

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

Edited by DAVID GOW

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PROFESSOR RICHTER ON THE
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Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research

"Light! More Light!"—Goethe.

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

No. 2541. VOL. XLIX. [Registered as SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1929. a Newspaper.] PRICE FOURPENCE

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the modern view." We are not required to believe as some of the ancients believed, that the suns and planets are sentient beings; but it does look as though they were the organs of a greater form of life. Cicero attributed to the stars, "intelligence, reason and design", and felt that they should be included in the number of the gods. When we examine the statement we can see that it is not entirely the outcome of blind superstition. And it may yet come to pass that "Man, proud man", will discover that the bodily form which he too often mistakes for himself is simply the organ of a life and intelligence vastly surpassing his own personal, self-conscious existence.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER.

It is a comical thing to observe the "high-brow" type of psychical researcher denouncing Spiritualists for what he terms their "anthropocentric" notions. Now, when we remember that this means the habit of regarding man as the centre of things and basing all ideas concerning the Universe on man's idea of himself, it really looks as if the sauce for the Spiritualistic goose might be equally sauce for the anti-Spiritualist gander. For when we come to analyse the position, it is clear enough that the man who is sceptical of any future life, who maintains that personal consciousness is limited to the physical world and cannot be carried beyond it, is equally taking himself (as a human being) as the basis of his theory. In short, he is clearly regarding himself as the test and touchstone of all that constitutes personal existence, and drawing his limit at that. In effect, he says: "I am a real, definite, positive existence, and as such the standard and base-line of all supposed human existences in any other world. These alleged spirits are simply phantasms, figments, fictitious projections from the minds of mediums." And after that he calmly talks of the "anthropocentric tendencies" of Spiritualists! It is indeed droll.

INTELLIGENCE—HUMAN AND UNIVERSAL.

As time goes on it is becoming clear that there are deep and true ideas behind some of those teachings which, as belonging to the past, it has been the custom to dismiss as superstitions. An instance in which a revision of view may have to be considered is the old doctrine that natural objects possess a life and intelligence of their own—a "soul" in fact. That was a belief of early man, but it has a truth in it. Recently it was objected by a critic that "the spirit hypothesis has a delusive appearance of simplicity, but so also had Kepler's hypothesis of guiding angels". In answering this objection, Sir Oliver Lodge remarked that although he did not know what Kepler meant by "guiding angels controlling the planets" he was sure that Kepler meant nothing capricious. "He must have meant that an unknown something guided the planets in their path; and that is a paraphrase of

TERRORS OF THE DARK.

Where fear and credulity go hand in hand almost anything may happen, or seem to happen. The writers of "ghost and vampire" stories, occasionally published by the popular Press when pandering to the craving for morbid sensationalism amongst the more ignorant classes, were formerly careful, for reasons of policy, to take the line that these stories were mere superstitions. But almost always, as we have noticed, the sensation-mongering author included cases which, he suggested, looked curiously like facts. As some of us know, they *are* facts, although usually very much embellished and distorted in order to tickle the palate of the reader. The presence of this substratum of fact explains what so many writers of this kind of literature find, or profess to find, so very mysterious, viz., the "tenacity of superstition", and its survival even into the twentieth century. If the marvels narrated were all the product of fancy, they could not possibly survive. A lie that is all a lie has a very short life; but, mixed with a little truth, it will go a long way. And the truth at the back of these legends and traditions reveals not so much the credulity of mankind as the reality of man's psychic and spiritual nature, the manifestations of which often take queer and perverted forms until they are examined fearlessly in the light of knowledge. They then fall into their proper places in the scheme of Nature, for ignorance alone provides the darkness in which supernatural bogies and monsters can exist and terrify the timid and credulous. To suppose otherwise is to be really superstitious.

THE LATE JAMES HEWAT MCKENZIE.—To the personal sketch of the late Mr. Hewat McKenzie we may well add an observation by Mr. Dimsdale Stocker who in an appreciation of the departed leader spoke of him as "the man who was unafraid; he knew no fear". That indeed was the special and peculiar note of Mr. Hewat McKenzie's character, and when he espoused the cause of Spiritualism he brought into it all his vigorous and uncompromising nature. He would give out the truth as he saw it at all costs. As Mr. Dimsdale Stocker put it "the cause of spiritual emancipation from the fetters of tradition and superstition is indebted to his splendid courage and dogged pertinacity".

THE VALIANTINE SITTINGS IN ITALY.

BY H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

IN May of the present year, 1929, Mr. George Valiantine gave a series of seances held under his own mediumship at the house of the Marquis Centurione Scotto in Genoa. Mr. Valiantine travelled to Genoa from Berlin accompanied by his wife and Mrs. Dennis Bradley. The party arrived there, after having broken their journey at Lucerne, on the night of Wednesday, May 15th. In view of the ostensibly inexplicable happenings which took place at the end of this short series of seances which extended for only one week, it is necessary very briefly to refer here to the origin of the Marquis Centurione's interest in psychical research.

In the spring of 1927, knowing that Valiantine was in Europe and staying with me at Dorincourt, the Marquis wrote to me saying that he had been advised to do so by Professor Ernesto Bozzano, and asking me if I would visit him with Valiantine in Genoa. It was impossible for me to do so, and I told the Marquis that as he was introduced by Professor Bozzano, if he came to England I would receive him as my guest. He accepted my invitation. While he was here I was able to give him three seances at my house, under the mediumship of Mr. Valiantine.

The Marquis Centurione does not speak English, and I, unfortunately, do not speak Italian. Neither does Mr. Valiantine nor my wife. The Marquis therefore brought with him Mr. P. E. Rossi, an Italian gentleman, and his wife, a very beautiful and peculiarly attractive Frenchwoman, in order that they might interpret for him. The three seances held at Dorincourt were exceptionally successful. Practically the whole of the communicating "voices" came through and spoke in Italian, and the Marquis and Mr. and Mrs. Rossi were enormously impressed. On his return to Italy the Marquis Centurione gave his accounts of these sittings to Professor Ernesto Bozzano, who published a report on them in Italy. From these lengthy reports it is only necessary to quote one salient point.

The Marquis Carlo dei Centurione Scotto, having suffered the tragic loss of his eldest son, and being naturally in a very sad and depressed state of mind, begged me [Bozzano] to approach Bradley in the hope that Bradley could arrange for him to have sittings with the medium Valiantine. After about a month had elapsed, the Marquis went to London, where he was received as Bradley's guest, and was enabled to take part in three sittings, at which his dead son manifested repeatedly, speaking to him in Italian.

In addition to the Marquis Centurione's son speaking to him in his own voice, other evidential information was given to the sitters in Italian, including one point concerning an unknown name given to a sitter, which was confirmed on the following day by wiring to Italy, when the name was found to be correct.

When the Marquis returned to Italy, amazed at what had taken place at Dorincourt, he commenced to experiment for himself in order to see if he could obtain the "direct voice". He sat with Mr. and Mrs. Rossi, in addition to other sitters, and in a comparatively short time, from the published records, the Marquis and Mrs. Rossi developed a dual mediumship, and obtained the "direct voice".

The records of the somewhat remarkable phenomena and the various communications received in the "direct voice" have since been published in Italy by Professor Ernesto Bozzano, and the abbreviated translation—occupying over a hundred closely-printed

pages—has appeared in *Psychic Science*. In addition, a very long and comprehensive book has been published by Mrs. S. Kelly Hack containing the full details of these sittings which have extended over a period of from April 1927 until the present year.

It is peculiar to note, however, that while many Italian spirit voices manifested themselves, and one of Valiantine's Guides, "Christo D'Angelo", attached himself to the Centurione-Rossi group, and manifested there throughout these "voice" sittings with the utmost regularity, yet the Marquis's son never (according to the English translated reports) came through and spoke. It may be interesting to conjecture whether there was some psychological reason for the son being unable, or refusing, to manifest under the Centurione-Rossi dual mediumship.

Some months after the Marquis Centurione's original development, he travelled over to England to hold one or two seances under his own mediumship, chiefly in order for me to observe any phenomena which might take place. Two sittings were held, both of which took place in London at the flat of Mr. and Mrs. Rossi. The Marquis Centurione appeared to me to be suffering badly from nerve-strain. At the first sitting only the "voice" of "Christo D'Angelo" manifested and a "voice" which purported to be that of Rabelais spoke. At the second sitting these two "voices" again manifested, but after a comparatively short time "Christo D'Angelo" stated that the sitting must close and that the Marquis's nerves were in such a condition that he must take a rest from holding any seances for at least another three months.

In regard to the arrangements made for Mr. Valiantine's visit to Genoa, I received the following letter from the Marquis Centurione, dated April 9th, 1929.

Dear Mr. Bradley,

Needless to say that it is with the greatest pleasure that myself and my friends are receiving the visit of Mr. Valiantine in the third week in May. It is understood that I will defray Mr. Valiantine of his travelling expenses to Genoa and back to London. Of course Mr. Valiantine will receive from me a cheque as a remuneration for his services, on top of the said expenses. Perhaps you would be good enough to give me an idea of what is the right thing to do in this connection.

In a letter to the Marquis Centurione, dated April 12th, I replied that I considered if he paid Valiantine's (and *only* his) fare to Genoa and back to London, and contributed the sum of £50 towards his expenses in travelling from America to Europe, that that would be sufficient. I should here like to emphasise that there was no possible question of making any money or profit out of this visit to Genoa. It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Bradley defrayed her own travelling and hotel expenses, which amounted to £37, while the bare *net* cost of travelling and hotel expenses of Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine amounted to £74. It will be seen therefore that the contribution I suggested from the Marquis Centurione to Valiantine was less than the actual bare expenses of the visit. With incidentals of course it amounted to very considerably more than the sum I had suggested he should contribute.

I mention these figures very deliberately because of the mean suggestion, which is so often made, that mediumship is used as a means to make money.

Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley arrived in Genoa on Wednesday, May 15th, and stayed at the Hotel Isotta.

SEPTEMBER
The first sitting was on Thursday, May 15th. The Marquis Centurione arranged that three of his friends should be present, as was the case on the few days.

The Marquis spoke English through an interpreter, each time. They told them that they should be twelve. Mrs. Bradley and G. Kelly Hack and four others were present, but it was said to be a certain Mrs. Bradley that the communication was various of the son and spoke. Mrs. Bradley

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The first sitting was held on the following evening, Thursday, May 16th, at the residence of the Marquis Centurione in Genoa, 12, Via Caffaro. It had been arranged that five sittings in all should be given, at three of which Professor Ernesto Bozzano would be present, as he was only able to stay in Genoa for a few days.

The Marquis Centurione suggested, as he does not speak English, that Mr. P. E. Rossi should act as interpreter, and also that thirteen people should sit each time. Mrs. Bradley and Mr. Valiantine informed them that this was too many, and that the number should be cut down. At this particular sitting there were twelve sitters: Mr. Valiantine, Mrs. Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, the Marquis Centurione, his wife, Mrs. G. Kelly Hack, Professor Bozzano, Mr. Castellini, and four others. There were certainly too many sitters, but it was stated that if any were left out there would be a certain amount of fuss and animosity.

Mrs. Bradley in her report of this sitting, states that the conditions there appeared to be fairly good. Various of Valiantine's Guides spoke with the sitters, and the son of the Marquis Centurione came through and spoke to his mother. To quote verbatim from Mrs. Bradley's report, she says:—

It was a most thrilling moment, as the Marquise, who is a very charming, gracious, animated woman, full of personality, spoke in the most heart-rending tones I have ever heard, and the spirit "voice" answered her and then went over to the Marquis. He (the spirit voice of the son) was speaking through Valiantine's luminous trumpet and kept going from one to the other. During the sitting this spirit "voice" came back twice. I was informed afterwards that he gave some good evidence about a watch, after they had asked him where it was. Then a "voice" which, I am told, purported to be his father, spoke to Professor Bozzano, but the "voice" to me was not very plain. Professor Bozzano, who appears to take a calm, judicial, yet still sympathetic, sort of attitude, remarked at once, when Christo D'Angelo came through, that he had exactly the same accent (which is a rather uncommon one) as when he came through at the Centurione-Rossi sittings.

The sitting closed after one-and-a-half hours. I am only giving very brief extracts from Mrs. Bradley's reports, because it is quite possible that Professor Ernesto Bozzano will publish detailed accounts at a later date.

(To be continued.)

THE SCHNEIDER TROPHY CONTEST.

A FULFILLED PREDICTION.

BY CHARLES L. TWEEDALE.

On August 31st a psychic message was received by us from an Italian communicator who said that England would win the race, and that an accident would happen to one of the Italian competitors. This forecast was at once communicated to the Editor of our local paper, and to the Sub-editor of the Bradford *Telegraph and Argus* and also to Mr. Oaten, Editor of *The Two Worlds* and to several other ladies and gentlemen, who thus had the forecast nearly a week before the race.

It has been *exactly* fulfilled, England winning, and an accident happening to one of the competitors who was badly scalded owing to the breakdown of his machine.

The forecast also told of a serious earthquake in Japan within three months. Later in the same evening, a message, purporting to come indirectly from the spirit of the murdered Ilkley girl, gave a description of the murderer and his residence. This we communicated to Col. F. Coke, the Chief Constable of the West Riding, and duly received a letter from the Ilkley Office, acknowledging receipt of same, and saying that it should have attention.

PROFESSOR RICHEL ON THE "SIXTH SENSE."

Professor Charles Richet's important work *Notre Sixième Sens*, which was noticed in *LIGHT* in April, 1928, has now been put out in an English translation under the title—the only possible one—of *Our Sixth Sense*.* It should command attention, as well as a wide circle of readers. Richet shares with Lodge a valuable quality—they can both speak and write interestingly, while at the same time being meticulously exact in their utterances, even when dealing with complexities. *Our Sixth Sense* is a scientific book, but it is also one that could be read with pleasure on a long train journey by any ordinary "low-brow". Some of the matter in this present volume has appeared before in the author's *Traité de Métapsychique*, but the repetition is well worth while; there are cases that are sufficiently well-known to the student of psychics, but other, and hitherto unpublished, cases and considerations have been added. It is, in essence, a new work.

Those who know something of Professor Richet's mind will feel no surprise at the discovery that he has not yet come out as an enthusiastic supporter of the Spirit theory. He writes as "a professor of physiology, one who is determined never to abandon the sacred and productive domain of experimental science"—*vide* the Preface. Yet he is no enemy of Spiritualism. He admits that "sometimes the spiritistic hypothesis is more convenient than any other, that it explains the facts more easily". Nevertheless, he seems to prefer to remain in the physiological area, until that region becomes exhausted—an attitude one must respect. The reality of the "sixth sense" is to him, incontestable; it is a small window opening out upon the real world, an avenue through which certain human beings are stimulated to abnormal knowledge by unknown forces—to paraphrase his remarks in the two final pages.

I should like to quote one or two cases given in this book, even though some of them may not be entirely new to the reader. The author mentions his very first experiment, which took place in 1872, and made a tremendous effect on his mind. He was at that time a dresser in the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital and had been trying his hand at hypnotising, which he found he could do very easily. There was a patient in his ward, a nineteen-year-old girl who readily went into the somnambulistic state; the young medical student showed her one day to an American visitor who had never before been inside the hospital. The patient, Mariette, was asked if she could sense the visitor's name; she laughingly denied all knowledge of it, but on being pressed she shut her eyes and after an interval spelled out H, E—then came a letter she could not decipher—followed by R and N. The visitor's name was "Hearn". No precise details are given of this experiment, but the author is clearly satisfied of the supernormal character of Mariette's knowledge of the name. Though much impressed, it was not until ten years later that Richet became interested in lucidity.

Here is another personal experience:

One evening a young relative of mine poisons himself by taking a dose of strychnine. The cause of his death is successfully concealed from everyone. It was known only to the father of Ludovic (pseudonym), to his uncle, and to myself. Of course the Press did not—nor ever will—mention it. Three weeks afterwards, I ask Mme. R., a non-professional sensitive, for the name of the person, a near relative of mine, who is dead. Mme. R. says: "His name is Ludovic; you were at his death-bed; his lips were covered with red foam." All this was quite correct, though I must say she gave many

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other important details that were wrong. Perhaps these errors matter little when compared with the precise facts that were correct.

Ludovic, supposed to be speaking through Mme. R., says: "Stephen, Stephen, ah! This letter, all this writing, I thought I should never be able to finish it." Here we have a detail of the utmost precision. Before taking the strychnine, the unfortunate Ludovic had written to a friend of his (Etienne) a letter that was left open on his table. No one, except his father, his uncle, and myself saw this letter.

It was the same medium, Mme. R., through whose powers there was received the well-known message which appeared to foretell the assassination of the Serbian Royal family. Raps on a table spelled out *Bancalamo*—upon which Richet interjected the remark that "calamo" was a Latin word—and continued until the sitters had the following message: "Banca la mort guette famille" (Banca death is lying in wait for the family).

At first the professor thought "Banca" was intended for the Italian name "Bianca", but as no decision was possible he contented himself with copying down the message in his note-book. Next day, at two in the afternoon, news reached Paris of the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga, together with her brothers, a fact which did not at first seem to connect up with the psychic message—until the French newspaper, *Le Temps*, mentioned that the name of Draga's father was Panka.

Now "Banca" and "Panka" are not precisely the same, but the author gives close reasons for accepting the first as a permissible spelling of the second; he points out too that the minute at which the rapped message was received in Paris, corresponds exactly (allowing for difference in latitude) with the time when the revolutionary officers of the Serbian army left the Hotel de la Couronne de Serbie with the object of slaughtering their royal victims.

Some experiments with the psychic, Kahn, at which Professor Richet was present, made an impression upon the author, though he admits to having even more confidence in Ossovietski. Still, as the writer remarks, "confidence in the sensitive should play but a very secondary part. Always we must have the greatest distrust. Whether it be Reese, Kahn, or Ossovietski, the same rigorous precautions are necessary." And he adds: "If I were experimenting with my wife or my daughter, I should not consider that I had any right at all to mitigate the utmost rigidity of control." Kahn, as many psychic investigators will know, seems to be able to read concealed letters, without using his eyes. He visited the home of Professor Richet and demonstrated his powers. Words and sentences were written on pieces of paper which were folded in eight parts, rolled like a cigarette, and covered with gummed paper. One of these paper tubes was picked up, at random, and burned, by Richet. Kahn, without difficulty, then "read" the contents of the notes—"The men of the day," and "The more it changes," being the two sentences written therein. Then touching one of Richet's hands with his finger-tip the sensitive announced that the burned note had borne the words "Victoire de Sansothrace"—for Samothrace. This was correct.

The author has little patience with the opinions of uninstructed persons upon psychic matters. Zoologists, he remarks, rightly pay small attention to opinions upon zoological matters uttered by grocers or bankers. Yet, strangely enough, so many ignoramuses, without any previous study, air their flimsy views upon metapsychic questions—an area of enquiry which calls for profound research, prolonged meditation and precise methods. Professor Richet feels strongly on this point, as also, do many Spiritualists.

It may be useful if I conclude now with a sentence on p. 226 in which Professor Richet sums up the whole of his work. Here it is:

The real world sends out vibrations around us. Some of these are perceived by our senses; others, not perceptible to our senses, are disclosed by our scientific instruments; but there are still others, perceived neither by our senses nor by our scientific instruments, which act upon certain minds and reveal to them fragments of reality.

I should, in justice, add a word of commendation for the work of the translator, Mr. Fred W. Rothwell, B.A.

W. H. C.

THE POWER OF OVERCOMING.

Much of the sting of life, and a good deal of other unpleasantness besides, is the outcome of resistance. The Great Teacher knew this and said: "Resist not evil." Nothing is ever gained by the attitude of "back up"; indeed we are only increasing trouble by determined opposition to anything we wish to overcome. For the undesirable not only then remains, but becomes greater and greater in consciousness, and the conviction grows that we are faced with an evil that can in no wise be got rid of.

It is wise to bear in mind the difference between the words "overcome" and "overthrow". The latter expression unhappily is the thought commonly held in mind whenever there appears on the horizon something of an unpleasant nature, which must be banished at all costs.

The better way is to consider how we may overcome rather than overthrow the undesirable. That is done by change of thought. In no other way can we become free of evil; for an attitude of hostility does but serve to poison the mind, and then health breaks down.

Life is made up of a succession of present moments, and each second of time is the precious opportunity of changing what we will. So many dream about the future, all the while neglecting present opportunities for improvement, and so the unwanted remains because of mental lethargy which springs from lack of self-discipline.

In his wonderful collection of essays titled as *The Hidden Power*, Troward says: "There is really no energy in our universe but what emanates from ourselves in the first instance, and the power which appears to reside in our surroundings is derived entirely from our own minds."

There is the key to the whole matter, and when we cease to resist so-called evil, and set about overcoming by a change of thought, then, and only then, shall we get a taste of that peace which passeth all human understanding.

L. I. G.

THE SPIRITUAL AGE.

BY V. MAY COTTRELL (Napier, New Zealand.)

New ideas and new habits of thought are permeating the human consciousness, changing men's outlook and enriching their natures. This is the beginning of a spiritual age in which things will be accomplished in the world that have never been possible on so large a scale before.

Spiritual perception is increasing enormously in spite of the apparent materialism of the present day. Men's minds everywhere are accepting new truths with great avidity. The new knowledge, which follows in their train, is being turned to good account in the everyday lives of people of widely varying nationalities. The eventual outcome will be the revolutionizing of thought concerning many things of vital importance to the human family and, ultimately, the complete reorganization of individual and national life.

SEPTEMBER
LETTER
(The Editor)
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

THE REFLECTOGRAPH.

Sir,—I promised Mr. Kirby of Skegness that I would give some account of my experiences with the instrument which he calls "The Reflectograph" but several interruptions have caused some delay.

Mr. Kirby had for some time been in correspondence with me over this instrument and I had read accounts in the Skegness and Norwich papers which showed that he had demonstrated it to several small audiences to their satisfaction.

The idea as he explained it to me was that of a series of keys, not unlike those of a piano, each of which would represent a letter. They are connected with a screen by electric wires and each key is poised with extreme delicacy. If the key is depressed, the result is that the corresponding letter in crimson appears upon the screen.

Such an instrument as this must obviously be of extremely delicate construction and I am sure that Mr. Kirby does not exaggerate when he says that it was very costly. The idea of the machine was, according to Mr. Kirby's account, given to him by a deceased Spiritualist in posthumous communications and this spirit presided over every stage of the construction.

On the 1st of August, on my invitation, Mr. Kirby came to London, bringing with him the machine and also Mrs. Singleton, his medium. The idea seems to be that the ectoplasmic rods proceed from the medium and touch the sensitive notes. The message would then appear letter by letter upon the screen.

On the first day a sitting was held at the offices of the Marylebone Society in Tavistock Square, Mr. Hawken being present with several other members of that Society. The proceedings were not satisfactory. The machine had been somewhat jarred in transit and the keys stuck.

We were in total darkness and though the medium's cabinet was at least eighteen inches away from the machine, none the less it would not have been impossible for her to lean forward and control the keys. Mr. Kirby also was not under control. Under these circumstances the fact that red letters did appear upon the screen could not satisfy the minds of any researcher, though I would add that there was not the least evidence of foul play upon the part of anyone. The mere possibility, however, was enough to negative the experiment. Next day we were able to have a second sitting where the control was much fuller.

Mr. Hawken was again present as was Mr. Horace Leaf, Mr. Hunt of Johannesburg, and Mr. Theron Pierce of the American Society for Psychic Research. A low red light was used and the cabinet was placed in such a position that no one could approach the machine which stood about eighteen inches in front of it. Mr. Kirby was controlled by Mr. Hawken and myself. The medium at the outset was not under control. In these circumstances a message was spelled out to me in red letters upon the screen. It certainly had a significance though somewhat vague in its terms. Nothing could be final however unless the medium was also under complete control. To this end a piece of thick muslin or similar material was nailed with drawing-pins all round the mouth of the cabinet. This being thoroughly done and Mr. Kirby being still held by Mr. Hawken and myself the conditions seemed to be such as to give a definite result. To our great satisfaction red letters flashed out upon the screen. They gave no message and came in spasmodic fashion, but none the less, their appearance bore out Mr. Kirby's claim. At the end of the proceedings I appealed to the company as to whether any possible normal explanation of the

phenomena could be given. Mr. Pierce suggested that a piece of thin wire might be passed through the holes in the muslin and touch the keys of the machine eighteen inches in front.

The machine was so delicately balanced that a thin wire would certainly be enough to depress the notes, but I pointed out that meshes of the veil were so fine that any wire which was worked through them would certainly show some dilation. We examined the material carefully with this idea, but no such dilation was visible. We also examined the nails all round the cabinet and none of them had been disturbed. Mrs. Singleton when taken out of the cabinet appeared to be in a deep trance from which it took her some time to emerge. Before the end of the proceedings her control who had only uttered a few words in a rather deep masculine voice said that if any other materialising medium could be found the same result could be obtained and therefore a third meeting was held on the Saturday, at which unfortunately I was unable to be present.

At this meeting Mrs. Henderson whose development is proceeding in a most satisfactory manner took the place of Mrs. Singleton in the cabinet. In these circumstances and with full control, Mr. Hawken assures me that the letters were again reproduced upon the screen.

These are the plain facts and in face of them I cannot resist the conclusion that Mr. Kirby has established his case and has opened up what seems to me to be a new path in Psychic research and demonstration.

The next stage as it seems to me should be that Mr. Kirby should be invited by some responsible committee to come again to London and to demonstrate before a larger selected audience, which might include some well-known scientific men. It seems to me that so long as you had upon the platform a small committee for the purpose of control and so long as that committee had the complete confidence of the audience there is no reason why the result should not be appreciated simultaneously by a considerable number of people. It is in this direction I think that the value of the machine may lie.

I should add that Mr. Kirby is not a rich man, though he has spent much over the invention and that if he comes to London arrangements must be made to defray all his expenses. He seems to me from the beginning to have acted in a very unselfish fashion.—Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

Crowborough.

"A HYPNOTIC PERFORMANCE."

Sir,—In reference to the letter in LIGHT, of September 7th, I have not met an "alfresco hypnotist", but have seen the remarkable work of Professor Morritt who was here some time ago. He hypnotised a man and kept him in a coffin, to all appearance a corpse, on view for a week—he was immersed in a tank of water one night! A man in the crowded audience, who consented, was rendered unconscious and restored again in a few minutes. Professor Morritt is well-known and has been before the public for years.

It has nothing to do with Spiritualism but is a curious gift which, used rightly, may be of immense use.—Yours, etc.,

BEATRICE OWEN.

Ilfracombe.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. RIKER, Esq., Angola, N.Y., U.S.A.—We thank you for your letter. We fear the topic you touch upon is too abstruse, and is not likely to appeal to our readers, but we appreciate your offer.—Ed.

LIGHT.

Editorial Offices, 16, QUEENSBERRY PLACE,
SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.7.

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ADVERTISEMENTS.—For rates, apply The Advertisement Manager, LIGHT, 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. (Phone: Central 1462.)

OPINIONS IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

A spirit communicator, we are informed, has expressed the opinion that although in rare instances communication between his world and ours may be possible, nevertheless it is extremely undesirable and highly dangerous. The unthinking person might regard such a pronouncement as authoritative and final. "Why the spirit himself *admits* that it is undesirable and dangerous! And surely he ought to be the best judge!" This might be the unspoken comment of the unthinking critic, who would probably resolve never to take part in any attempt at spirit communication.

But those of us who have been immersed in this subject of Spiritualism for many years do not attach any special weight to a message simply because it comes from the world beyond, knowing, as we do, that the inhabitants of that world are much like ourselves—particularly in little matters of human weakness; they, like us, are sometimes actuated by unconscious prejudice; they, like us, occasionally utter ill-considered opinions, give hasty judgments.

Spirit-messages, one must remember, can occasionally be "forced" by sitters; there is nothing strange about this; in the law courts it may happen that a bewildered witness, under pressure by a hectoring and persistent counsel, will say "Yes," when he truly means "No"—the witness realises this in his calm moments, when removed from the dominating influence of his questioner. "Now, sir! *Do you not agree* that so-and-so is true? . . . *Is it or is it not* correct to say that such and such took place?" Questions like these, uttered by an individual of strong forceful personality, with the intention of drawing a certain desired answer, are not infrequently successful—from the questioner's point of view, although the answers are not exactly truthful ones. An experienced judge recognises and allows for these "forced" answers; similar discrimination is necessary where the cross-examination takes place in the seance room.

But in any case the question of the danger or undesirability of spirit communication is in no kind of doubt, as all experienced Spiritualists are aware. One spirit communicator, here and there, may regard communication between the two worlds with strong disapproval. But millions of others take a diametrically opposite view.

A SHOCK FOR THE GHOST.

Recently the *Star* gave a brief account, quoted from a church magazine, of the visit, at a late hour, of two strangers to a presbytery; they unfolded to the canon, who resided there, the story of their recent visit to a seance, at which one of them had consulted an alleged spirit purporting to be his brother. Asked as to which form of Christianity he recommended, the spirit is said to have replied: "Go and consult Father Bellini!" Apparently the canon tried to trace Father Bellini in the clerical directory for Great Britain, but failed to track down the name. And just then a resounding blow was heard on the room door, apparently caused by some unseen agency. The canon admits that he was scared; he advised his two guests in solemn tones to "give up Spiritualism or they would end as lunatics and suicides." After that he sprinkled the house with holy water.

One sympathises with the good canon. A little sympathy might be spared, too, for the unseen intelligence—assuming the latter to have been actually present and desirous of making himself known. (The psychic student of experience knows, of course, that possibly no spirit communicator was involved, and no opinion on the point is possible without a study of the facts.) However, assuming that the spirit was actually trying to draw attention to his presence with a view to opening up communication, it seems a little hard on the unseen visitor to be greeted as an outcast.

The *Star* heads the report "A Shock for the Canon". Might not the ghost have been even more shocked at its chilly reception? Would not any average man or woman feel startled and pained if, on visiting a friend after a long absence, he or she were unexpectedly thrown out of the house "neck and crop" by a host who showed every mark of disgust and horror. And would not the pain and shock be even more acute on learning that the host had sprinkled the rooms of his house with carbolic as a protection against possible contamination by his unwanted visitor?

With every possible sympathy, and respect for the worthy canon, we would suggest that it is not everyone who appreciates being treated like a leper, or a plague-carrier.

THE WANT OF THIS AGE.

The question involuntarily arises: "What is, in a religious point of view, the want of this age?"

In accordance with my impressions, I answer—that man requires a demonstration of the truth of immortality; a sensuous evidence that the soul continues to exist in a *physical* or *palpable* organisation, subsequent to the event of outer dissolution. When a friend or a relative departs from amongst us to an invisible world, then man flees to his religion for consolation and faith; but, in addition to what solace he derives from this source, he internally desires some *substantial* illustration and evidence of the continued existence of the departed spirit. There is scarcely a Christian who would refuse to receive some *material* evidence that the soul lives always—that friends and relations shall meet, and recognise, and love each other again, in another world, as on the earth. . . . The *strongest* advocates of those miracles which are said to have occurred centuries ago (there being no other proof than human testimony that they ever were performed) are minds who will not give any credence to the no less wondrous miracles that are of almost daily occurrence in our very midst.

—ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

SIDELIGHTS.

"Shock for a Canon", is the title of a *Star* item of September 4th, which relates an experience described by Canon McKenna, of St. Helen's Church, Westcliff, in his church magazine. The reverend gentleman tells of two visitors who called at his presbytery, at a late hour, and who "looked and spoke as if they had been oppressed by criminal consciences". They had come from a Spiritualistic seance, and one of them had asked the alleged spirit of his dead brother which form of Christianity it would be best to adopt. "Go and consult Father Bellini," was the reply.

* * * * *

The canon consulted a clerical directory for Great Britain but could not find the name. The report continues: "Then a wooden door of a small opening between the kitchen and the dining-room in which we were seated received such a resounding blow from some unseen agent that the pictures on the walls and the furniture were shaken. There was not a living soul in the kitchen at the time. I admit I was scared. I advised my nocturnal visitors in solemn tones to give up Spiritualism or they would end as lunatics or suicides. Afterwards I sprinkled the house with holy water and tried hard for several hours to compose myself to sleep."

* * * * *

"Q.E.D."—a writer in the *North Cheshire Herald*, whose impressions of a public Spiritualist meeting, described in that journal, were quoted in *LIGHT* of August 31st—now gives in the *Herald* some account of his further examination of psychic phenomena. They are at present slight enough, but "Q.E.D." mentions a case which is worth touching upon here. He tells us he was informed by the late Alderman H. G. Turner, of "The Goodiers", Newton, that one of the alderman's relatives had been killed in America owing to a fall from a haystack. Says the writer: "The incident was seen at the identical moment by one of the household at 'The Goodiers' who was hurrying across the yard and who, terrified, came back and related the vision." He adds that although some readers may scoff, others may be able and willing to add their own experiences, and "Q.E.D." invites communications on the subject, addressed to him at the *Herald* Office, Hyde, Cheshire.

* * * * *

The broadcast talk by Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe last month is printed, in part, in *The Listener*, of September 4th, and contains some interesting accounts of ghost-lore and superstitions current in the North of England. He referred to the Greenhow miners, and their belief in the occasional presence underground of mining folk long dead and gone. Sometimes these visitations are in the nature of warnings of impending disasters, and Mr. Sutcliffe described the sound of heavy footsteps echoing along the underground passages, causing the workers to think that the "relief shift" had arrived before its time. But the footsteps come from no material feet, and with one accord the miners make a dash for the ladder which leads to the open air above ground. "They were scarcely away from the mine's brink," said the speaker, "when they heard a deafening roar as its walls hurtled to the depths below. To their lives'

end they were sure that the ghosts of comrades, killed aforetime in the mine, lived on to give warning of catastrophe."

* * * * *

Writing to the *Evening News* of September 9th, a correspondent, B. E. de J. T., who gives a Kensington address, says that shortly before his birth, his father, a vicar, was appointed to a new church at Chesham, Bucks. As there was no vicarage at the time, the vicar and his wife—B. E. de J. T.'s mother—were obliged to live temporarily in rooms in the High Street. He continues: "One June afternoon—a Saturday—my mother, then a young woman of 22, came down the wide old-fashioned staircase to see, as she walked across the square hall, a dear old Quaker lady in outdoor clothes, even to the white strings on her bonnet seated on a chair apparently waiting for someone. My mother said 'Good afternoon'—so real was the illusion—and passed on.

* * * * *

"That evening my mother asked her landlady who the Quaker lady was. 'Well,' she replied. 'I have never seen her myself, but other people who have stayed here have seen her. It is my old mistress; she died here and left me this house.'" The writer of this account adds that his mother was not ordinarily psychic, and that she never had another experience of the kind.

A MATERIALISED ANIMAL IN THE SEANCE ROOM.

Mr. Fred H. (his name and address are known to us) writes us with an account of an unusual seance which he attended. Says our correspondent:

"Most people have seen numerous small apports, as I have done myself, but perhaps few have clearly seen an immense Indian giant tortoise, under an ordinary dining-table, and almost touching the feet of the sitters. . . . I have done this. It—the tortoise—would have been approximately three feet long, excluding the projected neck and head. . . . It came about in this manner. I had said to M. [a purported spirit]: 'Will you send us something that J. [the Medium] could not possibly hide or convey, and which could not possibly be obtained in Lowestoft?'

"She replied, 'I will try.'

"I said, 'Will it be on the table?'

"She wrote, 'On, or under.'

"Presently I asked again, and she wrote 'look under the table.' J. and I were sitting together by the corner of the table. I instantly looked and thought I saw a dark circular object, about the size of a well-known carpet foot-rest that is sometimes there. I assumed it was that, and did not examine it at all. I looked away for a few seconds, then looked again, when to my amazement I saw this huge reptile, with its head under a chair opposite to J.'s, on the other side, and its huge bulk reaching nearly, if not quite, three-quarters of the width of the table.

"I exclaimed 'Look!', and J. and her mother both stooped and looked, and saw just the same as I did—from the tail-end, whereas I saw it broadside on. We all agreed that it was 'huge', and a 'tortoise'. I looked away three times and then at it again, and always saw the same. An aunt of J., sitting at the same end of the room, also looked, but says she saw nothing. This proves nothing. . . . At last I made up my mind I would touch it, and at that moment I looked again with J. and it had disappeared absolutely. Nothing was there."

Mr. Fred H. adds a footnote to his letter to the effect that there is a small stuffed tortoise in the house, about one-twelfth size.

A NOTE ON "ROBERTSON OF BRIGHTON."

BY E. W. DUNBURY.

On Sunday evening, July 28th, 1929, the B.B.C. broadcast a religious Service from Trinity Church, Brighton, the Mecca of so many American visitors. Here it was that the Rev. F. W. Robertson, usually known as "Robertson of Brighton", and in many respects the greatest preacher of the nineteenth century, preached during the years 1847-1853. He died at the early age of 37 on August 15th, 1853. In reference to him Carlyle spoke of his "great thoughts". Once Robertson and Tennyson met, and the two conversed on the brewing of beer, each feeling shy of the other. It is related that Tennyson afterwards said: "I felt that he had come to tear out the heart of my mystery."

In the book entitled *The "Controls" of Stainton Moses*, by A. W. Trethewy, will be found a communication to the Rev. W. Stainton Moses from his unseen teachers, recapitulating the unconscious guidance which his life had received and educational influences to which he had been subjected, in order to fit him for his future mission. Among the thinkers to whom his attention was thus directed was Robertson of Brighton, who was described as "angel-guided". It will be interesting to note what confirmation of this description can be gleaned from *The Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke.

The following passage occurs in a letter written by Robertson in 1850, and attention is drawn to the last sentence:

I read Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Coleridge, Philip Van Artevelde, for views of man to meditate upon, instead of theological caricatures of humanity; and I go out into the country to "feel" God; dabble in chemistry to feel awe of Him; read the life of Christ, to understand, love, and adore Him; and my experience is closing into this, that I return with disgust from everything to Christ. I think I get glimpses into His mind, and I am sure that I love Him more and more. . . . A sublime feeling of a Presence comes about me at times, which makes inward solitariness a trifle to talk about.

Again, a correspondent described in the following terms the effect of Robertson's preaching, and once more attention is directed to the last sentence:

I cannot describe to you in words the strange sensation, during his sermon, of union with him and communion with one another, which filled us as he spoke. I used to feel as if everyone in the congregation must be thrilling with my emotion, and that his suppressed excitement was partly due to his consciousness of our excitement. Nor can I describe to you the sense we had of a higher Presence with us as he spoke; the sacred awe which filled our hearts; the hushed stillness in which the smallest sound was startling; the calmed eagerness of men who listened as if waiting for a word of revelation to resolve the doubt or to heal the sorrow of life; the unexpected light which came upon the faces of some when an expression struck home and made them feel, in a moment of high relief from pain or doubt, "this man speaks to me, and his words are inspired by God". And when the close came and silence almost awful fell upon the church, even after a sigh of relief from strained attention had ceased to come from all the congregation, I have often seen men so rapt

that they could not move till the sound of the organ aroused them to the certainty that the preacher had ceased to speak.

I have read over what I have written, and I say again that mere words can never reach to the true height of what this man was in the pulpit. I never understood till I knew him what Inspiration was; and, whether in the church or in the street, he always seemed to speak as if under a higher than earthly influence.

It is stated that there were present at his funeral, united in a common sorrow and common love, Jews, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, and Churchmen; the working men, the tradesmen, and the rank and wealth of Brighton.

In view of its reference to the subject of this note I will conclude with the following quotation from the book by the late James Robertson, *Spiritualism, the Open Door to the Unseen Universe*:

Mr. Edward T. Bennett, who for twenty years was secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, has published some records of a private circle, at which addresses were given through a lady which breathe the loftiest spirit of piety and wisdom. One entitled "God is a Spirit", purporting to be inspired by "Robertson of Brighton", surpasses in power anything I ever read from his pen. Were such gems of spiritual literature issued apart from the word "Spiritualism", many would find in them a solace far beyond the ordinary sermon which is printed.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

BY W. H. EVANS.

QUESTION: *Why are some Mediums, through whom beautiful teachings are given, dishonest?*

ANSWER: This question is a perennial one; it is constantly popping up. It is based upon the misconception that Mediumship is synonymous with good character. One may as well ask why a good poet, artist, or actor, is immoral. It should be clearly understood that Mediumship is a temperamental quality existing independently of character. Even so, it is (like the power to write beautiful poetry, or to paint a good picture, or to act well) dependent upon the unfoldment of good character for maintaining a high standard. But the Medium is not usually judged as is the poet or artist, whose work is judged upon its merit. The average man will take the teachings, given through the Medium, as a standard for judging the character of the Medium. That is natural, if not entirely logical, but we have a right to demand from those who lay themselves open to express the teachings of the higher world some reasonable approach to the standard of morality expressed in the teachings given through them. Mediums should strive not only for psychical unfoldment, but for spiritual development also.

It will, of course, be asked, why do spirit people make use of unclean channels? Spirit people, like ourselves, have to use the means at their disposal, and a little water in a dirty vessel may save a man dying of thirst. But it will be found that with dishonest Mediums there comes a decline in the quality of their work. The law of attraction holds, and we see that such Mediums attract spirits like unto themselves, and persistence in wrong-doing ultimately leads to disaster in the field of Mediumship as it does in every other walk of life. But are there so many dishonest Mediums as the question would lead one to suppose? And have we a right to demand from Mediums a higher standard of life than we ourselves are prepared to live? May I suggest that the question of living good lives is one for all people to observe.

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THE PERSONAL SIDE.

HANNEN SWAFFER.

Hannen Swaffer frequently writes or is written of and "written at" in the Press, and there are so many descriptions of him that it might seem needless to add to them here.

But still it may be possible to survey him from a new angle and also to say something understandingly about him as a Spiritualist.

As we know, he is an outstanding figure in journalism. Dramatic criticism is his forte, but he has served the Press in other directions. He was the editor of at least two important newspapers successively. He originated the idea of putting the Sunday newspaper on the basis of the ordinary weekday journal; aforetime it had contained simply the week's re-hash of news. He was one of the pioneers of the daily pictorial newspaper. He is always original in his methods, and always fearless. It is this fearlessness which made him the unshrinking protagonist of Spiritualism when his keen brain discerned it to be true. That was all that was needed. He found its truth and, after that, whether it "paid" or not did not concern him in the least. Now there is one little point of observation which occurs to us in passing in connection with Swaffer. The man who is fearless is always also the man who is feared by his enemies and the enemies of any cause he takes up. Hannen Swaffer has some bitter enemies, but as they are themselves conscious of little fears and timidities from which he is free, they are usually at a disadvantage in a contest with him.

Some say he is a genius; he is certainly an "original"; there is a "uniqueness" about him in person, manner, method and action. He is denounced for his arrogance and egotism by those who do not know him well. In point of fact, he reports life as he sees it, so frankly and with so little reservation that he disregards the petty tame conventions. He says what he thinks always. At the outset of his entrance into Spiritualism he told us, personally, that he was not a philosopher, that he was ignorant of the deeper side—philosophical and scientific—of our subject. But he knew facts when he saw them, and those facts he saw as of vital importance to the world in every department of its life and thought. And he has acted accordingly, winning the admiration and respect of all true lovers of humanity. Even those who disagree with his views cannot withhold from him their respect.

He once said of himself: "Some say I am the greatest journalist in the world, some say the greatest fool. I reply: 'A man would not be a journalist unless he were a fool—so perhaps it is the same thing'." But long before Swaffer came on the scene, two Fleet Street journalists, W. T. Stead and Edmund Dawson Rogers, stood before the world as Spiritualists. From personal knowledge we can testify that neither of them was a fool. They were keen practical men of affairs. And we do not regard Hannen Swaffer as in any way a fool—either as journalist or Spiritualist. Far from it!

For those who think of writing to him, a word of caution. He seldom or never answers letters; apparently he accepts Napoleon's dictum that a letter, if left unanswered, eventually answers itself.

MAN'S life here is of short duration and does not determine his future for all eternity. It is only a link in a chain. Its importance in relation to his future has been over-estimated, because of our lack of knowledge with regard to that future. His experiences here only constitute the foundation upon which successive nobler and grander superstructures are developed in the inner planes through which he subsequently has to progress.

—From *The Process of Man's Becoming*, by

"QUAESTOR VITAE".

RAYS AND REFLECTIONS.

A poetic phrase for the air and sky is the "vast inane". But there are some supposed philosophers to-day who take the view that everything outside of the purely human consciousness is also a "vast inane", devoid of sense or intelligence. They claim the monopoly of sense and sanity. It is very suggestive of the mad persons who suppose that it is the other people who are lunatics. Who could forget the picture of the Rev. Mr. Stiggins at the Temperance meeting, when standing unsteadily on his feet he hiccupped out his opinion that "this meeting is drunk, sir"?

* * * * *

I have told the story before, but this time it may have a fresh application. It concerns an old man—a Christian Scientist—who met a weeping boy and inquired the cause of his grief. The boy replied that his father was very ill. "Go back to your father," said the old gentleman, "and tell him he is not really ill—he only thinks he is." A few days later he met the boy again, more tearful than ever. In reply to the kind inquiry after his father's health, the lad replied, "Please, sir, he thinks he's dead." Now there are scientists (of a sort) who assert that there is no hereafter—that the dead are really dead, although they report themselves to us as very much alive. So we might (to give the story another application) be polite to the unbeliever and suggest that the dead are not actually living—they only think they are!

* * * * *

In connection with the investigation of a remarkable medium who has been visited by some well-known scientists, it seems that one scientific man, on receiving an invitation, wrote that as he was convinced that such phenomena were explicable on the ground of conjuring or self-suggestion, he would require the presence at the experiment of an amateur conjurer, a neurologist and a pharmacologist, the latter to collect samples of the ectoplasm and analyse them! It is obvious that our subject is now so well-advanced and well-established that there is no time for investigations of this kind. It is very much as though a schoolboy arriving at the close of a lesson should require the whole course of instruction to be gone through all over again for his benefit. The scientific investigation of this subject is a matter that has gone on for forty to fifty years; it started with Sir William Crookes, and it is now time that something like the Parliamentary "closure" should be applied, to methods of investigation that are out of date.

* * * * *

Mrs. Madge Donohoe (widow of the famous war-correspondent) sends me some humorous remarks concerning the phrase "dabbling in Spiritualism". She has long noticed, she says, that "if, for instance, a boy commits suicide and is found to have attended Spiritualist services, the coroner remarks: 'He seems to have been dabbling in Spiritualism.' But no one would dream of saying that the boy had been 'dabbling in Wesleyanism', if he had gone to a Wesleyan Church service. Similarly, if a woman has been convicted of shoplifting and it is known that she ever visited a medium, the magistrate will remark: 'Apparently she has been mixed up with Spiritualism.'" Mrs. Donohoe is quite right. But I think it represents a state of things which is passing away. There was, of course, a time (a century or so ago) when even to have been "mixed up" with Wesleyanism would have been regarded as a stain on anybody's character. And in the old Roman days it was very discreditable to have been found "dabbling" in Christianity. History is simply repeating itself in the case of Spiritualism.

D. G.

MRS. LILLY'S MEDIUMSHIP.

AN ALLEGED CURE.

Mr. Max Gittleston, of 19, Stourcliffe Street, Edgware Road, W.2., requests us to publish an account of a case of healing by the mediumship of Mrs. Lilly. Lack of space prevents our giving Mr. Gittleston's report in full, nor is it, perhaps, necessary to do so, but briefly the story is as follows:

The experiment took place in the Medium's home in the East-End of London, the patient being Mrs. Clarke, who was suffering from a cancer of the breast. Says our correspondent: "The Spirit Doctor who regularly controls the Medium predicted a speedy and miraculous cure, a statement which to myself and to other patients present seemed absolutely incredible. . . . Eight people, including the Medium, were present. With the exception of the Medium and myself, they were all Mrs. Lilly's patients."

"As the Medium in her usual way went under control there was seen to emerge from her mouth a tiny bubble of blood which gradually increased in volume, filling her mouth, some of it trickling down the chin."

"Mrs. Clarke, the patient, seated a short distance away from the Medium, says she felt at the same time a peculiar tingling sensation in her left breast."

The spirit communicator who, we understand, is chief of a band of healers, explained that a surgical operation had just taken place.

Mrs. Lilly, the Medium, cleared her mouth of the impure blood, after which another mouthful appeared which she was obliged to get rid of and then rinse her mouth.

The patient, who was a member of the Lewisham Spiritualist Church, said that she felt much better as a result of this experience.

Later it appears that one of the guides known as the Stranger promised to visit Mrs. Clarke in her home and further work upon her, and on the next healing day Mrs. Clarke reported to the assembly that she had had another strange experience. While in her own home she had "felt the Doctor working on her", and afterwards had a discharge of impure blood and matter. She had a similar experience at a later date and Mr. Gittleston tells us that "Mrs. Clarke is now entirely cured of cancer." We learn, too, that the following persons were present at the sittings: Mrs. K. Bower, Miss Nellie Bailey, Mr. W. S. Hewett, Mrs. Clarke (the patient), Mrs. K. Samuels, Mrs. K. Freshfield, Mr. Max Gittleston and the Medium.

Our correspondent also describes the treatment of Miss Nellie Bailey, who was suffering from deafness. The medium, in a state of control, made passes over the patient, at the same time offering a prayer. Afterwards, the patient was seen to be bleeding from both ears. Some of the blood was found to be on the Medium's hands. Mr. Gittleston writes that the patient said she felt "a peculiar clicking in the head when this operation took place. . . . The Doctor promised that three such operations would be necessary before anything could be done for her." He adds that a second operation has been performed along similar lines, with identical results.

Mr. Gittleston has given us the names of all the persons present during each of these two experiments, and adds that he has three signed documents in testimony of the genuineness of the experiments.

We publish the above report as a matter of interest without expressing any opinion as to the merits of the case. We observe, however, that the experiments do not seem to have taken place in anything resembling test conditions. It is a pity that a doctor's report is not forthcoming. It might be desirable too that a chemical analysis should be made of the substance purporting to be human blood. In the absence of such supporting evidence one naturally receives reports of such cases with some reserve.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"FAMOUS CURSES." By Elliot O'Donnell. (Skeffington. 18s. net.)

Do "threatened men live long", as a popular dictum insists? Do curses, like chickens, actually "return to roost"? In short, is there anything in the "curse" tradition beyond mere superstition? Mr. O'Donnell seems to think there is. And certainly, after perusing this big book, with its thirty or so histories of family curses and their actual or partial fulfilment, one feels impressed. The maledictions do "come off", at times, although one frequently has the impression that the person who was cursed rather invited the malediction, and its evil results. And that leads to one or two considerations. First of all, assuming that power lies in a curse, would it harm an innocent person? One feels that it should not, for "as the swallow by flying so the curse causeless shall not come." (There is virtue in that word "causeless".)

But then we are led to believe, in Mr. O'Donnell's book, that in many instances the evil consequences affected not only the "cursee", but his children, and children's children. Which seems to bring us up against Exodus XX—"visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation". But the timid reader need not therefore tremble at the extended power of the curse, but can take comfort in reflecting that it is the iniquity of the father, not of the curser, which entails these long-drawn-out consequences.

Is there any power in a curse? None whatever, I think; but the power may reside in the pronouncer of it. (A study of the laws of psychics confirms this.) The Jackdaw of Rheims had occasion to appreciate this fact; the priest who uttered the holy anathema, with bell, book, and candle, evidently had psychic power of a kind, and poor Jackdaw got the full weight of the anathematic bombardment. Had that priest possessed no psychic faculty, the thievish bird might have escaped scot-free, to continue (probably with derisory chuckles) his predatory pranks.

But to get back to the large, illustrated volume under review. Some of the accounts are clearly apocryphal. The tradition of the Lambton Worm—which, being caught by John Lambton in the River Wear (after the fisherman had indulged in a little understandable blasphemy) grew in later years to monstrous proportions, until it was able to circle the top of Fatfield Hill—is clearly too preposterous to accept in its present-day form; yet the tale must have grown out of *something*, and one agrees with Mr. O'Donnell that probably some unpleasant creature, perhaps of a type now extinct, was referred to. In short, there was a core of reality, since overlaid with accretions of superstitious embroidery. The same may be said of the story of the Bloody Footstep, the screaming skulls of Calgarth, the Drummer of Cortachy Castle, and the Midwife's curse, to mention a few out of many.

A story that has a peculiar ring of truth is that of Francis Howgill, which the author gives in Chapter XIII. Howgill, a propagandist member of the Society of Friends, lived near Greyrigg, Westmoreland, in the seventeenth century. With fanatical obstinacy he persisted in preaching his faith abroad, at a time when a too-forceful expression of unpopular views, was, to say the least, highly impolitic. Undeterred by threats and warnings Howgill, and a co-religionist named Camm, undertook a preaching tour, finally reaching Bristol, where their meetings led to disorder, and even rioting. The Bristol authorities set the wheels in motion for their arrest, in Kendal (where they had returned after the Bristol disturbances) and Howgill, after being cast into jail, was later allowed to return home for a few days on urgent business—apparently, one gathers, "on his own recognisances". Before going back to prison he visited Greyrigg Hall, the home of Mr. Duckett, a magistrate, who, in Howgill's eyes, was one of the chief instruments of his persecution. In a condition of overwhelming emotion and religious fervour, Howgill solemnly cursed the magistrate, saying that the Lord would send a blast upon all he possessed—"that thy name shall rot out of the earth, and this thy dwelling shall become desolate, and a habitation for owls and jackdaws." Duckett, we are told, took it badly, being "too overcome with horror to move or speak." (It might, from a psychic point of view, have been better for him had he defied the curse, and refused to cringe beneath the flail.) The tide of fortune turned against Duckett soon after, and the curse was fulfilled to the letter, even to the nesting of owls and jackdaws in the ruins of the Hall. This story, simple and straightforward, stands out in convincing contrast against some of the more highly-coloured dramas in Mr. O'Donnell's interesting collection of fulfilled curses.

W. H. C.

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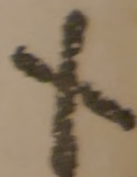
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