at the present stage.

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NOTE.—The College has occasional accommodation for Students or interested visitors from the Country or Abroad.

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Friday, Aug. 12th, 7.30 p.m. (Flower Clairvoyance) ... Mrs. GLADYS DAVIES

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Camberwell.—The Central Hall, High Street.—August 7th, 11, service; 6.30, Mr. A. Lund. Wednesday, 7.30, public circle, at 55, Station Road.

Peckham.—Lausanne Road.—August 7th, 7, Mrs. E. Clements, D.N.U. Thursday, 8.15, Mrs. S. Podmore.

Richmond Spiritualist Church, Ormond Road.—August 7th, 7.30, Mr. Ella, trance address. August 10th, 7.30, Miss M. D. Struthers, address and clairvoyance.

Croydon National Spiritualist Church, New Gallery, Katharine Street.—August 7th, 6.30, Mrs. Petz.

Fulham.—12, Lettice Street (nr. Parsons Green Station).—August 7th, 11.30, circle; 7, Mrs. Maunders. Thursday, 8, Mr. Osborne.

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