

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.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE NEWSPAPERS.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in some recent notes in the *Sunday Express*, summed up the "conspiracy of silence" amongst the newspapers towards Spiritualism in a neat saying:—

A rat once cut off the electric light of a great city. The light was restored—but not the rat.

The fact that notwithstanding the disposition to boycott accounts of the public activities of Spiritualism—as in the case of the Queen's Hall meeting—a considerable amount of attention is given to the subject, shows that the newspapers are conscious of the change in public opinion. Similarly, the fact that more or less hostile articles are usually accompanied by a kind of whining apology, tells the same tale. But nowadays, as every journalist is aware, the Press has become highly commercialised, for advertising which formerly was a "side-line," has now become the main factor in a great newspaper. Censure is of little use. There is a severe economic pressure, which only those well fortified by moral courage plus a sufficiency of material means, are strong enough to resist. If the average newspaper had to look to Spiritualism for a substantial part of its advertising revenue we might see some interesting developments!

* * *

HAUNTED HOUSES.

Longfellow tells us that "all houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted houses." And it is true enough, in the poetical sense, and in some other senses too. But, as the phrase is commonly used, it denotes a house in which there is something mysterious, uncanny, "supernatural," usually associated with a ghost. Some houses get a reputation for being "haunted," without any real cause. They are so built that they get very little sun and become damp, bleak and depressing. Popular fancy does the rest. Others have been the scene of tragedy or the abode of misery, and a dark atmosphere hangs about the rooms, making its impress on the minds of people sensitive to these things. They describe their feelings, and the house is reported to be "haunted." Again, we have instances of "poltergeist disturbances," which may, or may not, be the outcome of unquiet or earth-bound spirits. In some cases it is impossible to resist

the conclusion that there is a real ghost or ghosts at work; but not in all. The causes seem to reside in obscure electrical phenomena closely connected with human agency. The most trustworthy authorities on that question must be looked for amongst those who have no bias either way, not amongst people who are "all out" to discover a ghostly agency and establish its existence, or those who, on the other hand, are firmly resolved that the "spirit theory" shall receive no support from them. Both these attitudes are not only unscientific: they are untruthful. The pre-conception, the "pet idea," is always an obstruction to any advance in knowledge.

* * *

ANIMAL SURVIVAL.

It would seem that amongst the readers of *LIGHT* are many who cherish a deep affection for our humbler brethren of the animal world, including especially the dog, which the Oriental holds in such contempt, and the Westerner regards as the friend of man. We judge by the great interest which is always shown in the question of animal survival. There is, as Mrs. Leaning and other writers on the subject have shown, overwhelming evidence that the ties of affection which bind us to the "little brothers" are not severed by death. Writing of spirit communications in her family circle, Miss Walshe, one of our contributors, says that she is assured by her unseen friends not only that the animal pets we lose by death survive, but are happy. She adds:—

"Gone to be jolly" is the way they put it. So that if a young animal dies we say that it has "gone to be jolly." Rats, they say, are evil, and do not go there. I asked if the terriers had rats to hunt, and they replied, "Synthetic rats," which amused us very much in view of the present craze for electric hare-racing and artificial rat-racing for terriers!

So much are the two worlds alike.

THE DAY IS AT HAND.

The night is far spent and the day is at hand;
The veil that would darken wears thin.
By faith and our reason we must understand,
If we seek we shall find, we shall win.
Though the pathway looks dark we must never turn
back,
But march with our hearts beating high,
For nothing is ours if it's courage we lack—
So let us press forward and try.
Who knows what may wait us out there in the dark?
The dear ones, perhaps, we love best.
Shall they wait all in vain, and our cowardice mark?
Perhaps we are now at the test.

—E. HALL HAINS.

QUEEN'S HALL MEETING.

(Continued from page 135.)

MR. FRANK ROMER, L.R.C.P., in a brief speech suggested that the scientist had been unduly criticised in regard to his work along psychic avenues. It had to be remembered that large numbers of scientists—Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Lombroso and many others—had taken up the matter not in the emotional atmosphere of the seance room, but under a cold scientific scrutiny, and had accepted the hypothesis of survival after death. He deprecated hasty judgments and spasmodic investigation. It was useless for newspaper representatives to be sent round to one or two seances with a view to giving judgments in their journals as to the truth or otherwise of the matter. It was a deep subject and required the most careful and sustained examination.

MR. HUGH WALPOLE spoke as one who was entirely outside the movement. He confessed that he knew very little of the subject from personal experience, although he was entirely sympathetic. He had always regarded the question as one of absorbing interest. In his own very limited examination, however, he had found nothing to convince him of survival. He was impressed by the fact that there was a deep chasm separating those who were satisfied upon the question from those who were dissatisfied; on both sides of the chasm were people of intellect and culture. He felt drawn, however, to the Spiritualist movement on account of its tolerance. It was more tolerant than any other movement concerned with spiritual matters.

MR. HANNEN SWAFFER said, "Three years ago in this hall I addressed a meeting quite as crowded as this evening's, affirming in public for the first time my acceptance of the scientific proof that the spirit of man survives the grave. Sir Edward Marshall Hall was my chairman; Earl Haig sent a message wishing me success. Now both of them are on the spirit side and both of them have given proof of their survival. More than ever am I convinced to-night that what I said on this platform three years ago was true. The facts accumulate; the proof piles itself up."

Scarcely a day has passed in the last three years that evidence of some kind or another has not come my way. Gonnoske Komai, the great Japanese poet, who twice sat with me in Dennis Bradley's house, has told me how in the Shinto temples of Japan a young priest addresses the congregations in trance. Olga Petrova, the actress, came to tell me how in the southern states of America she has seen negroes at revivalist meetings go into trance and address the congregations. A Red Indian chief has called and whispered of the occult mysteries into which his forefathers delved when the tent flap was pulled to, in the night. Frank Weston, the great Bishop of Zanzibar, told, not long before he died, how, in the dark places of Africa, witchcraft was a real thing, and how he had exorcised evil spirits from the bodies of poor tortured natives. The evidence for the psychic case comes from the most trustworthy of people. I cannot say the same of some of our opponents.

Mr. Swaffer recalled an occasion when he had taken Mr. Dennis Bradley to the Magicians' Club and listened to a lecture by Arthur Prince, the ventriloquist, exposing direct voice mediumship. Mr. Swaffer had challenged Prince with such success that two of the magicians had asked him to be their publicity agent—(loud laughter)—and he was made, and still is, an honorary member of that Club. Many conjurors and illusionists had definitely accepted the Spiritualist case. Will Goldston, president of the Magicians' Club, was an avowed Spiritualist; Mrs. Houdini, wife of the opponent of Spiritualism, now admitted the genuineness of a message from beyond the grave from her husband's mother; Harry Rigoletto was convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, and Horace Goldin had made the following statement: "Though I have never had

an opportunity of attending a seance, I believe and can prove that an unknown power exists. There are three items in my present programme which are not done by trickery; it seems as if a force comes to me. Often on the stage I hear a voice saying, 'Be careful,' and sure enough I discover a defect which if it had not been altered might have caused a catastrophe. I must be possessed of a psychic power which I cannot explain. When I get on the stage ready to start, something will often direct me to look to the right or left; when I do, I find that something has been neglected or not set properly which, but for the warning, would not have worked. I believe this to be supernatural."

Yes, many people have come to tell me things—Major Segrave, for instance, how his life was saved during his record-breaking motor ride in Florida last year, by receiving a cabled warning. He discovered afterwards that it had been sent by a friend to whom Parry Thomas (killed during a similar speed-breaking ride) had spoken in the direct voice, telling Segrave to change a part of his machine. On his return to England that part of the machine was tested, Segrave told me. Parry Thomas had said it would snap at 170 miles an hour; actually, it broke at 174 miles an hour.

Mr. Swaffer then referred to the work being carried on by Mrs. Wickland, the wife of the Californian doctor who claims to drive out evil spirits. She had, when in trance, performed in Mr. Swaffer's home, a play in Russian dialect, twelve spirit actors controlling her one after the other. Speaking as a professional dramatic critic, Mr. Swaffer gave it as his conviction that a simple, ordinary woman like Mrs. Wickland could not act with the perfection of technique which she displayed, in a normal state. Joseph Greenwald, the Jewish actor, had also watched this performance. "Now Mr. Greenwald is an actor—if a man can be an actor who has played for over five years in 'Abie's Irish Rose'—(loud laughter)—and speaking with a long stage experience behind him he said that the falls and turns and changes of voice which made Mrs. Wickland's performance notable, would be impossible by normal means."

Cernicoff, the Russian pianist, had told the speaker that he sometimes felt influenced by the spirit of Liszt while playing; well-known Harley Street doctors had told him how they used psychic powers in diagnosis; Rosina Fillipi, the well-known actress, had written to him saying that certain chapters of her last book, which she could not write in a normal way, had been written under direct outside influence; this influence had sometimes compelled her to write against her will, and on one occasion had stopped a friendly party in order that a chapter might be finished.

I could go on with these cases for hours. I want to insist—and this is my whole case—that just as I am convinced of the truth of Spiritualism by the direct voice mediumship of my old friend Dennis Bradley, a man of supreme honesty, so my case ever since has been built up not on professional mediumship, but on the mediumistic powers of friends whom I know and trust.

In Mr. Swaffer's flat overlooking Trafalgar Square there had happened during the last two years an astonishing series of incidents of the kind that are called miracles when the Bible records them. The medium was a personal friend—not a Spiritualist—whose powers were of such extraordinary range that on one Boxing Night fourteen different kinds of mediumship were recorded at one sitting, and all in normal light. These psychic happenings had begun with rappings in broad daylight and purported to come from Charles Frohman, the late theatrical celebrity; messages thus given concerned members of the dramatic profession. They had been heard by actors and actresses of the highest repute. "Though in no scientific sense would I say that Frohman's identity has been established, the rappings have given

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evidence that the intelligence creating them possesses an encyclopaedic knowledge of the late Charles Frohman's life and activities."

They have sent messages to Lee Ephraim, Frederick Lonsdale, Constance Collier, Doris Keane, to Julian Frank, to Marie Lohr, and to Robert Loraine. I have not delivered all of them.

Julian Frank, invited to the flat at the request of an unseen communicator, had been warned to postpone a play of which neither Mr. Swaffer nor any of his friends present had heard. Doris Keane received a message saying, "Sail Aquitania, March 9" in circumstances so dramatic that she was sufficiently impressed to obey the instructions instead of going to Madeira as had been arranged. Her journey had a profound influence upon her financial fortunes. Betty Chester—a message had been rapped out, "Send for Betty Chester"—came direct from the theatre and immediately received a message from her brother, which was also confirmed by a book test; she was told to look in two separate books, and in them an exact description was given of the way in which her brother had died in France. Milton Hayes was given a clairvoyant message concerning his immediate future, and by means of a book test, a supporting message warning him of a certain thing that would happen. "He wrote me from Nice last week," added the speaker, "saying that everything prophesied had come true in every detail"; the letter, which Mr. Swaffer had received cabled permission to read at the meeting, ran as follows:

"There is no doubt in my mind that I was guided to call on you, and that the medium was impelled by some power outside his own to give the test. Nobody asked, he suddenly threw it out just as he was leaving. I am convinced."

Continuing his remarks, Mr. Swaffer said that Harry Rigoletto, the vaudeville artist, had received a rapped message a day prior to his first appearance on the Coliseum stage saying, "Accident stage Coliseum to-morrow." This mishap had taken place as prophesied. "Mr. Rigoletto," said the speaker, "authorises me to tell you that the raps and the warning must have been of supernormal origin."

The passing of three theatrical people, Frank Wyatt, Arthur Bouchier and James White, had been predicted by raps.

Mr. Swaffer then described a remarkable book test which had occurred in his flat.

Four of us were sitting for raps when we noticed that a loud rap came on the medium's toe, which was so unusual that we all commented upon it. "Row 3, book 9, p. 188," said the medium, "and I think it is a red book." I went into my study and found the book indicated, it was Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*—a green book; but seeing a red book next to it, I brought the two. On returning to the seance room I noticed that another friend suddenly started. I said, "Why did you start just then?" He said, "Something touched me on the knee." I found that on p. 188 of Hardy's book it said, "A slight tap upon his toe," and on page 188 of the other book, which was Zangwill's *Ghetto Comedies*, it said: "If I touch him he winces"; the first reference was to the first tap, the second to the second touch which happened after I had brought the book into the room, but before it was opened.

The speaker then told of the messages received when a relative—Mr. Swaffer's sister-in-law—was dying of cancer, some distance away. "The end is near; pray for her passing; she is at peace," said the message. Asked whether this indicated that she had passed over, the reply was, "No, she is unconscious and will never suffer again." "My wife, who had been absent from home nursing her sister, telephoned us afterwards, saying that at the moment the message had come through her sister had lapsed into unconsciousness. A few days later came the

message announcing the end and saying, 'Be careful, wet feet,' which apparently had no significance. Next morning my beloved sister-in-law died and my wife returned home to say that all through the last delirious hours the dying woman had wanted to go out in the wet grass, and she had said, 'No, dear, you must be careful of wet feet.' The 'silly' wet feet part had proved the rest!"

"Yes, Mr. Chairman, our cause is winning. Only last week I happened to pick up a pamphlet called *Survival after Death*. It was not written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge or Dennis Bradley. It was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and was written by the Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. It was an attempt on the part of the Church of England, once thought our enemy, although many Anglican priests accept our case, to answer the materialism so omnipotent to-day. After a few pages, giving as reasons for survival: (1) logical inference, (2) instinctive belief, and (3) 'a subtle sense of awareness,' the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, up against it for argument, has to come to us for proof. Over one third of his pamphlet consists of a summary of the proofs of survival obtained by psychic research!"

"For years, Sir William Crookes was sneered at. In this pamphlet they quote him as being on religion's side! Sir Oliver Lodge, a few years ago, was questioned, when he came out as a Spiritualist. Now, this official pamphlet has to come to him for evidence! The writer quotes also Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, one of our great workers in the past, Sir William Barrett, F. W. H. Myers and Prof. William James, and quotes the names of a score of distinguished men, including Lord Balfour and Mr. Gladstone, who were members of the Society for Psychical Research.

"'I am sure that the evidence collected by the Society for Psychical Research,' declares this Christian apologist, 'provides the missing link in the chain of evidence for survival. It also furnishes the most conclusive argument against materialism. By means of the study of the data which are investigated by the Society for Psychical Research we can at least learn the fact of survival.'"

Yes, Mr. Chairman, concluded Mr. Swaffer, for years Spiritualists were denounced and jeered at. Years ago they were stoned in the streets; their meetings were broken up and the windows of their homes were smashed. These apostles of the truth can now look down upon our meeting smilingly. We have won.

MR. E. P. HEWITT, K.C., LL.D., in a few brief words pointed out that none of the speakers who had addressed the assembly had anything to gain in presenting their views and experiences. Adhesion to the spirit hypothesis could not possibly enhance their interests, but on the contrary might harm them. Those who had expressed their conviction of the truth of survival had done so owing to the overwhelming force of the evidence. The opponents of Spiritualism were fighting a losing battle, and before long the truths for which Spiritualists stood would be recognised generally. Already the orthodox church was borrowing from Spiritualism, but had not the generosity to acknowledge the debt. All who desired to promote the improvement of humanity should support the movement.

SIR FRANK BENSON, the chairman, in the course of his remarks at the beginning and end of the meeting, said that his countrymen would have a leading part to play in the shaping of the new world which has been born since the Great War; it was their duty to explore honestly and fearlessly. Physical scientists had discovered the indestructibility of matter and the next duty was to try and comprehend the dynamics of thought. It was a vast field that was opening up before the explorers. "Who shall say to what heights human faculty can soar in the years to come?"

(Concluded.)

AFTER-DINNER MUSINGS.

WITH SOME MUSICAL REFLECTIONS

By RÊVEUR.

Tum . . . TUM-tum . . . Ta-RAH, tum-tay. . . Dash the confounded music! *Waiter!*
Bill, please! Ta-RAH, tum-tay. . .
 Wish this infernal jazz-tune wouldn't keep throbbing through my head. . . This is the last time I'll eat in a restaurant where they play syncopated music. . . Can't stand jazz when I'm eating. A quiet soothing waltz played by a concealed orchestra, yes! . . . But this "throb-throb stuff" gives me dyspepsia. Find myself trying to eat veal cutlet in *tempo rubato*. Result—indigestion! . . . Ta-RAH-tum-tay. . . Oh, shut up!

* * * *

Music ought to soothe, not irritate. Restaurant music ought to induce that calm harmonious contentment that assists digestion . . . instead of which— . . . Apparently, most people who dine here are not irritated in their digestive faculties by saxophones that wail *My Cutie's a Sugar-Footed Baby*, or trap-drums that beat eccentric rhythms. . . . But those people belong to the Undiscriminating Many while I am evidently one of the Fussy Few. . . . What was it Fielding-Ould said at the Alliance the other day about music? . . . Can't remember. . . . Something about music at seances. . . . Oh yes, I remember: "Most of the music at semi-public seances which I have attended, has usually produced a state of irritation far different from the passive condition it was intended to induce." . . .

* * * *

Seance music. . . . I wonder why. . . . Vibrations. Music sets up vibrations which assist the manifestations. . . . Sounds suspiciously like poetry, that! In spite of all temptations, to assist the manifestations he remains an ENGLISH-MANNNN. . . . Ta-RAH, tum-tay. . . . Oh, bother! that band's started again. . . . Vibrations. . . . I suppose the spirits don't actually *hear* the seance music. Wonder if they do, though! . . . Most probably they don't; p'raps they are merely conscious that their work is facilitated, somehow . . . by the vibrations. . . . One day somebody will invent a machine to set up in the ether a subtle vibration that can be adjusted to the exact rate of speed required for the experiment. . . . The spirit control will say: "Friends, our work is unusually difficult to-night; please tune up to 572 billion." Then the leader of the seance will turn the amplifying switch of his Psychovibrometer, and set the indicator at five-seven-two—and then the communication will be perfect. . . . Just a simple mechanical operation.

* * * *

Wonder precisely *what* is the function of the vibrations at seances. . . . Nobody seems to know. But they help somehow. . . . Gramophone, piano, flex-a-tone—or the human voice, which is usually the worst of the lot, æsthetically speaking. All one can say is that music gives better results. . . . It stands to reason then that it is a *physical* requirement. If so, what degree of vibration works the best? That's the problem. . . . Yes, we *must* invent that Psychovibrometer, and try to find out what rate of vibration gives the best results. . . . Some people seem to think it is the æsthetic quality of the music that enhances the psychic result—beautiful ethereal strains of melody uplifting the soul to transcendental heights! . . . No, it can't possibly be the *beauty* of the music that does it because much of the music I've heard at seances has been dire and dreadful—and the psychic results have been remarkable! . . . Shall we go-HATHER at the RIV-UAH! . . . Ta-RAH, tum-tay. . . . No, it *must* be physical. . . . *Waiter, my hat and stick, please!*

THE DEATH SHEETS.

By DAFYDD THOMAS, Barrister-at-law.

The fact that I am of Welsh parentage may account for my possession of a peculiar kind of psychic gift when a small boy. It took the form of premonitions—death warnings. I always knew beforehand whether any of my relations or any of the villagers were going to pass through the gate of death. I believe this faculty is fairly common among the Welsh. To this day I am told there are seers among the Welsh peasants who claim to indicate the house shortly to be visited by death; the warning, with them, takes the form of a light which they see moving from the house and travelling to the churchyard in the depths of night. When this light is seen it is claimed that a death will take place in the house from which the light emerged.

In my own case, the warning was given in a different manner. Whenever I heard a drawer in a certain old oak chest, which was kept in my mother's bedroom adjoining my own, being opened, this invariably preceded a death either in the family or in the village. This drawer contained a pair of linen sheets which were used either as a covering for the dead body or else the body was placed upon them, I am not sure which. I must explain that there was a superstition in those days that only pure linen must be used; cotton would not do.

Now my grandmother during her life-time had frequently been asked by her labourers for the loan of a pair of linen sheets for this purpose, and she had set aside a certain pair for their special use; these were borrowed from time to time by the local peasantry. After her death the sheets came into the hands of my mother and were kept in a drawer of her oak chest. When a death occurred in the village we were always asked the loan of these linen sheets by the villagers, themselves much too poor to own such comparatively expensive articles; needless to say, the request was always granted freely.

Many a time as a small boy I have gone to my mother in the morning and said: "I heard the drawer open last night." My mother was never surprised at this news; we all knew its significance. She would say: "Let me see, old Mrs. Evans is ill, John Jones' little boy is in hospital, and Morgan Morgan is over ninety; it must be one of those three," and we would debate amongst ourselves as to which of the villagers might be affected by my warning. I was never wrong. Within three or four days the linen sheets were always in requisition.

This faculty of mine—a somewhat gruesome one, perhaps—left me entirely at the age of seventeen, but I had an echo of it a few years ago when a clairvoyante described a spirit visitor holding up a sheet and asking if I remembered a certain old oak chest.

On one occasion my warning came in a different manner. Living as we did in a remote Welsh village, it was necessary to call upon the services of a local seamstress whenever mourning clothes were necessary in our family. I remember, when quite a tiny boy, waking up in the night and hearing in the adjacent room the unmistakeable sound of scissors being used. I knew the sound—I had heard it before—and I tip-toed out of bed, went into the next room, but found it was empty. A few days later, however, I again heard the sound of scissors, but this time on going into the adjoining room I found this very seamstress at work cutting out crepe; she was making a mourning garment for my mother who had just had news of a death in the family.

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THE CREATIVE POWERS OF MANKIND.

By L.I.G.

Many find it hard to believe in the creative power of mind because of the initial difficulty of having to accept what appears to be untrue. By starting with the right basic fact, however, reason comes to the rescue, and the most helpful statement to proceed from is that *man cannot think a lie about himself*.

No man can think a lie about himself because what he thinks he expresses—always. If therefore he cannot think a lie, he can only think truth, which he does; and that is the big fact. What he thinks IS—always. He can state a lie, of course, but cannot think one. Man can no more express contrary to his nature than an apple can appear as an orange, which explains why evil and undesirable conditions obtain.

For the change-over to better conditions (the transformation is never sudden, but always gradual under the law of growth), the first step is to recognise the creativeness of the mind, and then to assume the improvement desired. In time the reality follows because that is the law.

We are where we are to-day because, and only because, we fail to recognise the great fact that we *are* creative beings. Made in the image of GOD, we are as HE is—creative. But our power will only return with recognition. It will not, nay cannot, force itself upon us. In every way we are creative, and always it is by belief; that is, by assuming the reality of the desired condition, and holding to it.

In all prayer it is better to seek conditions rather than things. Asking for things is likely to lead into wrong paths. One should pray for wisdom and love, for these include everything desirable.

The change of self for the better is seen in the movement of that thin line dividing the true from the false, which, as it advances against a decreasing area of darkness, leaves behind an increasing area of light—Truth growing (or appearing) as error is eliminated, or "made over."

In this world we are like lamps projecting through slides (thoughts), images of reality upon the screen of life. From those images we react, and our reactions shape and determine the course of our individual lives. If the image is evil (undesirable), change the thought when the image MUST also change.

THE CLEOPHAS SCRIPTS.

An unusually large audience assembled in the lecture hall of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday evening, 22nd ulto., when Miss GERALDINE CUMMINS gave an address on the Scripts of Cleophas, describing the circumstances in which they were received, and dealing with some of the theories concerning them.

The REV. DR. GEIKIE COBB, who presided, referring to the address which he had himself delivered to the L.S.A. some years ago, explained that he was still a student of the subject to which the members of the Alliance devoted themselves. He did not think that subject represented anything but an indirect contribution to the subject of Religion. The Alliance were endeavouring to discover whether there was any scientific evidence for a future life. If they could furnish such evidence they would have conferred the greatest boon that any scientific inquiry had ever conferred upon the human race.

Miss Cummins then delivered her lecture, which was marked by clearness of thought, grace of diction, and many touches of delightful humour, holding the interest of her audience throughout and winning great applause. Many questions were put at the close and these were answered with marked ability. We hope to print a summary of her paper later, when space permits.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

FORMS AND CEREMONIES: ANOTHER "WORD OF WARNING."

Sir,—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's pamphlet, "A Word of Warning," will serve a needed purpose if it acts as a check on the misuse of things good and legitimate. I trust that it will be widely read and heeded. But if it be intended to effect the exclusion of all form or ceremony whatsoever in the Spiritualist movement I feel that I must also venture to utter a warning against the grave danger in repressing and excluding developments in the form of Service common at present in the Movement. I ask for a hearing because as the author of a Service of Holy Communion with Jesus Christ for Spiritualists I may be included by him amongst the offenders.

There is no strength nor safety in exclusion or repression. Comprehensiveness is power and wisdom. Let us tolerate with understanding and sympathy—if we cannot welcome—all forms of religious service in the movement because all forms of worship represent and carry some spiritual truth even though tinged with error; and we must beware lest in our earnestness to exclude error we do not exclude some valuable light. We have not yet garnered all truth. Do not let us repeat the mistake of the Christian Church in striving for uniformity in belief and religious expression. Let error rub shoulders with truth. I have no fear of the result. It is more likely thus to drop away than when driven to mobilise for defence and attack.

We are all agreed that character is more than Creed. Yet everybody has a creed and his character is largely moulded upon that creed. No man can be without a creed of some sort. The point is to improve and enlighten our Creed—not to abolish. In the pamphlet it says that "Religion has nothing whatever to do with theological belief, forms or ceremonies, or priest-hood, vestments or any of the other trappings and adornments." Has not Sir Arthur's reaction against the excesses of his original church caused him to overstate his case? We know that Sir Arthur has his own strong theological belief and he has expressed it strongly. Because it is summed up in the word Spiritualism it is none the less a theological creed.

In private life most of us use some "form and ceremony, trapping and adornment." If I were to call upon a friend I should not force my way into his house but knock at the door which would be opened, maybe, by a maid wearing some insignia of her office in the shape of apron or cap. My card would be taken to him on a tray and not carried in the hand, and I might be divested of my hat, stick or cloak in the Hall. The door of his sanctum after knock and invitation would be opened by the attendant and I should be formally announced. He would courteously rise to greet me and possibly shake hands, and I might bow. At his meals perhaps a grace would be said and at late dinner the butler, if a butler be kept, would probably wear evening dress with the proper tie. My host himself might be wearing the conventional evening vestment and the dinner would be served in some conventional form. What is all this but simple rite and ceremony, trapping and adornment, etc.? And my friend's manner of life and character would be none the worse for it, possibly better. If he were a public speaker he would frequently be in conventional evening dress upon the platform. It is certainly beneficial to all concerned when a labourer takes off his work-a-day clothes, washes and brushes up, puts on a linen collar, etc., in order to attend a meeting.

These formalities may not be absolutely necessary to good character nor indispensable to righteousness, but surely they are helpful. And if they be found agreeable and suitable in daily life—why should not religious services have their own simple and helpful forms, ceremonies and adornments? At the Sunday School connected with the Wimbledon Spiritualist Church I tell the children to look upwards, shut eyes, and put hands together. I know that I get more reverent attention and sincerity from them thus, than if allowed to stand as they please. I assert that I know it from experience. At the conclusion of a simple affirmation which the scholars repeat are these words, "How do we know all this? Through Jesus Christ and other world-teachers, our own inner conscience and the witness of the Spirit World." At the name of Jesus they incline their heads, being taught to regard him as their chief Spirit Guide under God the Universal Father. This emphasises the value of His doctrines, teaches that He is still a Divine Master at work, and inspires us to seek the highest in Spirit Communion.

The real difficulty is in where to draw the line. Well, let everyone draw their own line and do not let us seek to draw the line for them. Let us show that Spiritualism is a movement that has at last found the meaning of real Catholicity.

Yours, etc.,

RICHARD A. BUSH.

Merton Park, S.W. 19.

LIGHT.

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THE PRIEST AND THE PROPHETS.

Father Thurston has been discoursing on Spiritualism in *The Month*. The first part of his article deals with the failures of Spiritualism in the past, and it is to that part our present observations, necessarily brief, will be confined.

First, let us say we have always felt considerable respect for Father Thurston as a critic; he is one of the very few of our opponents who knows what he is talking about. He may be a biased critic: he is never an ignorant one. That he has a keen eye for our faults is always apparent, and much of his censure may be regarded as salutary by those who, while observing that the opponent dwells in a glass-house, can resist the temptation to return the stones he throws. There is an ex-member of Father Thurston's Church who, having left it to become a Rationalist, found that his former Church and Spiritualism likewise provided him with targets for his militant zeal. He had thus two "Aunt Sallys" at which to hurl his sticks, an invigorating form of mental gymnastics. Of this individual we observed that he was both ignorant and reckless in his charges against Spiritualism. (Of his onslaught on his former Church we took no account.) We have not observed that Father Thurston—although bound to the Roman obedience—ever adopts the method of suppressing truth in order to score a point. This is illustrated in the article under notice by his allusion to the Fox sisters (whom we are never likely to canonize!). He refers to recantations by Margaret and Kate Fox in 1888, when they declared Spiritualism to be the "most wicked blasphemy in the world," a description rather like some of those which we have heard applied to Roman Catholicism, without being at all favourably impressed by them. Father Thurston notes that the two sisters afterwards retracted their pretended confession, and he remarks, "I do not doubt that they had been virtually bribed to make it, and further that they were animated by vindictive motives."

But the staple of that part of Father Thurston's article to which we are now attending, deals with the many glowing prophecies made by spirits to some of the pioneer leaders of the Spiritualist movement, and Father Thurston quotes messages to Leah Fox, Professor Robert Hare, Judge Edmonds, coming down at the present day to Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Dennis Bradley. They were assured of great revelations and developments, great

changes in the public mind, the approaching triumph of Spiritualism, and the like. It seems to Father Thurston that some of the statements have been falsified through their non-fulfilment within certain specified times.

The point does not strike us as very important in any case. We recall how the early Christian Church was deceived over the prophecies concerning the impending end of all things, just as it went woefully astray in the exaggerated importance it attached to magical signs and wonders—that "religious thaumaturgy" which the advanced minds in the Roman and Anglican Churches have alike outgrown. The simple explanation is that we are all human, spirits and mortals alike. We have no infallible and supernatural revelation, except the voice of the Spirit in the heart of everyone who cares to listen.

We have in our time listened to many communications from the spirit-world, some wise, some foolish, some charged with religious zeal, others quite secular, some full of poetry and idealism, others prosy and pedestrian to the last degree.

So far as we could observe, we had not a new revelation, but simply an extension of the old one, an enlargement of view, the spectacle of another world of human life, showing that in the Divine economy of the Universe there were no great breaks, no impassable gulfs, but a wondrous continuity reaching from the lowest germs of life to heights beyond all mortal thought. As a revelation it was at once religious, scientific, philosophical, social and altogether human.

Father Thurston's objection to unfulfilled prophecies, therefore, leaves us rather unimpressed, especially as the time factor comes in, and we are painfully familiar with the mistakes frequently made by spirits in gauging mundane time; they live in a different time-order, as they have explained on innumerable occasions. Here and there a spirit shows a superior power of time-valuation; but mistakes are frequent. The thing foreseen happens at last, but it has taken years instead of the weeks designated by the prophet. And as we have often observed, some spirits in whom an ardent love is more conspicuous than a restraining wisdom, are prompted by their affectionate enthusiasms to very rash predictions, like those of a fond mother over a favourite son.

In all these dissensions and disputes we see but one bond of union for the world—its common humanity, all being children—as A. J. Davis put it: of Father God and Mother Nature. And if to be human is a defect it is one which is shared alike by Popes and publicans.

When the seaman in the old story became a convert to Christianity his first act on behalf of his new faith was to knock down a Jew pedlar as being one of the race who had crucified the Master. We may smile over this. It was the true human touch!

Similarly, when the devotees of one faith set to work to censure the followers of another, we see the same element in action. It is not quite so amusing; but it is very human, and therefore to be treated with some indulgence, as being the crude expression of religious loyalty or devotion. It is inhumanity, and not heresy that is the real enemy—the one is a sin against life, the other merely the infraction of some particular ecclesiastical code.

THE NOBLE LIFE.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be;
Or standing like an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere:
The lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

—BEN JONSON.

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FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE WINDOW.

From the *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel's* report of Sir Oliver Lodge's speech at the Annual Dinner of the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, when Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge were the principal guests, here is a passage relating to the ether, concerning which we cannot hear too much from scientific authorities:—

People sometimes say that the ether is an exploded superstition—that it does not exist. They say that Einstein exploded it. Einstein does not think so. He gave three lectures to show that the ether was an absolute necessity as soon as you leave mathematics and interpret it physically. The ether is the one fundamental reality, and we are making use of it continually. When you toast something in front of the fire, how does the heat get from the fire to the toast? You say, "Hot air." That is wrong. The air is not hot. How does the heat of the sun reach the earth through 92 million miles of empty space, absolutely cold? The heat is generated at this end. What do you feel when you are basking in the sunshine? You are feeling the ripples of the ether. . . . We are using the ether in all manner of ways. Our very bodies are composed of it, as well as other matter, and it is the ether body which will persist when the matter portion has been left behind.

A correspondent of the *Daily Express* informs us that Professor William Brown, the head of the department of Psychology at London University, in delivering at Yale University the first of the Terry Lectures on "Religion in the light of Science and Philosophy," declared that modern science had not been able to prove that mind does not survive physical death. He said:—

There is nothing to prevent us from holding the view that although the self-conscious mind may have developed out of simpler forms of biological process, it gradually achieves a greater and greater degree of independence and is able to react on the body with an increased degree of freedom, and eventually to survive physical death.

Preaching at Liverpool, Canon Peter Green, of Manchester (says the *Express*), thus expressed himself on the subject of animal survival:—

I am not sure that some cats and dogs have not attained a personality of such permanence as to call it a soul. Some, I believe, have attained this stage, and I shall not be surprised if I meet them in heaven.

Regarding the animal soul and its destiny, the *Daily Chronicle* reports that the congregation in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, were informed by the Precentor, the Rev. H. J. Lawler, D.D., that the cathedral was haunted by the ghost of a dog. The *Chronicle* says:—

There is in the cathedral a statue to Captain J. McNeill Boyd, R.N., who was drowned off Kingstown in an attempt to rescue the crew of the wrecked brig Neptune in 1861.

Captain Boyd's dog, said the Precentor, followed his master's coffin, and lay for some days on his grave.

"Now," said Dr. Lawler, "if one were in the cathedral between 12 midnight and 1 a.m., he might hear the patter of the dog's footsteps on the floor."

In *Tit-Bits* there are about four columns of an interview, instructive and entertaining, concerning "Margery," by John T. Flynn, who says that she watches the quarrels about her "with much interest, a little irritation, and some amusement." Said "Margery," "what amazing things people are willing to believe in order to avoid believing the things they don't want to believe!" Her husband, Dr. Crandon, was "intellectually convinced" of the reality of Spiritualistic phenomena before she believed in Spiritualism; so, "entirely in search of amusement," "Margery" went with a friend to "gather some good laughing material with which to twit the doctor." She confesses:—

What I heard surprised me a little. It interested me so much that I asked for a private sitting later in the week. At this I was told of things that amazed me. I was entirely converted. I hastened home to my "intellectually convinced" husband, supposing he would be pleased by my conversion. And what do you suppose he said? "Don't be drawing the long bow. You were just imposed on." Such is the wondrous way of the male mind.

As soon as the Crandon story was published, letters to them poured in from the public—chiefly from poor souls begging for help in bereavements, but also from firms that made a business of supplying bogus "mediums" with the tools of their hideous trade. Continuing the interview, "Margery" said:—

Next came the scientists to investigate me. The gravity of these gentlemen has sometimes led to amusing results.

Now the first thing that struck me about all these investigators was that each one had built a little wall of incredulity about himself. One of these men—a very famous psychic researcher—held many sittings. He was tremendously impressed by the independent voice of my deceased brother, which always manifests itself in the seance room. He wanted to be sure this was not my voice, so he held his hand over my mouth and nose. But the voice came through quite as plainly.

"Now, doctor," I said, "isn't that convincing?"

And what do you suppose he said? "How do I know you don't talk through your ears?"

With all due respect to my scientific friends, I think it more likely they are talking through their hats.

From *The National Spiritualist* we take the following:—

"If there is a man who knows that there is such a thing as a human soul," said Huxley, "I should like to see that man, and if there be a man who knows there is not, I should like to see him."

And yet Walt Whitman, surely no less a contributor to the knowledge of mankind than the late Professor Huxley, said, "Does someone ask to see the soul? Then let him look at the grass, the trees, and the sand on the seashore. Objects gross and the unseen soul are one."

That was his way of saying that look where you will, you cannot escape the reality of your own soul and the soul of the universe.

YOUR NEWSAGENT CAN SUPPLY "LIGHT" WEEKLY

NOTES ON "THE SCRIPTS OF CLEOPHAS."*

By E. B. GIBBES.

It may be of interest to give some further details concerning the production of *The Scripts of Cleophas*. It must be borne in mind, that the story is one continuous narrative grammatically correct and written in a recognised style. Each succeeding series of writings shows an improvement in facility of reception, choice of words, etc., and, beyond the deletion of an occasional conjunction, requires no correcting whatever. Up to the time of writing Miss Cummins has produced no fewer than half a million words of early Christian history, or enough to furnish another three volumes of similar size to the one just published. *The Scripts of Cleophas* supplement the Acts of the Apostles. A careful reader of the latter will perceive that they contain very little detail. There is, therefore, an immense field from which "Cleophas" might draw. This resuscitation of old chronicles presents a vivid picture of what appears to be a perfectly authentic record of Apostolic times.

From the first it was evident that the Messenger of Cleophas intended to give an account of the lives of the early Christians. On the first occasion of his writing, he spontaneously made the following allusion to Peter, James and John:—

Peter, James and John were appointed by the Master as the living signs of the Trinity upon the earth. Ye may truly say, "Why was Peter, the one that denied, chosen to be of these three?" He was chosen because he did, through the dark vale of despair, struggle and pass. The knowledge of his sin was great with him, so would he know the sins of others and have pity for the fallen. They that do not know sin, unless they be of God, can have no power to divine the sore temptation that snareth others.

Peter denied his Master, so he could know and have understanding of the man who, with the grace of God in his heart, did fall by the way before the evil that beset him. That be why Peter was chosen. That be why he carrieth the keys of Paradise. He did fall so he was fitted to judge the sinner.

John was chosen, he being one that had great spiritual excellence and the pure innocence of a little child. James was chosen for the reason that though a silent man and slow of speech, he had the power to read what was to come. For him there was the knowledge that drifteth to the living man from the Unseen World, telling him where his foot would stumble, and where the pit was digged where the adder lay in wait to strike.

So James was chosen for his knowledge of the wicked traps of the devil and the snares of men. Peter was chosen for the pity and the understanding that did grow within him in the soil of humility that cometh from the pain of a great remorse. John was chosen because he knew, not by reason of his mind nor by reason of his suffering, but by reason of his pure love. So John be the greatest of the three, and James, the least. For love and suffering be greater than knowledge. Solomon did have much knowledge, but love was a stranger to his soul. So Solomon cried out upon the Lord, saying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." All be vanity for him that knoweth neither love nor suffering. These two make of the desert a garden, and of the wilderness fruitful fields.

This idea was subsequently developed when, six weeks later, further details were given concerning the choice of the Twelve Apostles. This Script now forms Chapter II of the volume just published.*

*"The Scripts of Cleophas." Rider & Co.

On several occasions the Messenger has written that "Cleophas draweth from many chronicles." It may be of interest to note whether there is any evidence to prove this statement in the writing of the scripts. We had been much puzzled by the commencement of one of the early writings, now Chapter Four in the published volume. Contrary to previous and succeeding communications this began in the first person. In fact the first person has only been used once again, very much further on. The Script in question began, "I was much with Peter, and I sought to serve him, and to listen to his words. For he was ever a man who could make others see visions and dream dreams through the fiery light of his words."

Fifteen months or so later, when the first instalment was being prepared for publication, an explanation was asked and the paragraph read aloud. The reply was as follows:—

I would have ye know that when these words were given, it was our design to pluck from one ancient chronicle the very words changed into your tongue by the scribes and set down by this hand. Howbeit, our purpose changed when we perceived that there was power within the invisible shape of the living women to receive from us the happenings in many chronicles. And so ye should read these first words not as our utterance when we walked upon the earth, but as the utterance of a chronicler whose words were imaged upon the Tree of Memory and plucked by Cleophas, then given unto the scribes so that they might shape them for the men of your generation. Let these words be blotted out, lest they should cause confusion in the minds of those who hearken to ye.

These words were removed from the published text as directed. The above explanation was entirely unexpected. If we may judge by the immense amount of material subsequently written by Miss Cummins, we can accept the statement that upon the discovery of the writer's capacity in the required direction, it was decided to compile a much larger chronicle than was at first intended.

In the introduction to the present volume the Editors touch upon the fact that the Messenger is remote and apparently still dreams of the days when each parchment was laboriously copied by scribes; not only does he wish a careful eye to be kept on "errors" they may make, he also recommends that watch is kept upon their industry, that "they sleep not over the letters." It would appear that when he writes he lives again in the time when he was on earth, and imagines that scribes laboriously copy this vast chronicle letter by letter, word by word, on long rolls of parchment. His statement that "we write from the Invisible and may not enter into the life of man," is borne out by his inability to grasp modern ideas. During the early writings the Messenger showed, from time to time, his keen desire to relate the Chronicle of Paul's travels. His first spontaneous allusion to this was in September, 1925. "And also I would write of Paul. For, of a truth, he did testify to many among the people of the West." In the following month he wrote again. "Yet first would I tell ye the tale of the spreading of the light. I would shew ye wherefore Paul was chosen to bear the lamp of faith to the Western lands, and even to that Western island of which many strange tales were told in those ancient days." Early in 1926 the following statement was made: "The Messenger will write of all those days of journeyings in Macedonia, Galatia, Athens and Corinth, and will lead ye across the seas unto the gates of Rome." On yet another occasion the Messenger stated that he wished to relate Paul's Martyrdom in that city.

In the light of these and other spontaneous remarks made in early scripts, it is of interest to note how he keeps his promises. For these records, up to date, give an account of the life of Paul in Judæa, Antioch in Syria, Antioch in Pisidia, Galatia, Phrygia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Cyprus, Ephesus and

other places. They also describe happenings in the lives of various saints in Rome, Alexandria, Crete and elsewhere.

He wrote some time ago, "We shall not fail ye if ye do not fail us."

Sometimes a question has been asked about a certain individual who lived in those times and the reply has been, "That cometh in my chronicle." Incidents in the life of that person are subsequently introduced in their appointed place, and the bearing of the epistles on the Acts is illustrated by many and various episodes narrated in the Scripts which concern (in addition to those already mentioned in the published volume) Titus, Gallio, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Aristarchus, Aquila and Priscilla, Erastus, Dionysius, Damaris, Andronicus and Junia, Epænetus, Sosthenes, Crispus, Tyrannus, Philo, Apollos, Epaphras, Justus, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, Trophimus, Stephanas, Tryphena and Tryphosa, John the Elder and many others.

The last completed portion of the Scripts, not yet published, deals with the disorders in the Church at Corinth which caused Paul to write the Epistles to the Corinthians. It gives a detailed account of events of that period, and I feel inclined to disagree with the Messenger when, some time ago, he wrote: "The tales we would give, the thoughts we would render unto ye, may not shape themselves in the words of your generation. Your tongue cannot now faithfully interpret the Vision of a Vanished Day."

MISERY HAS ITS MERITS.

From that amusing book, *Miserable in Heaven*, by Freedom Hill Henry, to whose work we have given attention in the past, we take the following piece of jovial philosophy:—

We want to be less miserable and we try various methods of making ourselves happier. We accumulate property, thinking riches will make us happy. We vote for the "full dinner pail," thinking three big meals a day will make us happy. Nature pitches us head over heels in "love" and we think if we could just marry that woman and own her we would ever after be happy. We seek for self, self, self. And after ten thousand years we have not yet learned that selfishness will not make us happy. Yes, we have learned it theoretically and we admit it on Sundays, but the six days we struggle discontentedly and anxiously for selfish happiness.

We have to make lying affirmations about our youth, our health and our happiness in order to be comfortable enough to avoid committing suicide with diabolic acid. Oh, we are jackasses all right!

But let me say for your encouragement that we must go through the jackass stage of evolution before we can become real men and women. Sunny Jim says, "Hell is the trap door to Heaven." Perfection is reached through imperfection. Practice makes perfect. Mistakes make for improvement. Misery makes for happiness.

As I at this moment see you, I have not a word to say against you. Your meanness is all used by the evolutionary God to fertilize your growth. The Gardener of the universe utilizes all the fertilizers from the jackass stables, and finds it just enough.

Our hypocrisy and dishonesty and envy and other forms of deviltry are made good use of, so we need have no regrets. I would not ask you to reform and live "straight"; for if I succeeded in getting you to do so, I would cause you to miss valuable experiences. I don't want to lead you along pleasant lanes just on the outside of hell, for then you would never get to heaven. The only way to heaven is through hell, so we might as well take our medicine and grin and bear it like a man.

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

A writer on occultism, dealing with the dangers of over-concentration of mind, instances the case of a man who in a fit of abstraction mistook a piece of rope for a snake. But this was much better than mistaking a snake for a piece of rope.

* * * * *

For many—perhaps most—of us life reveals itself mainly as a career of Trudge and Drudge. But we go forward in the faith that at last will come the invitation to "arise and shine." As a Scots poet put it:—

The rough task ended—reckoned nothing worth—
And closed the bargains of the lowliest vendor,
Lowly and rude will doff their garb of earth
And don their robes of splendour.

* * * * *

A philosophic contributor remarks that although we may well deplore the lower forms of Spiritualism, the recourse to psychic practices for base ends, the abuse of spirit communication, and so forth, these things have their uses in the long run. They keep open, in some fashion, intercourse with the unseen world, and help to prevent mankind from going back into the darkness of a stony materialism. That is a consoling reflection, and (like Wordsworth) my heart leaped up when I beheld that rainbow in the sky. But even on this account we need not condone the depraved forms of Spiritualism, especially as in the end they recoil violently on those who practise them.

* * * * *

The study of psychology, having invaded the business world, has now penetrated the football field. An evening paper, dealing with the defeat of Tottenham Hotspur at Huddersfield, refers to a theory that the defeat was due to "the atmosphere created by concentrated and supreme confidence" in which they were enveloped by the supporters of the Yorkshire team. There was a "wave of thought" supporting the victors, and "willing" its opponents to defeat. The question is asked: "Can the supreme confidence of a vast army of people create an atmosphere which renders it well-nigh impossible for a hostile force to do itself justice?" The answer is clearly in the affirmative. The incident is instructive. It shows that the thought of the time is developing in the right direction. When the football crowd becomes aware of the meaning of "mass psychology," it will be a great stride forward in bringing home to the public the reality of an unseen world.

* * * * *

A few years ago I gave in this column a humorous exchange of epistles passing between Bishop Colenso and Archbishop Longley. That was at a time when theological warfare was raging just as it is to-day, and Bishop Colenso was the victim of a "heresy hunt." The Archbishop wrote:—

My dear Colenso—with regret,
We hierarchs, in conclave met,
Beseech you—most disturbing writer—
To give up your Colonial mitre.
This course we urge upon you strongly,
Believe me, yours sincerely, LONGLEY.

And Colenso replied:—

My dear Archbishop—to resign
This Zulu diocese of mine,
And own myself a heathen dark,
Because I've doubts of Noah's Ark,
And think it right to tell all men so
Is not the course for yours, COLENSO.

This happened more than sixty years ago. It seems appropriate to recall it now that the old *odium theologicum* shows that it has not yet been extinguished by the growth of Christian charity.

D. G.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"Blair's Letters." Communicated by James Blair Williams to his Mother. (Old Royalty Book Publishers. 3s. 6d. net.)

This book strikes rather a new note in the literature of psychic messages. James Blair Williams died in 1918, at the age of thirty, and the bereaved mother sought evidence of his survival and found it through the agency of Miss Helen McGregor, Mrs. Barkel, Mrs. Blanche Cooper, Mrs. Vickers and Mrs. Mason. The proofs of identity, indeed, were striking. There followed a series of automatically written letters dealing with the war, the coal crisis, and other national and political matters. These show traces of a keen observation and an original mind. They are noticeable for their strong, practical good sense and are thus somewhat in contrast with the bulk of automatic script. It is true that the communicator has not been very long in the world from which he dictates his messages, but he contrives to be interesting and instructive. E.P.G.

"Living Secrets." By Luma Valdry. Authorised translation by Fred Rothwell. (Rider. 5s. net.)

This is a book remarkable if only by reason of its coruscating literary style. In the course of a Preface to the work, that distinguished writer, M. Edouard Schuré, describes the circumstances in which it was written, and remarks:—

Such a book should be judged, not by its genesis, which remains a mystery and cannot be lightly interpreted, but by its intrinsic worth. . . . In its vertiginous flight this esoteric and cosmogonic poem—a kind of vision made up of hidden secrets of history—touches upon the gravest problems that have ever harassed the mind of man. . . .

That gives a hint of the nature of a book which it is difficult to describe adequately, by reason of its tumultuous eloquence, and the strange and mystical note which pervades it throughout. Yet under its curious terminology there is a sign of balance and clear judgment, as thus:—

Do not cry out against the necessary errors of Church instructions: these errors form a counterpoise to material and Luciferian negation. Creedal and mercenary ceremonies would long ago have been destroyed by the Powers of Heaven, had they not been the necessary equilibrium to the magical incantations of Hell.

This puts in a rather oracular form what some of us would have expressed in "a few other words." The book has many "strange and moving pages," to quote M. Schuré, and may even prove to some "a luminous sign amid the moral darkness in which we live." LUCIUS.

"Chinese Ghouls and Goblins." By G. Willoughby-Meade. (Constable. 24s. net.)

This book is aptly named—those who are attracted by its title will, for the most part, be satisfied with its contents. Quite properly the first chapter is devoted to the Chinese idea of the soul and if the author has not given a complete picture of celestial speculation on this important topic, he has at least avoided serious error. I am happy to see that as early as the first page, the author has realised what countless writers of books always seem to forget, that China is a continent rather than a country and that most general statements about it are wrong. There is too much to know.

The two chapters which will prove of absorbing interest to students of psychical research are "X. The Spirits of Inanimate Objects. Hauntings and apparitions of Lifeless Things," and "XV. Spiritualism." Tree-spirits are very real to the Chinese, as also are the spirits of dead people—hence the custom of a wronged man committing suicide on the evil-doer's doorstep, that his spirit may return again and again to bear witness.

In Chapter XV. the reader will be agreeably surprised to find that the general topsy-turvydom of China is given a rest—the development of Spiritualism as a definite code of belief follows largely the lines of Western thought. A type of planchette is very highly esteemed—trances, spirit-writings, and various kinds of "possession" identify themselves with modern Western views.

The poltergeist is known and feared, the *wu* (commonly but erroneously regarded as "witch-doctor" or "shaman") who is the nearest approach to the Occidental "medium" is credited with the same "possession" and supernormal powers which are the attributes of European mediumship. Telepathy was known in very early days and many stories are to be found in Chinese literature, explaining that such "magical knowledge" as was displayed by wonder-workers stopped short at something not known to anybody present. One or two of the stories told in this chapter have an unmistakeably Western ring but their authenticity is beyond doubt. Clairvoyance and clairaudience have their place in Chinese Spiritualism as elsewhere.

The author has laid not only the Spiritualist and student, but the general reader under a burden of indebtedness. His book is not merely interesting, it is highly informative and belies his modest disclaimers. The illustrations are beautifully reproduced and add much value to a well put-out volume.

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On Sunday evening last at Grotian Hall, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spoke to a crowded audience. During the course of a deeply interesting address he said that Spiritualism had already outgrown its infant state, but had not yet reached its full adult growth. There were three things Spiritualism gave to its adherents:—

(1) Tranquillity of mind. If one has held communion, however fugitive, with the dead, despair is changed to hope, and then to certainty.

(2) The fear of death is removed. The death-bed of the devout is not always the most peaceful, for often the greater the faith the greater the fear of the unknown; messages have been received through mediums from those who have passed over in the Christian faith, asking why they were not told about the conditions on the other side.

(3) The loss of those we love is mitigated.

Sir Arthur said that the time was coming when phenomena would not be necessary: Spiritualism would rest on a philosophic basis.

There were also utilitarian benefits to be obtained from Spiritualism. In times of national stress one could obtain help and guidance from the spirit people, as was the case with Abraham Lincoln in 1862. Medical help and healing could be given. Sir Arthur, as a medical man, gave his conclusions from the results of his experiences with well-known healing mediums. In the treatment of lunacy the knowledge of Spiritualism was being used, particularly in America. The gift of prophecy was illustrated by reference to Andrew Jackson Davis.

After the address the Reverend Arthur Ford, of New York, gave some wonderful examples of his mediumistic powers. E.C.C.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

"THE BUSINESS OF LIFE BEING THE LORE OF LENT." By L. W. Fearn. (Elliot Stock. 9d. net.)

"THE ORIGIN OF MAN." By Ernest G. Palmer. (Rider. 4s. 6d.)

"FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ASTROLOGY." By Wilber Gaston. (Rider. 3s. 6d.)

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Camberwell.—The Central Hall, High Street.—April 1st, 11, serv 5.30, Mr. C. Glover Botham. Wednesday, 7.30, public circle at Station Road.

Peckham.—Lausanne Road.—April 1st, 7, Mr. J. G. Pollard. Th day, 8.15, Mrs. F. Kingstone.

Richmond Spiritualist Church, Ormond Road.—April 1st, 7.30, Bro John, address and clairvoyance. April 4th, 7.30, Mrs. Brown address and clairvoyance.

Groydon.—The New Gallery, Katharine Street.—April 1st, 8, Lyce 6.30, Sir Frank Benson.

Fulham.—12, Lettice Street (Nr. Parsons Green Station).—1st, 11.30, circle; 3, Lyceum; 7, Mrs. Worthington. Thursday, 8, T. Ella.

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NOTICES.

EASTER HOLIDAYS: The Library and Offices will be closed for the Easter holiday from the evening of Thursday, April 5th, to the morning of Wednesday, April 11th.

THE SPRING SESSION will commence with a lecture on Thursday, April 19th. The new syllabus will be ready immediately after Easter.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK: Except during the days of the Easter holiday sittings may be booked with mediums on the staff of the L.S.A., and members may obtain introductions to others approved by the Council.

HOME CIRCLES: From time to time members who are unable to form private circles in their own homes are desirous of meeting others willing to offer places to suitable sitters. In order to meet the need of members, the Secretary will be glad to receive names of those wanting either to complete or to form private groups.

CARD GUESSING EXPERIMENT: A further appeal: Many thanks are due to all those who most kindly took part in the card-guessing experiment for which an appeal was made in *LIGHT*. As the experiment continues to yield interesting and suggestive results, this further appeal is made to readers of *LIGHT* who have not yet tried the experiment to ask if they would help both by doing the experiment themselves and by persuading friends to try also.

The experiment is a simple one and the directions are as follows:—

1. Take a pack of 52 playing cards.
2. Draw one card face downwards from the pack and try and guess what the card is.
3. Record your guess under "guess card" on the scoring sheet provided. The space under "score" is for official use only.
4. Turn up the playing card and write down under "actual card" what the card actually is.
5. Return the card to the pack and shuffle. (The scoring calculations are based on a full 52-card pack.)
6. Then take out another card, record it as before, etc., and do this five times in succession at one sitting. Before guessing another set of five leave an interval of at least some hours, preferably a day, before guessing again.
7. Do not let another person see the card you have taken from the pack. The possibility of telepathy must be excluded.
8. If possible please do 25 guesses (five sets of five).

All records, however unsuccessful, are useful, and all degrees of success are allowed for in the scoring.

A scoring sheet for recording guesses and a stamped addressed envelope will be sent on application to Miss Jephson, c/o the Secretary, The London Spiritualist Alliance, 16, Queensberry Place, S.W.7.

A considerable number of data has already been collected, but more are essential before any definite conclusions can safely be drawn.

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