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"PEACE ON EARTH"

IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR TO-DAY IN THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE?

By THE REV. R. W. MAITLAND, Vicar of Darsham, Suffolk

CHRISTMAS DAY to-morrow! The thought comes into the minds of us Parsons as we sit in our studies on Christmas Eve, whether they are set in crowded towns, or quiet country vicarages.

Christmas Day to-morrow! Well, what does that mean for me, and for the people who will gather in Church to-morrow, amidst the holly and the ivy set up this Christmas Eve to mark the joyfulness of the occasion?

No doubt we shall sing once again the old Christmas hymns and carols, and hear once more the old, old story, with its tidings of "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." But...

Many of us, perhaps, will leave our reflections with the note of interrogation still there. The questions which arise in our minds remain unanswered.

But what does Christmas mean for us, and what can we make it mean for our people? Let me say right away that I, a clergyman of the Church of England, would answer this question in a very different way to-day from the way I should have answered it, say, twenty years ago. Not that one's faith has grown weaker—far from it; for now one has in very truth the faith which is "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen," as the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it.

No doubt most of the readers of LIGHT have had experiences of psychic evidence just as I have had—just as St. Paul had, for the matter of that; so I do not propose, any more than he did, to make myself a fool in boasting, to use his own words, by talking about them. It just comes to this, that as one saw in a glass darkly in days gone by, so now one sees, if not face to face, at least very much further than one ever saw before; and it shows Christ, His life and teaching in a far stronger light than in days of old, and all the details of the Birth at

Bethlehem become increasingly significant now. The Virgin Birth, the coming of the Wise Men, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Flight into Egypt all fade away into the background beside the fact that Christ was born on Christmas Day and that the life then begun on earth ceased not with His death, as His resurrection proved, but became for us the outstanding witness of a greater life to come.

One sees now—as I suppose one really ought to have seen in days gone by—that all Christ's miracles prove to us but little of His true greatness and nothing of His divinity. After all, the miracles continued to be wrought by His disciples long after He had left them. Men like St. Paul, who had never known Him in the flesh, worked signs and wonders; they are the common events of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In fact, one can truly say that Christ wrought His miracles, not because He was Very-God, but because He was Very-Man.

If this be so, I hear someone say, can we believe that He was God? I see no more reason to doubt this now than in former times—only the old dogmatism, I hope, has gone. That fatal propensity (which is the Church's inheritance from the decadent Greek thought of its early days) to be precise about everything and to leave not even the deepest mysteries of God undefined ought to find no sympathy with us Spiritualists.

Our adventures into the realms of psychic lore, if they have taught us to marvel at the depth of man's subconscious mind, as well as the powers of the worlds beyond, have also taught us something of the limitations of man's conscious mind; and the less we lay down precise definitions of wonders we can never grasp, the better for our own peace of mind and the less chance we shall have of coming into collision with minds not attuned to our own.

Why, then, do I say that I can see no reason why we should not believe that the Child born in Bethlehem—

Christmas Greetings

To all our Readers, Contributors,
Advertisers and Supporters, we
extend hearty good wishes for
Christmas and the coming New
Year.

if it were Bethlehem and not Nazareth—on Christmas Day, was God and Man? Certainly not because He performed miracles, as we have seen; not merely because He was a good man; not even because He gathered up in His teaching all that was purest and noblest in the teaching of those Scribes and Rabbis who preceded Him. These things only showed a man of the highest character and the noblest intellect. No, it can be for none of these things, but because He, being what He was, a Prophet, and more than a Prophet, with a blending of the finer psychic powers with the noblest qualities of mind and spirit, yet did not hesitate to proclaim Himself in such close affinity with God that it sounded like blasphemy to the orthodox Jews around Him when they heard it. We need not go to the Gospels (which may or may not be later than we suppose) for confirmation of this; we can find all the evidence we need in St. Paul's Epistles, which Paul began to write after our Lord's death, in a shorter space of time than what separates us now from, let us say, the great World War.

So to-morrow, then, we shall be singing once more, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men," because there was born into the world, more than nineteen hundred years ago, a Saviour who was Christ the Lord.

The Christian Church has sung that a good many times already, as the years of the Christian era have passed by, but the fulfilment of the promise never seems to draw nearer.

The shepherds heard those words in the first instance. Did they think that they heralded a new peace, a universal peace, or at least a new peace for Israel? Whatever they may have thought along those lines, they were mistaken; for there was to be no peace, only war, followed by more War—wars of aggression, wars of defence, wars of ambition, and wars of greed; but always War which seemed to mock at the angel's message.

So it always has been; so will it seem once more when Christmas Day comes round again to-morrow, and once again we sing the old refrain "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men." War in Spain; unrest in Palestine itself where the angels sang; threats of war on every side—Germany, Italy, Japan, France, and who knows but what we ourselves may be drawn in? And yet, "Peace on earth . . ." Can that mean anything even to us who are Spiritualists? *It most certainly can.*

It is curious how so few people, comparatively speaking, are able to see the immense social implications in the truths of Spiritualism in its simplest form. If the life beyond be a proven fact, and if the kind of life we shall begin to live there depends simply and solely upon the character we acquired here—in other words, if we shall begin there exactly where we have left off here—then our whole outlook upon life ought to undergo a radical change, and the weak places of our modern civilisation ought to lie plain before us. It was said in a book on India, which made a great stir not long ago, that the curse of India to-day lies in its other-worldliness. We here in the West are suffering from the very opposite of that, an exclusive concentration upon the values of this world; a condition of mind, indeed, which does not allow us as nations, and seldom as individuals, to take any other world but the one we live in into consideration at all.

It is that which is slowly ruining our moral fibre and dragging down our boasted western civilisation, and infecting with the same poison other nations which have accepted our industrialism and our culture, such as Japan and China. In Spiritualism, as I understand it, lies the correction for both these evils.

To the increasing evidence of a future life, which we are daily obtaining, there is to be added an increasing sense of the real value of this life, as well as of the life beyond. We are able to comprehend man's existence as a whole and to see the value of each part in its relation to that whole.

We can now place Death in its rightful position,

as an event not at the end of life but in the midst of life—not a break, but only a change in the continuity of life, not a calamity, but a promotion.

And the result of such thinking? That must be obvious to everyone of us. The inequalities of life here on earth have grown up through man's inability to grasp life as a whole. Men do not believe, or at least do not sufficiently believe, in the reality of the future life, to view the things of this world at their true value. Heredity, tradition, environment are all against us in this respect, and it will need the patient efforts of many generations of Spiritualists and the ungrudging services of many Sensitives, to break down those barriers of Materialism which still keep us enthralled. But when the eyes of thinking men and women are open to the proofs, the ever-accumulating proofs of that other world and its relationship to this world, then will spiritual values among us rise and material values fall, and men will come to their true senses at last. And that will affect not only themselves, but all those who are in any way dependent upon them.

What a change in their mentality will then be brought about! Will they then dare to lay aside with indifference the great social problems of the day, if they still press upon us? Will it be a matter of indifference then if souls, immortal souls, are allowed to pass through this earthly life with characters stunted and deformed by poverty, when it will be common knowledge that those who have allowed such things in this world will have to answer for them in the world beyond? Will it be really worth while for people to spend so much of their time in acquiring, and so much of their care in retaining the material things of life, when very soon such things will fall away from them together with those worn-out bodies of theirs, and they may find themselves, their real selves, poor indeed in the other world?

Some would say—yes, but all this is the commonplace of all the churches of to-day. This is exactly what it is; but how many of the rank and file, how many of the ministers, the leaders even of the Churches, are ready to accept all this as based upon natural laws which can be proved?

And so with war, with disease, with an infinite number of things which are the outcome of man's limited outlook upon life to-day. Man can rise and overcome them all, if only he knows the truth.

So after all, the song of the angels, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" ought to have no sound of mockery in it for us Spiritualists. It is rather a trumpet call to be up and doing, until God's Kingdom is established upon earth.

MRS. VIOLET TWEEDALE'S WORK

As recorded in *LIGHT* last week, Mrs. Violet Tweedale, mystic and novelist, passed to the higher life on December 10th, at the age of 74, at the Villa Languard, Torquay. In an obituary notice, *The Times* (December 16th) said:

"Her first book was a volume of poems entitled *In Lothian Fields*, but she then turned to prose and produced novels, short stories, and essays. Mrs. Tweedale could write a brisk and straightforward tale, such as *The Passing Storm* or *Her Grace's Secret*, but her real interest lay in Psychical Research, and the books she loved to write were those with a supernatural or spiritualistic atmosphere. In *Ghosts I Have Seen* she described with moderation and honesty the apparitions she herself had seen and those that had visited her friends, that left the sceptic envious perhaps of such guileless belief, but never in doubt as to the sincerity of the writer. It was the mystery that lies behind the *Painted Veil That Men Call Life* that fascinated and interested Violet Tweedale above everything else. She was a patient and devoted student in her endeavour to bridge the gulf between two worlds."

Mrs. Tweedale took a very active part in the civic life of Torquay, being especially interested in social service and the administration of charity.

TALKS WITH INDIAN ASCETICS

By STANLEY DE BRATH, M.Inst.C.E.

AS a man who has lived for twenty years in the service of the Government of India, and for seven of these years in close contact with Indians in Native States, I should like to sketch my experiences of Yoga in the country of its birth.

The large proportion of Sunnyasis are religious mendicants. Out of some scores with whom I have been acquainted, only two struck me as being spiritual in any true sense, or as having acquired what passes with us Europeans as the Cosmic Consciousness.

After my studies of Hinduism in the Imperial Library of Calcutta, mainly in Vedic philosophy, my wife and I turned aside on one of the annual migrations to Simla to visit Swami Sri Bhaskaranand at Benares. He was living in the garden of the Rajah of Benares, without any possessions of any kind. He kindly allowed me to take his photograph, and we had a long conversation on Hindu philosophy. He presented me with a book written by himself, for transmission to Professor Max Muller, whose Sanscrit studies of the Veda had healed the breach between the Northern and Southern Brahmans by a translation which was recognised by both as classical. After that conversation, when my wife and I took leave of him, he took an orange and divided it into three, giving one part to each of us and eating the third part himself.

I said "Swami-ji, what about your caste, eating with Europeans?" He replied: "My son, the lovers of Wisdom have but one caste; eat the fruit of the world, and praise God."

This man used to spend some hours each day in nude contemplation. It was easy to see the beginning of the deification of an ascetic. In the garden was a white marble bust of the Swami, and he told me that, when he himself was not visible, the people used to deposit their offerings of fruit and rice before the image. He said: "They come to me to be healed, and some, indeed, are healed, but it is not I that heal them, but the divine power that acts through me." I remembered our Lord's saying: "I can of myself do nothing."

The second real ascetic that I met was at Mount Abu in the Sirohi State. I was returning from a day's shooting with my gun on my shoulder and, passing a Sunnyasi on the road, I gave him the Indian greeting, "Ram, Ram, maharaj." He replied in excellent English, "Good evening, sir." Much surprised, I went and sat down by him. He told me that he had been English tutor to Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, and that, after the second Sikh war and the annexation of the Punjab, he had renounced all his dignities and position, had taken the yellow robe and become a wanderer. His reason was that "in the new régime there was no place for him." He, like all Hindus, was a married man and could have lived with his family on the pension granted to all servants of the Palace, but he preferred the life of an ascetic.

He gave me a number of most interesting details of the life of old Lahore in the time of Sikh rule. The Khalsa army was officered by French and Italian Generals, each of whom had his zenana (harem) of native ladies. One of these ladies, when driving through the city, had been insulted by a man shouting after her. She complained to the General (whom he named). The General had the man taken to the top of a minaret, allowed to cling to the coping, and rapped on his fingers till he let go and was dashed to pieces on the pavement a hundred feet below. This same Italian General had four gallows at the corners of his compound, each of which commonly had a victim swinging on it. These and many other outrages made Lahore abhorrent to a man of spiritual sensibility. He

left it and took the yellow robe. He seemed to be about 60 at the time I met him. He said but little on religious matters and claimed no supernatural powers at all, but condemned them. He was, of course, a Sikh.

The estimation of supernatural powers in India is well illustrated by the legend that Buddha came to the banks of the Ganges and found an ascetic who, by twenty years of austerities, had gained the power of walking on the water. "My poor fellow," said the Enlightened One, "is that all that your penance has led to? Why, at any time the ferryman would have taken you across for a halfpenny!"

This fictitious legend illustrates the difference between spiritual and merely psychic faculties. "Cosmic Consciousness" is a spiritual faculty which begins with the perception that human individual powers are insufficient to explain the origin of Life.

WHAT LIFE CAN DO

As I walk through Kew Gardens, the infinite variety of its flora illustrates what Life can do when unhampered by perverse wills, and its essential feature is the absolute dependance of all animal life on vegetable products and functions, beginning with the purification of the atmosphere. Animals breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon di-oxide; plants breathe in the di-oxide and exhale oxygen. On this primary function all animal life depends. The perception of this, and a score of other mutually consistent physical facts, is the first step to awareness of the Creative Mind. As we progress through the animal world to the intricacies of human life and history, we feel more and more our own inadequacy, which is not dispelled by any research into ancient mysteries.

As for Yoga—that seems to me suited to a warm climate and to the Eastern mentality. I cannot imagine any of our Spiritualists, male or female, adopting Swami Sri Bhaskaranand's method of nude meditation, even in solitude, though it certainly suited him all right!

The Western line of approach is, I think, through linking the three aspects of this present world—Matter, Energy and Life. I say nothing against the Eastern line, except that diluted Yoga does not seem to confer spirituality, and the undiluted Raj Yoga begins and ends with the development of the individual and does not tend to the advance of humanity at large, as does the truly democratic teaching of Our Lord.

"LIGHT" SUSTENTATION FUND

The following contributions to LIGHT Sustentation Fund have been received:

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Previously acknow-				Anon	1	0	0
ledged...	622	12	0	H. Fletcher			
Mrs. A. Marshall ...	1	1	0	Buckingham	10	6	
Miss E. M. Fowler	1	1	0	Joseph Gillett ...	10	6	
Mrs. M. L.				Miss A. Hall ...	10	0	
Robertson	1	1	0	Miss Grindrod Jones	9	6	

The LIGHT Sustentation Fund is still in existence. It has been used to help current expenditure and to meet deficits. Contributions are greatly needed, not only to meet expenses of publication, but for adequate publicity for LIGHT. Friends of LIGHT and of the L.S.A. are asked to contribute generously to the Fund, by which the influence of LIGHT may be sustained and extended.

Contributions should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer of the LIGHT Sustentation Fund, 16 Queensberry Place, South Kensington, S.W.7.

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We again remind readers who are not Subscribers, that they can give considerable financial help to LIGHT by becoming Subscribers (10/6 per annum, 5/6 for six months, post free). Also, that a Subscription for LIGHT for a year would be a very acceptable Christmas gift to give to some of your friends.

GHOSTLY CHRONICLES

Review by H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

A CHANGE has come over the writing of Ghost Stories. They were a vehicle primarily for the production of "thrills," and it was impossible too generously to "pile on the agony."

To-day we have realised that the thrill in such tales is dependent on their being believed, and consequently they have been stripped of the glaringly improbable.

Beside that there is the understanding by those who would, as in the present instance,* relate "true ghost stories," that there is a great deal, a very great deal, to be learnt from them.

The authors and arrangers of this collection are conscious of their responsibility to eliminate everything but the indubitably authentic, and one's only quarrel with them is a weakness for embellishing their settings with picturesque details which are obviously invented.

"The perfume of the flower incense rising from the pale tobacco flowers, the passionate fragrance of the magnolia, the cloying sweetness of syringa and the clean scent of many roses."

It may seem censorious to object to such adornments, which occur frequently, but the knowledge that they must be sheer embroidery shakes one's hold on the stark impulse of the story, and breeds misgivings as to the authenticity of more relevant details.

These stories all claim to be true, many of them are modern, and, where possible, names and dates and places are given; they are therefore more helpful than are most compilations of the kind.

Helpful to what, it may be asked? Well, to, at least, a more intelligent appreciation of ghostly varieties, and some explanation of their idiosyncrasies. There is, for instance, the audibility of ghostly footsteps. Mrs. Joseph Conrad, watching a procession of monks "could plainly hear their wooden pattens sounding in a kind of regular rhythm as they climbed upwards."

"W. heard soft padding footsteps going across the room towards the window." "The Vicar heard heavy footsteps in the yard, coming over to the motor house." "The patter of its (the child's) tiny feet is constantly heard in the tiled hall." "One night Lady Pennyman was awakened by hearing a slow, heavy step, pacing the *grenier* overhead." "I was awakened," says Miss Estelle Stead, "by the sound of footsteps coming quickly upstairs." "One night," declared Lady Vane, "we were disturbed by someone walking backwards and forwards overhead;" and the Hon. Mrs. Greville Nugent, when staying with Lady Strickland, heard, together with her hostess, "heavy footsteps coming upstairs from the hall, slow and hesitating, apparently those of an old man;" and the list might be prolonged; even phantom dogs contributing their quota.

How, one wonders, is it done? There is no apparent purpose in the noises; they are not made to secure attention; and they are caused by vaporous beings who can pass through walls and dissolve into thin air.

In one case, though the feet made no sound, they left a naked impression on the damp soil. In another, though the soil was sand, the footsteps "rang as clear as coming over hard and frosty ground."

Nor were the sounds all made by the type of wraith who can be explained as an emotional record.

Miss Stead's visitor was occasionally visible, conversed with her, described his life work, and himself as still "working"; returned after intervals of months, and impressed his hostess by his "charming and beautiful personality."

On two occasions his entry had the somewhat unusual

effect of changing the whole character of the room, reducing its furniture to a couple of wooden chairs and a large table littered with papers.

Mrs. ffoulkes is responsible for one of the least explicable of the stories, which describes how on two occasions she carried the ghost of Alfred Louis—the original of "Daniel Deronda"—for many miles in her car, conversing with him, and seeing him dissolve into the landscape when she set him down.

He was one of the few conversational ghosts in this collection, and Mrs. ffoulkes does not seem to have made the most of the occasion; for to have a charming and articulate ghost to yourself for an hour must certainly be a rare one.

For talking ghosts are exceptional, they are even frequently dissolved by an interrogation, as in the case of *The Captain's Return*.

The apparent solidity of the apparition is attested in many of these tales. Mr. Maurice Kelly tried to catch the Ash Manor Ghost by the shoulders, and his wife struck at it with her clenched fist. Captain Marryat discharged his pistol in the face of the Brown Lady at Raynham Hall, and Mr. F. C. Miller fired at a malign-looking phantom with disastrous results to himself and his gun.

Yet in some cases there must have been a certain amount of solidity. The handles of doors are turned and the doors opened. And that again is a puzzle, for the same ghost that troubles to open a door will walk right through a wall. The frequent knockings may, of course, be caused by other than material means.

There are various tales of animal ghosts, cats and dogs; but the most interesting is contributed by General C. Barter, C.B., who, in an Indian Hill station, saw a man whom he had known riding on a powerful hill pony, led on either side by a syce, a third servant supporting the rider in the saddle. He ran forward to warn them of a danger ahead, to find the entire party had disappeared. The General did not know his acquaintance was dead (he had been dead two years), saw him with a beard and a corpulent figure of which he had no cognizance, and on a remarkable pony of which he had never heard.

There was no reason why the General should have thought of a man he had not seen for years, and how can one account for the still living members of the group?

Still more difficult is it to explain the phantom dog-cart which carried two people into the Vicar of Cashel's drive one summer afternoon, and which he found on investigation had been frequently seen by his house-keeper.

One of these ghosts, that of the Rev. Dr. Astley of East Rudham, was a phantom of the living; and, though as interesting as any ghost, is somewhat out of place here; and the dancer in Sir Ernest Bennett's story was a séance room materialisation, and therefore in a different category.

Even with a desire to be as credulous as conscious ignorance should make one, it is difficult to digest *Grave No. —, Kensal Green*. L., a "self-made, rich and carefree publisher," after attending a friend's funeral at Kensal Green, wanders through the cemetery and comes across the grave of Elsie, a former mistress. At home and depressed, he decides after dinner to ring up a stock-broking acquaintance, but, instead of his number, gives that of Elsie's grave, and receives an enthusiastic response from his late mistress; who, she says, is already on her way to him.

Frozen with horror, he faints when she arrives, and when revived next morning, bits of wet clay are found sticking to the carpet and his dinner jacket, and the hall mat is clogged with them.

I confess the clay finished me. Spirit speech on the
(Continued in next column)

**True Ghost Stories*, by The Marchioness Townshend of Raynham and Maude M. C. ffoulkes. London. Hutchinson and Co. 1936. 8/6.

CREATION — A VISION

By W. H. EVANS

NOW in the night-time a great trembling fell upon me and my spirit was shaken to its foundation, so that my body quaked with great fear.

And as I looked out upon the world all things became dim, and the stars faded out in darkness, and the world fell away from under my feet.

So that I was suspended in Space in the midst of a great darkness, and fear fell upon me, and a violent trembling.

For I knew not what was toward, and it seemed that the end of all things was come.

And I waited in the darkness, and lo, as I waited a power took possession of me and my soul was lifted up and all fear left me and I was calm.

And into my being came a new strength, for I was "alone with the Alone," and the mystery of the Presence enfolded me like a mantle. And into my being

(Continued from previous column).

telephone one has met before, but calling up a grave is a new way of obtaining it.

The most charming apparition on the list is that of Sarah Fletcher of Clifton Hampden, a very lovely lady, described on her tomb as "a Martyr to Excessive Sensibility," who, in 1799, when but 29, hung herself on discovering her husband's infidelity. The romance of the story is furnished by the Rev. Edward Crake, who, when seventeen, at Clifton Hampden, which his father had turned into a school, heard "the footsteps of someone wearing high-heeled shoes" come into his room and leave it.

He followed the sound into the corridor, and there, by a long window, bright with the moon, saw Sarah Fletcher standing, and fell in love with her for life.

"She seemed tremendously alive," he says, "her eyes were full of tears, she had come from the edge of the world, and from soundless space, to seek my love and pity."

Later, by accident it would seem, on an anniversary of the lady's death, Mr. Crake, sitting up with a friend, heard, at three o'clock in the morning, the faint clear footsteps, and following the sound of them downstairs, he, abandoned by his friend, again saw the lady against a landing window, with the dawn on one hand and the moon on the other.

This time she smiled, and her face had lost some of its tragic intensity. She opened a door across the stairs, and, as Mr. Crake ran forward, pleading for a word from her, passed through it and was gone.

"For a year," Mr. Crake relates, "sometimes I saw Sarah Fletcher, but I always sensed her nearness. At times I felt I had only to turn my head to find her beside me, whilst the footsteps continued night after night."

Then the footsteps ceased; and, ten years later, Mr. Crake was asked to investigate at Clifton Hampden the mysterious happenings that were taking place.

He heard the various disconcerting noises, and at the request of his sister, made one night a search of the house. "I felt," he said, "there were other evil entities at work, . . . but at last I saw her again in the darkness, and by candlelight, and with my eyes held to hers, I saw once more the sweet perfection of Sarah Fletcher's beauty."

But the evil influences prevailed, and the house had to be abandoned, and "the quiet little clergyman" saw the lady no more.

There is no attempt in this volume to conceal that this grievous side of the unseen world is to be reckoned with; but there is no undue stress on it; and the variety and documentation of its contents makes the assertion of Mr. Osbert Sitwell seem somewhat primitive, that "ghosts and spirit phenomena are very often the production of ennui. Imagination, generally of an elementary kind, asserts itself to relieve tedium, and then self-deception follows."

came the sense of great awfulness, and I felt myself expanding to the uttermost bounds of space. Through my being swept a mighty tremor like the throes of one in great travail, and out of my mouth came a mighty voice, crying: "Let there be light."

And behold, from the centre of my being radiated a divine splendour, which spread outwards so that darkness was no more.

With the coming of the light came a great joy as of one who is delivered.

Then the light faded into a soft twilight, and over the face of the void I beheld the beaming light of stars, while beneath my feet was a mist which whirled in mighty wreaths of vapour.

From the depths of my being there rushed a power whose irresistible majesty separated the vapours, and I beheld the earth in its primeval state.

The seas roared and hissed, and mountainous waves beat upon the rock-bound coasts. And through the mists burst the light of the sun, proclaiming "the dayspring of youth."

And over the world my soul brooded, for I was possessed by the Eternal Spirit and knew Him as One and Everlasting.

There, as I passed by, on the margin of primeval seas stirred the first forms of life, and the breath of the Eternal went over the land.

And in swift panorama was unrolled before me the march of life; the birth of vegetation, of fishes, of birds, of animals and of man.

Uncouth and ungainly he wandered through the forests, but he held the germ of thought, and intelligence beamed in his eyes.

I saw him, lived in him, fought and loved in him, triumphed and failed in him, struggled and overcame in him.

Roamed the plains, founded cities and dynasties Drove slaves like cattle, and speculated with the philosophers and priests of the world.

Long ages I lived in a few moments; ages in which the rolling log became a wheel, the floating tree a steamship, ages, till at last man caught the echo and imprisoned it in discs and plaques, or sent it careering through the ether to at last re-echo in a million homes.

I saw the earth blood-drenched, and the nations wallowing in doubts and fears, beset with hatreds and mistrusts of their own sowing.

And when the holocaust was over, the old men wagged their heads and said: "We must prepare our youth for the day of slaughter," and nations groaned beneath the burden imposed by hate.

And on the altar of men's lusts the Christ was again and again crucified, while Mammon and Mars linked arms and trod the nations into the mire.

I saw the travail of woman, and the great unselfish love that ever sprang from her heart.

And ever did she give birth to the Christ, and ever did man in his blindness crucify her love.

And over all the world, I saw the majestic figure with arms outstretched to save, waiting with heavenly patience for the return of the wanderer, waiting for man to become clothed and in his right mind.

As I looked over the earth I saw how men struggled, how they were possessed with a great fear, because while they believed not in death with their hearts, their minds questioned and said:

"Wherefore is the purpose of being? Are we not as stubble before the wind and as sparks that fly upward from a fire and are quenched in eternal night?"

So they questioned, so they reasoned. And into my soul came the words of an ancient Scribe:

"And God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces." And I was comforted.

Then the Spirit who had possessed me departed, and I was a man, weak and fragile, but in my mind was a light which burned with power, and going back to my home, I was calm. For I had seen, and I knew.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(The views and statements of correspondents are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, who occasionally prints, in the interests of free discussion, letters with which he does not agree).

MAKING THE AURA VISIBLE

Sir,—The article by Brevilux on "Making the Aura Visible" (in *LIGHT* of 3rd December, p. 771) has greatly intrigued me. Dr. Kilner's work on the Aura was very interesting as far as it went; and if Brevilux—as his article suggests—has been able to take it further, then his contribution to the subject will be valuable.

The fact that he has been able to suggest a probable wave-length range for the Aura, or part of it, is very interesting, as it would appear to offer the possibility of photographic reproduction. The difficulties involved in exploiting this possibility are many, and, so far, results appear to have been negative. I have spent some time in investigating this phase of the subject, but my results, so far, have also been unsuccessful.

The book which he has prepared should prove a valuable contribution to the scientific section of psychic literature, and I personally shall look forward with interest to the opportunity of reading it.

Liverpool.

THOS. A. DAVIDSON.

PHANTASM OF LIVING MAN

Sir,—Recently I was the subject of an experiment in hypnosis which had a very curious result.

Dr. X. was hypnotising me for the first time. I am a very difficult subject and so far no one had succeeded in putting me into an ordinary hypnotic sleep.

I was lying on a divan in the Doctor's consulting room; he held my head between his hands, and the room was more or less in darkness, except for a red light. From time to time the Doctor gently squeezed my temples; I was experiencing a condition similar to that of a patient who is going protestingly under an anaesthetic. I had the same nausea and blackness as when sinking under the administration of chloroform.

I was, however, quite unaware that I had at any time really lost consciousness, and when it was all over, I remarked to the Doctor: "Well, you did not get me right off after all."

To my surprise he told me that I was quite insensible for several minutes, and that I looked up and gazed (through closed eyelids) in the direction of the right-hand corner of the couch. On looking to see what I was so interested in, he saw a phantom standing by the couch. I then apparently addressed it; what I said is of too private a nature for publication, but I evidently resented the phantom's presence, considering, no doubt, that it was poaching on another's preserves! Dr. X. said that the phantom appeared upset by my remarks, as it blinked and then dissolved, having been somewhat disconcerted. Dr. X. added that he was "most impressed" at the manner in which I had dismissed that phantom!

The "phantom" happened to be a mutual friend and a very well-known hypnotist, who had tried unsuccessfully to put me to sleep on previous occasions.

Some days later, when I saw the "phantom" in his physical body, I asked him what he had been doing on a certain night between the hours of 10.30 and 11. He replied that he happened to be walking in the street, that he had gone to execute a certain commission for me, and that he had, therefore, been thinking of me at that time. He was also aware that I was going to have an experiment with Dr. X., as I had told him about it some days previously and he had been wondering how I had got on.

I should add that I have never seen a ghost or phantom in my conscious state, except once, nearly three years ago—it appeared in a hotel bedroom abroad, and was so solid that I mistook it for a burglar, and

later on I was able to verify this most unpleasantly solid apparition as the thought-form of a relative.

I. H. CONYBEARE.

AFTER THREE YEARS

Sir,—The following sequence of events would appear to be very trivial, but the correspondents concerned are convinced that they are more than coincidents, and I believe they will interest readers of *LIGHT*.

In 1933, I spent my holiday at Torquay and, on my second Sunday there, attended the harvest festival at the Paignton Spiritualist Church; on the Monday I attended a small circle, and begged for a sheaf of corn to take back to London for the decoration of Lewisham Spiritualist Church at its forthcoming harvest festival. The corn was thankfully received and made a fine show. Since then it has been stored and used year after year for the same purpose. This year (1936) the festival was held on the 4th October, and the Vice-President said to me: "You see the Paignton corn is still doing duty." I thought it only fair and complimentary to write to the Secretary of the Paignton Church, telling how much the corn was appreciated, and I received the following reply:

"With regard to your letter referring to the sheaf of corn given to you by our Church, I feel the urge to write to you personally, as I feel somehow there must be some link, or what some people would term a 'coincidence.' I gave the sheaf of corn to the Church, before I was Secretary. You held your harvest festival on October 4th this year—this date is the birthday of a little sister belonging to me who passed on when she was six years old. This year also is the first year of my duty as an officer of the Church, and you write and inform me regarding 'the corn' used on 'her birthday,' and my little sister was buried years ago in *Lewisham Cemetery*, and the sheaf has come from Paignton Church to Lewisham Church. My little sister's name is 'Ethel' and you, the informant, bear the same Christian name, 'Ethel.'

"I thought it would, perhaps, interest you, and I sincerely trust the corn will keep for a long while. Some would call it a coincidence—it certainly is remarkable."

Several times clairvoyants have described with me a child, a sheaf of corn, and have given the name of "Ethel;" the name I have accepted as my own, the sheaf of corn as symbolic of plenty, but the child I could never place. After three years the descriptions are clear.

E.L.M.

PSYCHIC MECHANISM

Those endowed with psychic gifts are commonly thought to possess a special mechanism which makes them far less limited than others; but actually everyone possesses a psychic apparatus through which the ego works and gains experience, stated Miss Phoebe Payne, at the Besant Hall, London, at the weekly lecture of the Theosophical Society on Sunday, December 13th.

Man's great need at the present time is to become aware of the soul, its powers and the bridges over which these powers travel into waking consciousness. Intellectual knowledge of the finer mechanism is not enough, we must learn to use our subtler bodies consciously at will, and so gradually learn to move surely through the phenomena of the different worlds in which those bodies work. The physical body puts us in touch with the environment, but is limited by the capacities of our nervous systems. The outward expression of psychic life is entirely dependent on the etheric body, the usually invisible double of the physical body, which is the centre of vital activity, and the bridge which connects the inner consciousness with the physical brain.

In waking life, the emotional body acts as a bridge between the mind and the physical brain, but it is also an independent vehicle of consciousness during sleep and after death.

EVIDENTIAL PROXY SITTING

WE are indebted to Mr. W. H. Seton-Karr for an account of an experiment which he recently made on behalf of a friend.

This lady, a relative, and widow of a celebrated Colonial Governor, had not long ago had a successful sitting with Mrs. Ruth Vaughan; but in order to "make assurance doubly sure," she had begged Mr. Seton-Karr to go as a complete stranger to another Medium, merely taking with him a ring of hers, in order to see whether he could, by proxy, obtain either corroboration of what had been said at Mrs. Vaughan's sitting, or still further details.

Mr. Seton-Karr (whose grandfather was a godson of Sir Walter Scott, and who has taken part in several military campaigns) has been a student of Psychic Science for over 50 years, and has "seen every type of manifestation and lectured about them in all parts of the world;" which fact probably accounts to a great extent for the excellent evidence obtained at this second (and proxy) sitting.

Mr. Seton-Karr had had no experience, he tells us, with any of the L.S.A. Mediums, and had never before met Miss Naomi Bacon, with whom the sitting was arranged. Mr. Seton-Karr was prepared for a slight delay before the right conditions were established; but, he states that as soon as he was left alone with Miss Bacon, "immediately, without a moment's delay" (proving it would seem to show, that those on the Other Side had made their preparations beforehand) "the Medium's control called out the name I was expecting and proceeded to give me confirmatory and corroborative information—relevant and connected—about the last years of my relative's late husband. This poured out as quickly as I could make notes. I might add that I had requested the widow, who was then in the East of England, to concentrate her thoughts on me at that particular time."

On receiving these notes from Mr. Seton-Karr, this lady wrote:

"I am most deeply grateful to you for trying to help me by having this sitting, and for your account of it . . . I am answering it in full, as I feel that you will be interested to know how much of it is correct. The name F—coming through so early in the sitting is very wonderful."

The writer then lists 27 items of information given by the Medium, out of which only one small item is marked as "not understood," and only three as not really evidential but as having quite probable interpretations; the remaining 23 are all cited as "quite true," "most evidential," "circumstantial," or acknowledged as quite correct; certainly an unusual number of successful results. Amongst actual quotations from the sitting repeated by the lady occur the following, with her comments:

"My wife is in a temporary place." "This is circumstantial, as he is always telling me he would like me to have a home of my own."

Mention was made of her husband's last illness. She writes: "Both references to doctors and the mismanagement of his case are unfortunately perfectly correct."

"The actual name of the country of which he was Governor is, of course, correct." Again: "The reference to his hands is to me most evidential;" "He mentioned this watch and chain in the first sitting I had." And so it goes on, point after point being verified. The lady concludes: "As you will see from what I have written, there is no doubt that it must have been my husband . . . The great thing to me is that you could go entirely unknown to a Medium—a different one from the one I go to—and undoubtedly get into touch with F—, even to the name. I thank you very much."

VICAR ON SPIRITUAL HEALING

IN connection with St. Stephen's Church, Hampstead—of which the Ven. A. F. Sharp is Vicar—a centre for spiritual healing has been established, known as St. Luke's Sanctuary of Healing. In the *St. Stephen's Review* (the parish magazine), Mr. Sharp describes a visit to the Sanctuary as follows:

"As I entered the Healer's room, a lady was getting into her coat, cheerfully refusing help. 'When I came last week my arm was paralysed and my hand shrivelling. Now I can use it freely and do needlework again.' 'How is the little boy who was dumb?' I asked. 'He is doing nicely, now learning to talk, and being prepared that he may go to school.' 'And the man who was born blind?' 'He is progressing too. The colour in his eye-balls becomes darker and more defined, and there are times when he sees light.' 'And the lady, you remember, who was quite blind, and came one morning saying that she had seen the metal studs at a road-crossing?' 'She can now see objects at 20 yards distance.' 'And the little child reported to be dying of cancer?' 'There is now no sign of illness. She is apparently quite normal, except for the discomfort in cutting her teeth. As soon as this is over, she is to be taken back to the hospital for examination.'

"These are cases that I have watched at the outset. And another, a child carried in, spine curved badly, legs useless, hands twitching and clutching ceaselessly. The spine has straightened and the limbs are gaining power and control.

"Yet another heart-rendering case. A girl with her chin sunk in her breast, unable to move it or look up. For part of each day she now holds her head erect, and looks forward to gaining strength to carry it so always."

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL HEALING?

Answering the question, "What is this Spiritual Healing?" Mr. Sharp writes:

"It is the application of a spiritual Gift to the healing of disease through the imposition of hands, with prayer to God, and, with Christians, in the name of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it is spoken of as 'Divine Healing' in order to allay the curious suspicion that in some minds attaches to 'spiritual.' If the healing is Divine, then it is spiritual, because 'God is a Spirit,' and the 'Father of Spirit,' as our Lord teaches.

"Yes, but is the spiritual Divine? Undoubtedly, for God is the source of all spiritual life, incarnate and discarnate. But there are all kinds of spirits as there are of men—good, bad and indifferent, for all are free to choose their way. Then how am I to know that the origin of spiritual healing is good? By the same method of reasoning as that by which our Lord tells us to distinguish between good and bad people. Whether they are in the physical body or out of it makes no difference in this respect. 'A tree is known by its fruit.' 'Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, or a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.'

"The question then is—Is health good. Undoubtedly. Then because the corrupt cannot produce the good, that which brings health is good. Therefore spiritual healing is good, and the source and channel of it good also. But amongst the evil that an unqualified Spiritualism has done is the creation of a fear in some good people's minds that spiritual ministration and spiritual intercourse must be somehow connected with what they term 'Spiritualism,' meaning a cult that relies solely on spiritual communication for inspiration. That is entirely another thing and one which may lead people into all kinds of errors."

Light

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EDITOR GEORGE H. LETHAM

As We See It

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

WHEN Christmas comes round, and we hear again,
either outside our windows or in church, the hymn
beloved by children, "While shepherds watched their
flocks by night," or when we listen to the story as told
by St. Luke, we can hardly fail, as Spiritualists, to
recognise what happened to the shepherds on the
midnight fields outside Bethlehem as a psychic experience
of the highest order.

A purely psychic experience may come to us in
either of two ways: it may take the form of witnessing
some supernatural happening in a seance room, or it
may come to us unexpectedly when we are alone in
our private surroundings. Sometimes our reaction is
wholly intellectual—we observe, analyse, and try to
explain in scientific terms what has happened. On the
other hand, the incident may affect us on the spirit,
rather than on the mental side; then it becomes a
"religious experience." Still more is this the case
if the psychic experience has its source in the spiritual
and flows through the *psyche*, or soul, into our human
awareness. Then it becomes part of our personal
religion, and as such will affect our entire outlook on
life.

We do not get the desired results in the seance room
unless we provide the "necessary conditions." In
the case of the shepherds these were almost ideal:
the silent, midnight hour out in the fields; the peaceful
sheep browsing or dozing around them; the relaxed,
contemplative and receptive state of consciousness
likely to obtain at such a time in such simple open-air
dwellers; and lastly, the "two or three gathered
together." And so we read that: "The angel of the
Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them," their eyes were opened so that
they "saw" the spirit appearance, accompanied as
it so often is by the shining of the non-material "great
light." Fear would spoil "conditions"; but when
the heavenly message of the angel had calmed their
fear, then there followed the further unfoldment of
the greater experience, the "multitude of the heavenly
host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

So this unique psychic experience became a "religious
experience." The shepherds did not meet it in-
tellectually, did not analyse or question; they said
instead, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and
see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord

(Continued at foot of next column).

LEGENDS OF THE NATIVITY

MANY are the legends that cluster round the story of
the birth of the Child in the stable; and in reading
them, one wonders round what actual incident they
were woven, or whose was the mind that first clothed
some spiritual lesson in the story form, so beloved in
the East from time immemorial.

There is, for instance, the story of the reward
bestowed on complete selflessness. A little insignificant
crawling worm was laboriously making its way, we are
told, across the rough earthen floor of the stable, intent
on approaching the Holy Child in the manger, when a
tiny daisy growing in a corner called to it begging that
it would loose it from the ground and take it with it.
The little worm halted in its eagerness; with the
expenditure of much time and effort it contrived to
bite through the stem of the flower, and then,
burdened with the daisy, it crawled painstakingly
over the rest of the way and up the side of the
manger. And the legend says that when the Christ-
Child saw it, He put out His baby hand and touched
both the flower and its bearer; and ever since, you
may see the tips of red on the petals, as symbol of the
warm love of that first worshipping daisy; and the
selfless worm was given, not only wings to mark its
lofty disregard of self, but a little light as well, to show
that such acts come from the light of the spirit within.
Such is the legend of the glow-worm.

Another Nativity legend tells of the origin of the
first Christmas Rose. A little Jewish maiden, so it says,
had followed the shepherds when they came running
into the town on their way to the stable. She heard
how they said they were in search of the Child that had
been born, and she felt that she too must see this wonder
that had come to pass.

But shyness held her back, she did not dare enter
with them into the stable in the cave; who was she
that she should dare? She had, alas, no gifts to lay at
the feet of the Child and His mother, like those strange
Wise Men whom she saw enter and present their gold
and frankincense and myrrh; she had not even a penny
wherewith to purchase a flower.

As she realised this, the large tears gathered in her
dark eyes, almost blotting out the figures inside the
stable.

But one of the attendant angels saw both her ardent
longing to behold and to worship, and her distress at
having nothing to offer. And the angel bade her look
to where her tears had fallen upon the ground, and
behold there at her feet where each drop fell, there had
sprung up a pure white flower—a cluster of "Christmas
Roses."

Joyously the little maid stooped and gathered them;
and the flowers in her right hand she laid upon the
manger, and those in her left she placed on Mary's lap.

So we may learn that from our griefs we may gather
the flowers of sacrifice and offering.

(Continued at foot of next column).

has made known unto us." With perfect wisdom they
immediately turned their religious experience into
concrete action.

When so many of us are asking to-day, where is this
"peace on earth?" "Why is there so little evidence
of goodwill toward our fellow men?" may not the
answer be in part that there is too little of "the necessary
conditions?" Peace and goodwill, to be real, must
come from within—from a "religious experience,"
and the rush and scramble of modern life, the using of
psychic experiences merely for intellectual analysis
and experiment, the struggle for material position and
advantage—these things cannot bring "peace on earth."

Like the shepherds 2,000 years ago, let us this
Christmastide send out each our spiritual contribution
to those—and they are many in number, and we believe
not only in our own land, but the world over—who are
doing their utmost to build up the protective, helpful,
spiritual "right conditions."

LOOKING ROUND THE WORLD

REV. G. MAURICE ELLIOTT

AS readers of *LIGHT* are aware, the Rev. G. Maurice Elliott, a convinced Spiritualist, resigned the living of St. Peter's, Cricklewood, because he could no longer conscientiously continue to recite the prayers and countenance the teaching of certain parts of the Prayer Book. Mr. Elliott has taken a very active share in the "Confraternity" campaign designed to bring about co-operation between Spiritualists and Clergymen; and he is well known as a speaker for Spiritualism.

Under the chairmanship of Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, a committee has been formed for the purpose of raising a testimonial fund for Mr. Elliott; and a dinner is being arranged for January 23rd next, at which he will be the guest of honour. Mrs. Hubert Stephens (Grottrian Hall, Wigmore Street, London, W.1) is hon. secretary; and the hon. treasurer is Mr. Louis H. S. Goldschmidt, 15 Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, by whom donations to the fund will be gratefully received.

WOMAN CLAIMS TO REMEMBER FORMER LIFE

According to the Warsaw correspondent of the *London Observer*, a young woman who "remembers how she lived and died three hundred years ago" is now drawing thousands to her home in Gdynia, the Polish port on the Baltic Sea. She is Maria Sznablowna, the niece of a chemist.

Some time ago, it is stated, she went with her relatives for a walk to Oksywia, the Polish military port. Passing the old church and cemetery, she suddenly went very white and, exclaiming "here I was buried," dropped down to the ground.

When she came to herself she told a strange story of Reincarnation. "I remember this place very well," she said. "I was buried here before. I was the wife of a fisherman then. My name was Golosz." She went on to relate that her husband was killed in the Swedish war with Poland in the seventeenth century, that almost the whole population perished, and that she, with her two children, went fishing and was drowned and afterwards buried in the Oksywia cemetery.

The woman has never been known as a dreamer. The details she gives about the war are correct. Doctors state that her health is perfect.

SPIRITUALISM DEFINED

Often the question is asked: "What is a Spiritualist?" Many definitions have been given. One of the simplest, and yet most comprehensive, is that adopted by the American National Spiritualist Association, which reads as follows:

"A Spiritualist is one who believes, as a part of his or her religion, in the communication between this and the spirit-world by means of mediumship, and who endeavours to mould his or her character and conduct in accordance with the highest teachings derived from such communion."

Under this definition, a Spiritualist may belong to any religion, so long as he or she has a practical belief in spirit-communication "by means of mediumship." As this is the view always advocated by *LIGHT*, we are glad to find it stated so clearly by the American Association.

WILLIAM HOPE MEMORIAL

William Hope, the psychic photographer, paid many visits to Weston Vicarage, the home of the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, and some of the most evidential of his "extras" were obtained there, as recorded in Mr. Tweedale's books and pamphlets. It is fitting, therefore, that his name should be preserved by a memorial tablet in Weston Church (near Otley, Yorkshire) and that his many friends should be reminded of its existence. Recently, on the anniversary of the unveiling of the tablet, a tribute of flowers was sent to the Church by Mrs. Hope and family, and Mr. Tweedale (the Vicar) made eulogistic reference to Mr. Hope's work.

L.S.A. SPRING LECTURE PROGRAMME

THE syllabus for the Spring Session of the L.S.A., now being circulated, includes a series of Thursday evening lectures which promise to be of unusual interest and value. The first lecture (on Thursday, January 7th) is by the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, who will give examples (with lantern illustrations) of "Good Evidence" recorded in the course of his investigations, including what are known as "book-tests." Very appropriately, Major Mowbray (who may be regarded as an expert on psychical evidence) will preside.

The second lecture (Thursday, February 4th) will be on "Heredity and Spiritualism," by Mr. B. Abdy Collins, C.I.E. (Fellow of the Eugenics Society), whose article "Birth and Rebirth," in last week's issue of *LIGHT*, gives indications of his line of thought.

Other lectures in the series are by Mr. Evan Powell (Medium for Materialisation) on "Experiences and Reminiscences"; Mrs. E. S. Francis on "Rudolf Steiner, his Life and Work"; and Miss Charlotte Woods on "The Path to the Higher Consciousness: (IV.) Christian Discipleship."

"TRILBY" IN REAL LIFE

In his famous dramatic novel, *Trilby*, George du Maurier presented an imaginary girl who could sing and act magnificently only when under hypnotic influence. It has often been asserted that, in real life, such results could not be obtained; yet from Budapest comes a story almost as wonderful as that invented by du Maurier.

The new *Trilby* (according to the Budapest correspondent of the *London Observer*) is the daughter of a judge, of Debrecen. Her strange capacity was discovered a few weeks ago, when she was rehearsing a part in some amateur theatricals. Two days before the performance was to take place it was seen that her playing was impossible, and her stage fright was so acute that her friends took her to a nerve specialist. The doctor discovered that she was suffering from certain inhibitions, and put her into a hypnotic sleep, during which he suggested that she would feel no fear on the night of the performance. Although she had never appeared on the stage before, and had never had a lesson in acting, her success was overwhelming.

As the correspondent points out, it is fortunate for this young woman that no sinister Svengali stands in the background to direct her, as this is done by enlightened doctors in the presence of a committee.

AN INVITATION DECLINED

It will be remembered that, at a lecture-recital given on the evening of Wednesday, November 4th, at the British College of Psychic Science (of which his father, Mr. S. O. Cox, is Hon. Principal), Mr. Frank Cox claimed that, through his own mediumship and that of his mother, he had received direct instruction from Chopin as to how his (Chopin's) works should be interpreted.

Following the report of this lecture in *LIGHT*, Mr. W. Livingston wrote to Mr. Frank Cox offering him the use of the Grottrian Hall if he would agree to repeat his lecture-recital in the presence of "the recognised musical critics of London." For this invitation, Mr. Cox thanked Mr. Livingston, but declined on the ground that "as the lecture is purely psychic, and my tuition has been psychic also, it would be inadvisable to have any of the musical critics present, as they would not understand and it might antagonise them against me in the future. Besides," Mr. Cox added, "I feel that through lack of experience I am not yet ready for them."

From the copies of the letters sent to us, we gather that although Mr. Livingston pressed his invitation, Mr. Cox declined to reconsider his decision.

PROBLEM OF THE VOICES

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, the astronomer, after sixty years' search for "facts, facts, and again facts," wrote that fine work, *Death and Its Mystery* (3 volumes of 1,265 pages), and in the Conclusion, which everyone should read, he remarks.

"Let us acknowledge that these posthumous manifestations are not in conformity with our usual terrestrial point of view."

Again: *"It is a world very different from ours, and we, with our earthly ideas, would like to see it conducted on different principles."*

Again: *"We must not expect to enter into relations with the dead under the same conditions as with the living . . . communication between the living and the dead is of a most varied and enigmatical nature."*

The fact is that we all have the schoolboy mentality until we reach the fifth form in the Psychic school, and the good Professor's words should be written up on the door of every séance-room.

The meaning, I suppose, is that you must judge of what happens by mental measure rather than by sense perceptions; or, in other words, you must judge by the content of the communications rather than by the actual voices, and so on.

I am about to tell of a very remarkable sitting with Mr. Leslie Flint as Medium, held in my studio, at Lyndhurst, on 20th November, at 8 p.m., in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. D. Hanbury, Mrs. Shedden, Miss Bartlett and the writer, Gilbert Mahon. These sitters are not responsible for any personal remarks of mine, but they do not object to this narration of the events.

Mr. Flint's control is named Mickey, a newspaper boy who was run over and killed in Camden Town, so he tells us. He is remarkably intelligent, and is a distinct personality. I don't think I ever met one more so. He tells us his chief function is to keep the sitters from becoming too tense. We all know what a freezing effect a dead silence has at times. He chips in with some witty remark, and everyone laughs and talks, and the spirit-communicator soon collects power again and continues his narration.

But when Mickey is serious he is very instructive. He tells us, for instance, that the spirit operators construct materialised vocal organs, which are located in some kind of apparatus which the spirits talk through, and he remarked that it is not at all easy to use this contrivance, and that it alters the character of the voices, and that the communicators cannot remember what they wanted to say when they are using it. If you practised every day for three months, he says, you might be able to talk as he does. Our own friends in the Beyond have told us just the same—several of them. They speak with a rather disdainful tone about "this box." It seems rather foolish, therefore, to say, "So-and-so's voice didn't seem quite natural;" of course it didn't.

It is more sensible to say, "So-and-so did not express himself just as I would have expected," but that too is partly explained by the difficulty of "the box," but not entirely. Your friend in the Beyond will to-day be entirely himself, in manner and style, but probably not in voice, and to-morrow you will have the impression that some intermediary is talking.

With regard to "the intermediary," I may recall a conversation with a Danish girl in the Beyond. "How is it, Grethe, that you talk English like this?" Answer: "I don't talk English. I think in Danish and you get it in English because we are surrounded by English thought." Enigmatical! I should say that Survival takes some proving. The good Flammarion searches sixty years before he concludes, but then he does so in no vague way. There is no hazy "belief" about him. "Facts, facts, and again facts."

But to return to the sitting.

Mr. Flint suggested having a red light, but we preferred darkness, as results are more certain, we thought. We were glad we did so, as they were astounding.

Voices came one after the other and spoke of things unknown to Medium and sitters (other than the recipient). They were mostly different from one another, but two or three gave the impression of the "intermediary." Some voices were so loud that you could have heard them a hundred yards away. By no imaginable play-acting could any split-personality, or other portion of the Medium, have dramatised all these different male, female, child, Chinaman, Egyptian and other voices, with bits of their own languages thrown in.

I will not quote chapter and verse. The opinion of five sane persons must suffice. A very interesting feature was this:

While sitting, about six o'clock, reading the day's newspapers, Mr. Flint remarked that someone wanted him to write. He had not felt this kind of call for a long time. So he wrote under my eye.

My Grandfather announced himself, and said he would come at 8 p.m. and *speak*. He would bring my Mother also. The former owner of my house also said he would come. Another very close relation also—a brother, and so on. All did as they promised, *i.e.*, came and spoke at 8 p.m. and referred to the writing. The Medium was a stranger to our surroundings and could not, I feel certain, have any idea of these various communicators.

An Egyptian guide also wrote under the name Memphiha, but in the evening he spoke his name quite emphatically as Mee-nah-haht-see. He said he wished us to get it correctly because the "Young Man's sub-conscious prevented the proper transmission in writing." This makes one think that voice information may be more reliable than trance or writing.

No one could wish for a quicker or clearer corroboration of spirit-writing than this incident gave. Another interesting thing. After the sitting was closed, the Medium got up and walked about to get warm, and we sitters joined in general conversation, and the electric light was turned on in the next room, while the communicating door was left open; but still Mickey kept chipping into the talk, and I think both Flint and I heard his voice in the garden when we were locking the outside door of the studio about ten minutes later.

Now what about it all?

Well, suppose you are a committee of serious people enquiring into these matters. Firstly, be good enough to note that wise men like Flammarion take sixty years to come to a conclusion, while small fry like the writer presume to do so within five years. Respected sirs, please don't expect to learn much in half a dozen sittings.

Now we will suppose you have begun your enquiry. You will no doubt say: Why is the spirit-manager, or control, in this supposedly serious affair, a newspaper boy? Why not some (according to our earthly ideas) Personage? Why does a little negro girl, "Cuckoo," come and talk to us in a squeaky voice? We, who are giving up valuable time at great inconvenience, etc., etc.

Again, you will say: Why cannot our friends communicate with us direct without this farcical sitting with a Medium? As Flammarion says to such enquirers: "Let us acknowledge that these manifestations are not in conformity with our terrestrial point of view."

You may finally ask: "What good can it possibly do you, this certainty of Survival, since we all are agreed on immortality?"

The answer is that when one gets a knock which changes day into darkness, one becomes profoundly dissatisfied with the prospect of meeting "That One"

(Continued at foot of next column).

SPIRITUALISM AND THE SUPERMAN

By HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.

CONSIDERABLE interest has been shown in the question of the Man of the Future. Ever since Charles Darwin endeavoured to show that the human race has gradually developed from lower forms of life, the possibility of further advancement and modification has been obvious. There seems no reason for doubting that in course of time there may evolve a race of humans as superior to us as we appear to be compared with our original ancestors.

Man may be regarded as a veritable giant when compared with even the higher members of the animal creation, not in a physical way, but mentally and morally. No wonder that it should have been maintained that mankind is the result of a special creation.

What form will the future superiority take? Shall we become physically bigger and stronger? Shall we have larger and finer brains, or shall we become morally and spiritually greater? It is to be hoped that it will be in the latter fields that we shall attain our chief successes.

The superman has generally been conceived as possessed of immense Power. Nature will become his handmaiden, and his emotions and passions will be strictly under the control of his intellect and will. There is something unsatisfying about this conception, for we instinctively dislike beings who are devoid of the kindlier, if homelier human sentiments.

Those thinkers who are not interested in psychic and occult subjects usually believe that fundamentally mankind has come to a halt—that we shall improve upon our present senses only and not develop new ones. This means that the superman will be nothing more than a planetary creature. The idea that he may become extra-planetary and extend his perceptions to metetherial states is overlooked.

Spiritualism has long shown that this restricted view-point is not justified, for there are already among us people who are able to contact conditions of existence beyond the power of our normal special senses.

But there are now signs which indicate that even science will awaken to the importance of this fact, and then a better understanding of the Man of the Future will be formed.

The experiments conducted by Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University, North Carolina, have resulted in the suggestion that everybody has within their mental make-up the faculties of telepathy and clairvoyance; in the vast majority these powers lie latent, but are capable of being stimulated into a limited degree of activity. This suggestion has no relationship to a spiritual world, as all the experiments were restricted to thoughts and things existing in this world of ours.

It is, however, only necessary to turn to the trained Medium to realise that both of these senses can extend into the Beyond. The reason they have so long been overlooked is because the majority of mankind has not felt

the need of them. As soon as the need is felt, then efforts are made to develop them, with results more or less commensurate with the nature of the need. Dr. Rhine and his colleagues were interested only in telepathy among living persons and did not extend their efforts at clairvoyance beyond objects definitely existing in this world. Had they been interested in these faculties in relation to extra-planetary states, they would have confirmed the claims of Spiritualism.

Mediums have been desirous of communicating with the spirit-world and have therefore achieved other results. It appears that we get what we seek in this matter. This is a well-known feature of human endeavour. When we demanded modifications of normal time and space, we obtained them through the invention of the telephone, the telegraph, the radio and the gramophone. America would have been as much cut off from England to-day as it was in the days of our forefathers had we not grown dissatisfied with the inconvenience of distance. The demand for an improvement has brought distant parts of the world into immediate proximity with each other, so that we are able to communicate with them in a fraction of a second. It has been much the same in our conquest over the sea, land and air through the railway train, the automobile, aeroplane and submarine.

The same principle works with our mental powers, and we become aware of telepathy, clairvoyance, clairsaudience and psychometry. In this respect, the Medium and the Psychical Researcher have been invaluable pioneers who have thrown much light on the Man of the Future. In this field, we may safely predict, will be found the superman. Already, we must admit that the most advanced type of person is he who has control over the largest part of being, and this means primarily his mental powers.

Every fine Medium renders a tremendous service to science and the human race, and one day this will be fully recognised. The fact that even now the Medium is largely neglected by those who aim at reading the future of mankind means little more than that he is experiencing what all pioneers have experienced. A little ahead of his age, he is actually making the chart which will guide the laggards into the harbour that nature has prepared for them.

The prevailing view is definitely one of material power rather than material progress, and religion has been unable to alter that point of view to any great extent. If telepathy and clairvoyance should not enable us to extend our environment beyond this planet, the outlook will be no better, but conceivably worse. They would simply become means by which we could more effectively compete against our fellows for the attainment of personal wealth and power. They would do nothing to improve the lot of men and women but tune them up to keener competition, which would more quickly drive the weaker to the wall.

The extension of these faculties to a spiritual world has already opened, to those who are interested, a system of higher values, because they reveal that life on earth is only a small part of our actual environment. By becoming acquainted with those who have passed on to the next life, we can learn how best to conduct our affairs on earth, and they assure us that it is of value only in so far as it contributes to mankind's well-being when we have passed into the Beyond.

There is nothing really sentimental about this. Indeed, a more practical discovery is difficult to imagine. The fact that only the good qualities of mankind can prove of value to us hereafter is as much a matter of commonsense as of philosophy, morality and religion. Fortunately, no reasonable being would wish it otherwise, for who wants to live in another world marred by the defects which are so outstanding in this one?

(Continued from previous page).

again on "the resurrection morning," "the end of the world," and so forth. When that dark day comes one demands "facts," and you give us none. Not one.

But then you will say, "This search will lead people away from the Church." To that I can say that I know only one case positively and certainly, and in that case it had exactly the contrary effect.

Seek and ye shall find! I have sought and, thank God, I have found. "That One" has not gone into the Infinitely distant future, as I was brought up to believe, but is with me from day to day and is delighted beyond words that the channel of communication has been found.

As for me—night has been turned into day; that's all, but this is something Orthodoxy couldn't do for me.

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The Library and Rooms of the Alliance and the Quest Club will be CLOSED from Thursday, December 24th, re-opening Wednesday morning, December 30th.

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SELF-DEVELOPMENT

THE concluding lectures of Mr. Macmillan's Study Course on Self-Development, took place at the L.S.A. on December 1st and 8th.

In the former of the two, the speaker dealt mainly with the power of the spoken word—that is to say, its creative, constructive power when rightly used, or conversely, its negative, destructive force when abused. Words are symbols by means of which we communicate with one another—Cynics have said that they are the means whereby we conceal what we really think; and we, therefore, look forward to the day when, as Mr. Macmillan thinks, "we shall no longer be handicapped by the necessity of using them." Meanwhile, he would have us "experience a word in the physical, mental and spiritual planes before using it;" then, when uttered, it will express Truth, in ever widening circles. This was, and still is, the effect of the words of Christ.

No stronger example of the wrong and dangerous use of words can be found, he said, than in the Press. Words reach us via our emotions, and impact after impact is made upon the public consciousness by the words of the sensational Press in the form of fear, chiefly at present, fear of war. Unless we believe that the power of evil is greater than the power of good, we should resolutely meet these impacts with constructive, positive thoughts of good. "In the true understanding of Good—i.e., of Love—there can be no fear."

The meeting on December 8th fell within the week of national crisis, and the talk naturally centred round what was in everyone's thoughts. Talk of Kingship led to "The Kingdom," and Mr. Macmillan emphasised again and again the immeasurable power that would be ours, that indeed was ours, did we but

fully believe in our hearts, and not only with our intellects, that the Kingdom of God was within each one of us. Christ told us that we might do even "greater works" than He did—and so we could and should, if we would but lay hold on that "Kingdom," that Kingship, within ourselves.

The lecturer said he thought that the three chief causes that held us back were: (1) egotism; we are unable to make the complete surrender of ourselves—we prefer to go on using our own human minds; (2) the assumption that "there is no time" for spiritual matters—the affairs of the outward physical life press continually upon us, and so we put off the consideration of higher things; (3) the old arch-enemy, Fear—we are afraid of what it might lead us to if we made the surrender, what we might have to give up, or to do; and so we prefer to face the ills we have rather than "fly to others that we know not of."

To understand what we each of us might accomplish if we lived in terms of that inner kingship, we need only to turn to men like Schweitzer. Such men—and there have been women too—were only exceptional in that they believed in their hearts that within them was this Kingdom of God, Kingdom of all Power, and that as heirs and sons of God, it was theirs to draw upon and use this great power.

In looking back over this course of addresses and talks, one realises how much they lose in a brief written report. The force behind what was said came from the character of the speaker; the appeal, the uplift, imparted by Mr. Macmillan's words was derived—to quote an expression used by him in another connection—from "nothing other than the depth of experience out of which they were uttered."

SIR A. C. DOYLE AND CHRISTIANITY

Mr. Denis P. S. Conan Doyle, writing from Hotel Meurice, Paris, to *The Irish Times* (December 12th), states that his attention had been drawn to an article reporting a sermon by Rev. Father Coogan on what is described as the "Evil of Spiritism."

In the course of his letter, Mr. Doyle says: "I refer to his assertion that my father, the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'held Christianity to be as pernicious as it was absurd.' I positively declare that there is not one word of truth in this assertion, for my father, than whom no truer Christian ever lived, never uttered such words in his life. Indeed, he would have been the first to condemn such a blasphemous sentiment."

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6.30 p.m. Mr. Ernest Hunt. Address

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30th, at 7.30 p.m.—

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6.30 p.m.—Rev. A. F. SHARP

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Monday.

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2.30—Mrs. Bird's Ladies' Healing Circle. For appointments write to
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6.30 p.m.—Open Meeting in the Grotrian Hall.

Tuesday. Mrs. Livingstone, by appointment.

Mrs. Helen Spiers, by appointment.

Wednesday. 12.30—1.30 p.m.—Open Meeting in Grotrian Hall.

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6 p.m.—Mrs. Bird's Ladies' Healing Circle. For appointments write
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Thursday. Miss Lily Thomas, by appointment.

6.30 p.m.—Mrs. Bird's Mixed Healing Circle. For appointments write
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Saturday, January 2nd, at 7.30 p.m.—

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HINDU SPIRITUALISM

The extent to which Spiritualism amongst Hindus resembles the Spiritualism of the West may be gathered from the following extract from an article in "The Kalpaka" (Tinnevely, India) for June-July:

INDIA, the home of Ancient Wisdom, can furnish more and better Mediums than the Materialistic West. Mediumship may be hereditary. Women are the best materialising Mediums and spirit-women the best materialisers. These Mediums are strong persons with a high degree of masculinity in their character, while the Medium for the opposite process—the spiritualisations and apportionment of things of our world to invisible conditions—are mostly men of strongly feminine characters.

The development of Mediums, especially for the so-called "physical phases," materialisation and spiritualisation, consists of periodical sittings and extractions of medial substance from them by the spirits, which cause nature to increase the production of the extracted substances with healing abundance—a case similar to that of the increase of the blood in a person on account of periodical bleeding.

Wilful resistance of the Medium against the extraction of "medialum" makes it difficult, or even impossible, for the ghosts or spirits to get much of it. To overcome this difficulty the practice of the trance-like condition of the Medium, a sort of hypnosis, is required which eliminates opposition to that operation. Singing of the sitters also helps to neutralise their opposing "self-concentration" and prepare them for their contribution to the required medialum.

When the ghosts or spirits are in possession of enough "medialum" they can use it in two opposite ways—either for materialisation of things from their conditions to ours, or for spiritualisation of things from our conditions to theirs. In both cases the changed conditions are forced and abnormal, and can be held only for a short time.

Truthful and pure men and women (unlike in temperament) make the best circle, and draw, by the law of attraction, spirits even like themselves.

In communing with your beloved ones, let quiet, cheerful influence pervade the circle. In nearly every family can be found one or more who possess medial powers. Let the circle comprise from three to ten persons—as nearly an even number of the same sex as convenient. Obey instructions and await results. Let no outside parties know of your meetings. For the wills of opposing parties and even mere curiosity retard, if allowed to centre upon the circle. Susceptible to spirit influence, you tend to become also negative to human will-power—especially in the earliest stages of practice. Sometimes, Mediums who submit to control may have to be magnetised to restore them to their normal condition—by upward passes. If a clairvoyant or psychometrist is impressed that all is not well with some particular Medium, let him refrain from sitting forthwith, at least for the time being.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIUMSHIP

The most reliable way to discover the nature and degree of one's mediumistic powers is to sit for a course of psychic development with a developed Medium. From two to three years may be allotted to the task—the sitting occurring once or several times each week, according to temperament and other factors. A sitting should not last less than one hour. It is more difficult to determine how long it should continue, but as a rule two hours should be ample. Nor should sitting in a circle with others be so rigidly adhered to, unless the intention is to obtain physical phenomena. Even then, sit occasionally by yourself. Find out what psychic gifts you have and persevere with these. How, then,

to find out these? Our advice is: Leave it to the spirit-helpers themselves, if you can.

In the unfoldment of all forms of mediumship, the first rule is—be passive mentally and physically.

Mediumship is a form of genius. Mediums are usually of the order which poets, artists, and religious geniuses belong to. The developing Medium of the mental order should more than maintain mental and physical quiet during the periods allotted to psychic unfoldment—i.e., should actively co-operate with the spirit entities (though that is not generally required during the early period of development). This co-operation takes the form of keeping a look-out for any signs of a psychic nature and acknowledging the fact. Thus the invisible operators are made aware of the results of their efforts.

IMPRESSIONAL MEDIUMSHIP

In connection with this kind of mediumship, give definite expression to results, by describing to others what you mentally see or hear or feel. Mistakes will be made, especially at the beginning. Persevere, and the errors become less and less, until in the end successes will predominate.

So long as you are awake, the faculty of observation will be able to receive impressions involuntarily forced upon it. The thing to be guarded against is voluntary mental activity when impressions are deliberately sought after.

You need not at once give off the impressions. Do not speak at all during the first hour of sitting. Memorise the impressions you think to be supernormal in origin, or give expression to them during the latter part of the séance.

Unless some such expression is made by the Medium, the spirit-operators are likely to lessen their efforts, and finally leave the Medium entirely without completing their development. Remember that spirit-people, in the development of mediumship, are out to help us by spreading truth—not to amuse individuals.

IN A NUTSHELL

You will find the circle at home very helpful—especially where your home is in an isolated place and where all is love, which makes peace and harmony.

FIRST.—Listen to spirit-impressions as they reach you like wireless messages.

SECOND.—Listen to the inner voice of reason and goodness.

THIRD.—Meditate over the lessons and exercises, giving prayerful attention to spiritual progress.

FOURTH.—Continue the daily life in business and in social matters with spirituality and loving service.

NOTE.—If so asked by communicators, or with their kind permission, go into the silence, taking pencil and paper and requesting them to impress you.

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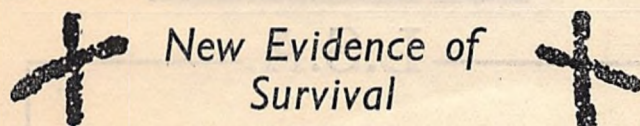
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