

The Two Worlds

SPECIAL

CHRISTMAS
SUPPLEMENT.

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Original Poetry.

ON EARTH, PEACE—GOODWILL TOWARD MEN."

By WALTER APLEYARD, J.P.

PEACE was the burden of the angels' song,
The sacred chorus of the heav'nly throng,
That broke the silence of the early morn
When Christ, the promised son of man, was born.
Transcendent theme of love to all mankind,
The common joy of all to seek and find.
Peace is the guerdon of the world's desire.
Though but a flick'ring flame of holy fire,
It burns each day with more intensive heat,
That must ere long its enemies defeat.
Then will the nations of the earth rejoice,
And pay their tribute to the angel voice.

Peace! ah me! what a cost of precious life
Our young men bore in that unholy strife,
When boldly they went forth to pay the price
Of all they had, in glorious sacrifice!
Was their blood shed for naught, and all in vain?
Shall all our cherished hopes, like them, be slain?
Peace—God forbid that we should now reject
The noble purchase of our brave elect,
Their pain and suffering on the field of death
Enforced the plaintive cry with dying breath,
That from the higher spheres wherein they dwell,
Bids us to urge the peace for which they fell.

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The Spirit in the Garden.

WHY COULDN'T THIS SAD LITTLE FELLOW
TELL HIS GRIEF-STRICKEN MOTHER THAT
HE LOVED HER.

WHAT WAS THE SECRET ONLY MISS PRISCILLA
KNEW?

By SOPHIE WENZEL ELLIS.

UNDER a crepe myrtle tree that showered pink confetti-like petals on the white head below, Miss Priscilla sat in her invalid's chair and told stories to a ring of breathless children—stories that were accompanied by the warbling of wrens in the shrubbery, by the chuckling of a fountain gushing merrily in the sun, and by the chanting of a wind harp in the blossoms overhead.

The garden had been created especially for birds, butterflies and children, and here, on pleasant days, the gentle invalid held court among the hollyhocks and daisies.

"And that," came the soft, young voice from the sweet, old lady, "was the fourth voyage of Sinbad of the Sea. To-morrow I'll tell you about his fifth voyage."

"Tell us some more now!" shrilled an impatient boy.

"A ghost story, Miss Priscilla, please," pleaded a shy little girl, looking furtively over her shoulder at the shadows in the shrubbery.

"No more stories to-day, dears." Miss Priscilla's frail hand brushed back from her delicately wrinkled face a web of fine silvery hair. "There's someone moving into the house next door. It's been vacant for five years; and I want to watch the furniture go in. Besides, I'm tired—and it's about time for the four-o'-clocks to open."

Her last words were magical. The children flung a chorus of careless thanks at her and raced down a winding gravel path to the four-o'clock bed. Soon they had despoiled the gay bushes and climbed over the stone wall to the street.

A nurse, properly uniformed in white, brought a shawl which was wrapped around Miss Priscilla's shoulders.

"Haden't you better come in now, dear?" she asked.

"Those kiddies tire you so. And if you're seen in the garden, more of them will come."

Miss Priscilla's blue eyes grew sweet. "Let them come. It's little enough that I can give to the world—I who have received so much during these thirty years of illness. Besides, I haven't long, Lucy."

"Hush! You'll live for ages yet."

"No. Already I've stayed too long. You know, Lucy—" She paused for words that seemed to come hard. "Sometimes I feel as though my body had already gone and my spirit were lingering on like an earthbound ghost. There's something here for me to do—SOMETHING. After it is done—" She closed her eyes, and a smile brought peace to her face.

"Come! Let's go in." Lucy's hands were on the wheel chair. She shivered ever so lightly.

"Let me stay a little while—until the sun goes down. I won't see the sun much longer."

"Until dusk, then. I'll sit on the back porch and keep an eye on you."

When Miss Priscilla was alone, she turned her attention to the grey stone house next door—the old-fashioned granite house with pot-bellied cupolas and slate-roofed gables.

Another moving van had just pulled up to the kerb. But before the men could touch any of the contents, a beautiful young woman, dressed in black, ran down the steps of the terrace.

"Wait! Let me do it!" her rich voice rang out sharply.

She reached in and lifted out with care an object that was wrapped in cloth. Anxiously, before she ascended the terrace again, she removed the cloth to examine the article which she evidently prized so highly.

It was a child's broken wagon, paint-scarred and worn.

Miss Priscilla smiled sympathetically. She, a maiden invalid, who for thirty years had mothered other people's children, knew the poetry and the pathos of a child's battered toy.

From her vantage point in the garden she enjoyed seeing this tall, pale aristocratic woman direct the servants and workers at their task. The sound of her voice was wafted over occasionally, vibrant and imperious.

The great, high ceilinged rooms and the long halls of the house echoed hollowly as the heavy feet of men tramped over the bare floors.

"It's not a house for a child," thought Miss Priscilla. The high, narrow windows, so recently emerged from their coat of grime under the scrubbing of maids, blinked in glassy lifelessness. Even the furniture being borne inside, though handsome and costly, had a cold, formal, forbidding look. But it was not until Miss Priscilla saw the painting of the boy that she started and caught her breath sharply. "Poor little lamb!" she exclaimed pityingly. "To have to live in that bleak stone house!" She sank back in her chair and watched.

The portrait was life-sized, and someone had stood it on the window seat, face out against the glass. At first glance, it looked like a real boy sitting there, in a brooding, pensive mood. The light falling on the picture was excellent. Miss Priscilla could even see the wistful droop of his lips, the listless, grown-up folding of the quiet hands. A very faint radiance behind his golden curls, so slight as to be almost imperceptible, lent the child a startlingly unearthly air. "How like his mother the boy is!" Miss Priscilla observed, and reluctantly withdrew her gaze from the disturbing portrait.

She settled back then to enjoyment of the garden, which at this quiet hour of closing day always brought to her a deep sense of peace. The soft stillness of the sweet air pressed drowsily against her eyes. Her lids fluttered down. After what seemed only a few moments, something delicate and light touched her hand, and she awoke.

A child stood beside her—a strange little boy with great, hungry eyes and a drooping mouth: the boy whose picture stood in the window next door. Miss Priscilla could not take her eyes from him. In life he was even more pathetic, more appealing, than in his portrait. Watching her, he stood, pale and slender, in the shadow of a lilac bush.

"Who are you, child?" asked Miss Priscilla, with her smile that charmed.

He kept his grave eyes on hers.

"I'm Ronald," he said simply.

A slight uneasiness crept over Miss Priscilla, an odd sensation of rising out of herself. Often, of late, she had had sinking spells; she ought to reach out her hand now and touch the bell that would summon Lucy and send the child away. But somehow she couldn't.

She smiled again, in her most magnetic manner, and held out both hands to the little stranger. It was an invitation for him to come close and stand between her knees, a rare favour that all the children coveted. But the boy shrank away from her, a surprised look in his tragic eyes. Miss Priscilla understood; he was not used to caresses.

"Tell me a story!" he said eagerly. "A story like you told the others, full of fightin' and pirates and gold!"

Again the invalid was swept with that unreal feeling of leaving her body behind, of soaring airily into the warm fragrant atmosphere. She closed her eyes and summoned strength from the depths of her delicate being.

When she looked again the boy was sitting on the grass, about five feet away, still fixing her with his hungry gaze. He sat so quietly, with patient, folded hands, that he seemed

almost like the picture in the window next door. Even when an inquisitive butterfly fluttered its golden wings before his face, he did not move, but continued to look longingly at Miss Priscilla.

"A story—quick!" he implored. "Mother wouldn't ever tell me any. She said they teach boys to lie. If you don't know a fightin' one, tell me about giants and princesses!"

Miss Priscilla shrugged out of the blanket of weakness that seemed to envelope her.

The boy needed her; the look in his eyes tugged at her heart. So, in her most charming manner, she told him an extemporaneous pirate story, drawing her inspiration from the boy's own face, now almost luminous with excitement in the shadows of dusk. He listened like one entranced.

When she finished, he let a little breath of pleasure whistle through his lips.

"Oh, thank you!" he cried. "That was awful nice, and I'll come again, please ma'am—may I?" His voice soared pleadingly.

"Indeed you may!"

As silent as one of the swiftly deepening shadows that stole down with the southern night, the child vanished through the hedge between the two gardens.

When Lucy appeared she asked, "Whom were you talking to, dear?"

"A child—a queer, grown-up little fellow whose mother needs some plain talk. The unforgivable sin, Lucy, is to cheat a boy of his childhood. And maybe—" even in the dusk the nurse saw the flash in her eyes—"maybe the service for which I wait lies here!"

"Yes! Yes!" Lucy soothed, her hand feeling the pulse in the slender wrist. "I didn't see the child; I guess he slipped away. Now, dearest, don't let them tire you so again. I must give you the heart medicine to-night."

Perhaps the drug Lucy gave her was too stimulating for Miss Priscilla could not sleep. She lay watching the wind stir the ruffled curtains at the window, while she breathed deeply the fragrance of the evening-scented stocks that grew in a box on the sill. There, between the soft, cool sheets, with the round moon washing her room with silver, and a tree frog chirruping in the shrubbery, she was happily thrilled with expectation. She lay awake planning stories that would bring joy leaping to little Ronald's hungry eyes.

Her bedroom faced the grey house next door. Suddenly lights flared on in the room directly across from her window. The curtains and shades had not yet been hung, and she could see that the room was a nursery. By the little empty bed knelt the pale woman in black. She was praying—praying and crying with deep sobs that shook her slender body. Her arms reached out and passionately hugged the pillow. Her long black hair poured over her shoulders and splashed the white counterpane with dark, quivering pools.

"Now I know!" whispered Miss Priscilla. "She has lost a child; and she is so torn with grief that she neglected the boy that is left to her. Poor little fellow!" Her words drifted into a prayer: "Lord, if this be my mission, show me the way."

Even before her plea was ended she saw Ronald cross the room to his mother, and, after watching her timidly for a moment, slip his arm round her neck. The mother did not notice him, did not move from her posture of grief.

A man came into the room, tall, distinguished, youthful. He went to the woman and drew her to her feet, leading her to a chair by the window.

"Estelle!" The south wind brought the words clearly to the invalid across the way. "You're killing yourself—and me. You have nothing to regret. You were a good mother—too good! And each of us who has lost a dear one can, if he tries, torture himself with some memory of unkindness or neglect. Let's go down."

He almost carried her from the room, kissing her as they went.

Miss Priscilla felt so well the next morning that she insisted upon having her breakfast on the south terrace instead of in bed, as usual. Then she went into the garden, risking an early siege of the children by sitting on the shady front lawn, while she watched a game of marbles going on in the street.

When the game was at its merriest a small, slender, white-suited figure came from the grey house next door and sat on the kerb, just beyond the group of boys. It was Ronald. He wore a sailor suit trimmed with blue, starched and smooth and spotless. The other youngsters were barefooted and hilariously besmudged and tousled. At first, he merely contemplated the players, his pale, slender hands on his white-trousered knees. Miss Priscilla could see the big dark eyes drinking in every move of the boys.

"Why don't they ask the shy little thing to join them?" she breathed. "How early in life folks earn selfishness!"

Presently the boy reached deep into a pocket and drew out something which he held up against the sunlight, surveying it with one eye cocked. It looked like a large red marble, uncommonly brilliant. He began an elaborate gambol with the flashing sphere, prompted by a timid child's silent braggadocio. He juggled it, throwing it high with one hand and catching it with the other, sometimes alternating by letting it fall into his mouth. And all the while he cast surreptitious glances at the boys, to see if they were watching him. But they were not. They noticed him no more than if he were the slender young sapling that grew by the kerb.

"He wants to play!" murmured Miss Priscilla, pityingly. "He's out of it somehow. I must speak to the boys."

She beckoned Ronald to come to her. She saw him leap up and start joyfully. But the next moment she fainted, suddenly and without warning. Such spells were so frequent now that if they escaped the nurse's observation Miss Priscilla did not tell her, for Lucy would require her to rest in bed—she who would soon rest forever, away from the garden and the children who grew daily dearer to her.

When she recovered consciousness, Ronald was nowhere about, nor did she see him again until nearly dusk, after the other children had heard her stories and trooped over the garden wall to their homes. He came unexpectedly, just as he had done the previous day. She had closed her eyes for a moment, and when she opened them he was there, on the grass near her chair, waiting.

"Good afternoon!" she cried gaily. "Are you hunting for a story?"

The boy nodded gravely. He still wore the white sailor suit, as spotless and unwrinkled as it had been hours before.

"But tell me, first, why you didn't play with the other boys this morning. I saw you watching their game."

"I mustn't get dirty." His voice was flat with patience. "Mother hates germs. But I have a pretty marble. See!"

In his small palm he exhibited the red marble. It was made of clear, crystalline glass, as transparent as red wine. In its ruddy core was the head of a tiny white cherub, with out-flung wings which seemed to flutter fantastically when the marble was spun.

"It's not to be played with, of course." His voice was overwise for a child of six. "It came from Czecho-Slovakia, and it's a present from my uncle." The curious foreign name did not even trip his tongue. An unexpected impish light flew to his grave eyes as he added: "Mother would be very angry if I broke it open to see how they put the angel in and what makes its wings fly."

Miss Priscilla laughed. "And it would be great fun to break it open, wouldn't it? If I were mother, I believe I'd let you try it."

"No you wouldn't," he said wearily. Then, after a pause he went on: "But I love mother very much. Will you tell her some day?"

"That you love her?"

"Yes, please."

"But why don't you tell her?"

"She won't listen. She's too sad."

His little face had an age-old expression which made the invalid yearn toward him with pity. "Poor mother—and poor baby! Yes, Ronald, I'll tell her."

The old look fled, and the childishness came back to his eyes.

"Could you tell me a story about this marble—about the boy angel?" He handed it to her.

She could see that curiosity must have nearly conquered

him once, for on one side was a chipped spot, the mark of a sharp blow. And, looking from the boy's face to the white cherub in the red marble, Miss Priscilla improvised a fascinating legend.

When she had finished Ronald took the marble reverently.

"If I'd known that, I wouldn't have wanted to break it. And you'll be sure to tell mother that I love her?" He paused at the hedge.

"Yes, dear, I'll make your mother understand."

After that Ronald came every day when the other children had left, and begged for a story.

Lucy scolded in her gentle, half-teasing manner. "If he'd only come with the others! One set of stories ought to do for all."

"But I love this quiet hour with him. It's good for us both."

Lucy's lips set firmly. "Someone ought to cure him of his abnormal shyness. He slips around like a shadow. During all the time he's been coming here, I've never really seen him. I thought I caught sight of him once at dusk, stealing around the bluebell bed as though the flowers bewitched him."

"They do." Miss Priscilla, more alert, sat up suddenly. "It's a poem to watch him in the garden. He comes over sometimes at night, when he should be in bed. I've seen him from my window."

Lucy was visibly shocked: "His mother must be dreadfully negligent."

"The poor woman is grieving her heart out over the loss of another child. And Lucy"—the invalid's blue eyes were two sudden flames—"if I could do something to help them both—the lonely, neglected child and the mother who seems to be consumed with remorse for some sternness of hers to the child that died. If I could help them, I'd fold my hands happily—and go to sleep."

"You can help us all best by living as long as you can," said Lucy, kissing the pale, blue-veined hand.

The new neighbours had not called on Miss Priscilla yet, although the invalid had left cards at the door, through Lucy. But Miss Priscilla readily forgave this serious breach of old-fashioned southern etiquette; the mother, she knew, was still in the first pain of her mourning. Then, too, Miss Priscilla wished time to ripen the friendship between her and Ronald before she met his mother.

Soon Miss Priscilla came to the conclusion that Ronald's mother was a fanatic on modern methods of child-rearing. According to her theories fairy stories and the Santa Claus myth taught children to lie; germs should be avoided at the expense of fun, meals were mathematical problems of vitamins and calories, and every misdeed had its own calculated punishment.

But always, after Ronald had discussed his mother with Miss Priscilla, he insisted: "She doesn't know how I love her."

"She will some day," assured the gentle invalid.

"After you tell her." And he gave her a peculiar charming smile that went through her veins like a stimulant.

When he came, at the end of the day, Miss Priscilla was always tired and faint; yet she never refused his plea for stories. He was such an odd child, such a quaint, oldish infant, with the heart of a six-year-old and the haunting eyes of a man who has seen more than he should. He was unlike all the other children that frequented the garden. He never caressed her, or touched her, or even approached nearer than five feet. He came unexpectedly, usually while her eyes were closed with pain and weariness, and, after his craving for stories had been satisfied, he went away, as quietly as he had come.

His only toy was his red marble, which he kept with him constantly. Nearly always, while he sat by Miss Priscilla, he played with it, sedately, engrossed with the illusion of the cherub's fluttering wings as the marble was rotated.

Occasionally, after the story-telling, he lingered in the garden to pick flowers or to chase fireflies. And when it came time for him to go back home, his little shoulders seemed to droop with weary resignation, and he hung his head slightly as he went toward the forbidding stone house.

As the summer advanced Miss Priscilla grew worse.

The doctors came every day now, two of them. There was also a night nurse. Some days Miss Priscilla could not even go into the garden. She grieved, then, because she could not see Ronald. But even when she could sit in the garden, the gay hours with the children were over; they were not permitted to come. Lucy turned them all away—all but Ronald.

Miss Priscilla sometimes wondered why Lucy ignored him. His demands for stories were more extravagant than ever, and now that he had the garden to himself he sometimes remained for hours, sitting by the lilac bush, silent and seemingly happy, even when he was not listening to stories. Miss Priscilla suspected that his unobtrusiveness was the reason why the nurse allowed him to come; Lucy was probably not even aware of his presence.

One day, before leaving her at dusk, Ronald handed Miss Priscilla the red marble. "I'm going to give it to you. I like it very much, but I want you to have it."

"No!" protested Miss Priscilla. "It's your only plaything, and you love it. Keep it."

"Yes, and that's why you must take it."

Before she could protest further he was gone. Then something unfortunate happened; Miss Priscilla dropped the marble. It rolled from her lap into the grass. Even Lucy, who answered her ring, could not find it.

"We'll find it to-morrow when we have more light," said the girl cheerfully.

But the marble seemingly had disappeared.

For two full days the invalid could not leave her bed. On the third afternoon, the cool golden sequel to a rainy morning, Lucy listened to her pleading and wheeled her out into the garden.

The world looked somehow strange to-day. Never before had there been such tranquillity in the garden, such sunlight that spread golden carpets along the paths and hung spangled tapestries among the damp shrubs and trees. But the strangeness was not in the peace that poured from the sweet, rain-washed air, nor in the yellow sunlight that gilded heaven and earth with a Midas touch; it was in the hushed and holy sense of waiting that lay over the entire scene—like the dramatic pause before some stupendous climax. That was Miss Priscilla's thought as she too waited, her ears strained to the sounds among the grass and leaves, her eyes drooping with dreams.

Lucy kept coming to her every little while, and Miss Priscilla tried to dispel the girl's anxiety by simulating new strength and alertness.

Then Lucy appeared once more and said: "Do you feel well enough to receive callers, dear? The new neighbour next door wants to see you."

"Yes! Let him come," said Miss Priscilla eagerly.

But it was not Ronald who came to her; it was his sad-faced mother. As usual, she was gowned in black.

"I've wanted to talk to you ever since I first saw you with the children," said the mother, stooping to kiss Miss Priscilla gently on the brow.

"Because of your boy?" questioned the invalid.

A look of pain stabbed the mother's eyes. "Yes—because of him. Ah, if I could have had your mother-heart!"

Then the invalid understood the strange waiting of the garden: the hour of her service was come. The joy of it overpowered her, sang through her frail body and pressed around her fluttering heart. She reached a trembling hand toward the other.

But suddenly Ronald's mother cried out incoherently and dropped to her knees upon the ground. Frantically she snatched at the grass close to the lilac bush. Like a wounded creature she dragged herself across the lawn toward the wheel chair, her eyes flinging some frantic appeal at Miss Priscilla.

"Oh, God! I've found it! Found it—after searching a year!" In her cupped palm glowed the red marble. "It must have dropped from some hidden place while we were moving in the furniture."

"No! He brought it here."

"Who?" The mother thrust her face close to the weakening voice.

"Your little son. And, dear mother—"

eyes flamed with sudden light—"he asked me to tell you!" She stopped and leaned sideways towards the lilac bush with a thoughtful, listening expression. "And he says—that the spanking you gave him the day of the accident when he tried to break the red marble—that spanking you gave him did—not—hurt."

"You saw him—my baby?" The pale light in the garden now illuminated the mother's face and dark eyes so like Ronald's. "You say you saw my darling, and that he told you that?"

Miss Priscilla smiled and nodded weakly.

"But that can't be! Don't you know—haven't they told you what happened one year ago to-day?"

"He is here now!" Miss Priscilla's voice rang out triumphantly.

For one long moment the mother's ecstatic eyes met her deep, saintly look, before the invalid's tired eyelids fluttered down, gentle as the fall of the crepe myrtle petals.

And as the frail body collapsed inertly among the pillows the mother heard a whisper, low as the chant of the wind harp in the tree: "He loves you—and I—I am at peace!"—From "GHOST STORIES."



The Spirit of Christmas.

By LILY BEECHAM.

MOST Christian countries celebrate Christmas as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, and as a season of peace and goodwill.

Although we, as Spiritualists, feel that Jesus did not come as a Saviour in the way the orthodox churches interpret the word "Saviour," we are convinced that he came to point the way to higher things, and to teach us to understand our psychic selves.

Jesus Christ was one of the greatest mediators and psychics we have ever known. He certainly practised what he preached. If every member of our Spiritualist churches lived daily up to the principles of Spiritualism—which are, after all, the principles of Christ—what a wonderful manifestation of love and peace would be brought about! All men would be brothers and live in peace and harmony. Life would take on a new aspect.

The Bible teems with instances of psychics who went about trying to convince the people of the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit. But then, as now, there was the doubting Thomas. For example: When Jerusalem received not the message, Jesus said, "O, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and ye would not." So it is to-day. The angels come with their mission to fulfil, and are rejected time and again, and their messages pooled, as imaginings of self-deluded minds. It is indeed hard to convince the sceptic, but it can be done, and is worth an effort. We can show them, by living our lives according to our principles, and following out the messages that are brought to us from time to time, that spirit return is no mere hallucination, but a real and glorious fact.

Saul of Tarsus was sceptical and antagonistic to the divine truth, but when on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians he saw a vision and also heard the voice from above speaking to him, and telling him it was wrong to fight against the truth.

A TWO-FOLD CELEBRATION.

Saul knew that it was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. His scepticism dropped from him like a garment, and Saul of Tarsus afterwards became St. Paul, the disciple who became the great pillar of the young Christian churches, and carried the new gospel to the Gentiles.

The mission of Jesus was to tell us of life immortal, and he came back after death to prove to mankind that life after so-called death was a great truth. He returned on several occasions, and the people saw him and conversed with him as they walked along the road together from one place to another. Afterwards they asked one another: "Was not that the Christ who was crucified?" It was he.

and he had returned to prove to them that he still lived.

So it is to-day. Our loved ones come to us to prove that they live and still love us, and are desirous of helping us. May we remember, then, as Christmas time comes round again, that as we celebrate the birth of Christ we are also celebrating the birth of the glorious doctrine of the soul's immortality. If we attune ourselves to the higher vibrations, we may have the spirit of Christmas in our hearts and homes, for our loved ones are round about us whether we realise it or not. If we "tune in" we shall know and understand the truth of Spiritualism.

Gifts Which Will Last.

SOME BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS.

THE question, "What shall I give this Christmas?" is on our lips again, for the problem of the ideal Christmas gift has always been an acute one. All sorts of presents have been originated, and we have in the past frequently given gifts which, although perhaps novel and original, boasted little practical value.

The tendency to-day is decidedly to give Xmas presents which are useful. But there is another type of gift which has hardly received quite the consideration it merits. It is the present that will make people think. Books, in this respect, are unparalleled. They open up numerous channels of mental and physical investigation, and if they are good books they do much to clarify and improve the character of readers.

Some suggestions as to books specially suitable for Xmas Gifts may therefore be valuable. "Guidance from Beyond" (Philip Allan, 5s.) consists of two volumes, spirit written through K. Wingfield. There is a preface to the work by Helen Countess of Radnor, and an introduction by Sir Edward Marshall Hall, K.C. Those who are only just becoming interested in Spiritualism would greatly appreciate these volumes, for they contain much information and enlightenment on elementary psychical problems. There are 371 pages in all.

Ghost stories are always acceptable at Christmas time, and however crude they may be in their psychical make-up, they must have stirred many to take the necessary steps to answer the question, "Is there really anything in it?" W. T. Stead's collection of "Real Ghost Stories" (Stead's, 256 pp., 2s. 6d.) is almost too well known to mention in this connection. "True Ghost Stories" (London Publishing Co., 252 pp., 2s. 6d.), by "Cheiro," can be recommended with confidence, and are remarkably well produced at the price. Violet Tweeddale has written two similar volumes, "Ghosts I Have Seen" (Jenkins, 313 pp.) and "Found Dead" (Jenkins, 255 pp.), both published at 3s. 6d. These also can be recommended with confidence.

The "thinker" will find his wants catered for in W. H. Evans's latest book called "Altar Lilies" (Greater World, 132 pp., 4s. 6d.). "The God in You" (Rider, 125 pp., 1s. 6d.) will also serve similarly minded readers.

A novel gift would be Amy B. Barnard's "Mind and Brain" (Fowler, 288 pp., 7s. 6d.), which serves as an introduction and text book to the study of phrenology. There are plates included, which amply illustrate and clarify the general text of the volume.

For evidence of human survival, Dennis Bradley's "Towards the Stars" and "The Wisdom of the Gods" (Laurie, 3s. 6d. each) are unparalleled in their appeal to the popular mind. Sir Oliver Lodge's latest book, "Phantom Walls" (Hodder and Stoughton, 251 pp., 5s.) will suit the more advanced inquirer. Conan Doyle's "Our African Winter" (Murray, 289 pp., 7s. 6d.) can be read by everyone with interest. It is racily written, and will "hold" its readers by its cheery style and sequence.

One booklet, "Brave Words About Death," may be mentioned specially in conclusion. It consists of selections from the works of the immortal "R.L.S.," bound in velvet wrap, or antique. Although the price is only 2s. 6d., this book would be an ideal gift, and would, I think, be appreciated by even the orthodox reader.

The individual who presents books with a Spiritualistic touch at Christmas is doing something more than merely "giving presents." He is very considerably helping the movement and, incidentally, furthering the truth of spirit persistence and the possibility of return.—J.L.

NOTE.—Some of the prices of the books recommended are not those at which they were originally published, but are reduced figures offered by THE TWO WORLDS, in order to clear stock, and to assist in the work of propaganda.—Ed.

Selected Poetry.

THE VILLAGE CHURCHYARD.

The tall green grasses wave
Above each narrow grave.
And here and there a bunch of fading flowers
Deck the last earthly bed
Of the beloved dead
Whose souls inhabit fairer worlds than ours.

Softly the sunlight falls
Over the moss-grown walls
Enclosing this calm plot of hallowed ground,
And round the tower high
The summer breezes sigh
And mingle with the organ's solemn sound.

The ancient, single bell
That rung the passing knell
Of humble villager and wealthy lord,
Each Sunday through the year
Still rings its call to prayer
And sweet communion at the sacred board.

How often, as a boy,
Have I in careless joy
Romped through this churchyard, playing hide-and-
seek,
Or later, wiser grown,
Touched the memorial stone
Of one who was "my comrade of a week."

Now many years have sped
Over my greying head
Since last I trod these old familiar ways,
And memory, sad yet sweet,
Has turned my wandering feet
Back to the playground of my boyhood's days.

A playground! Yea in truth,
We in our bounding youth,
Breathing the joy of living with each breath—
Careless and wild and free,
Thoughtless young sinners we,
What thought we of the sacredness of death?

When, after many years,
We gaze through blinding tears
Upon the grave of some beloved friend,
How sweet it is to know
That "he who rests below"
Has but attained earth's fleeting journey's end.

"He who rests below"!
Dear friend, it is not so.
'Tis but an empty casket lying here.
You have but gone a pace
Beyond this lovely place,
To one more lovely: I shall see you there.

So as fond memory
Recalls the days when we
Played round the spot where now your body lies,
I breathe a thankful prayer
To God, for other-where
I know we'll meet again 'neath fairer skies.

PROGRESS.—Science is ever adding to the supremacy of man. It brings forth continually new revelations of the power and marvellous possibilities that lie dormant and are inherent in him as a spiritual being. Nothing can impede his progress nor arrest his continuity. He has the gift of eternal life and the ability to know God. From him the darkness cannot hide, and the lustre of the sun will not mar his visions. He may behold the glory of the city of God, and all the tumult of materialism cannot deafen him to the sweet messages from his loving friends in spirit life, and the strains of holy song arising amid the vibrations of the Sunnederland.—W. JOHN.

The Kiss in the Dark.

A TRUE STORY OF A STRANGE WARNING THAT
SAVED EIGHT LIVES.

By ROSE BYRON.

WE slept soundly that night. We were a happy family, for all of us were well and not one was then missing from the shelter of the roof-tree. My two eldest sons slept in the bedroom at the far end of the upstairs hallway, and my two daughters occupied the middle room, sharing it with the little boy who had been the baby for so long, and who slumbered cosily in his cot near them. My husband and I were sleeping in the front room, and our new baby was snuggled between us.

How calmly we slept, while danger crept upon us! Not one of us felt the shadow of impending tragedy. We lived in a quiet little town, and it was hardly necessary even to lock the doors.

Some time after midnight I awakened partially and felt to see if my baby was all safe and well. Then I dropped off to sleep again.

How much time passed I do not know—but suddenly I heard someone whisper softly into my ear: "Get up—quick!"

I felt too sleepy to move, and dropped into unconsciousness again. I do not know how many times the words were repeated, but I gradually became aware that they were being said over and over.

Then I felt a soft kiss and heard the words again. Still I could not arouse myself enough to get up.

Suddenly I realised that a man's lips were pressed closely against my cheek. I could feel his beard plainly.

I put out my hand—and touched the wall near my face!

As the kind voice spoke again, I sat up in bed, trying hard to get my eyes open. The room was dark and silent, and everything seemed to be quite normal. I decided that I had been dreaming, and fell back on the pillow again.

Then all at once I heard the voice say sternly: "Get out of bed!" There could be no mistake about it this time.

I got up and stood sleepily at the foot of the bed, wondering why I should have to get up at all.

Some power propelled me toward the open door leading into the hall. I went out, still only half awake, and felt a kindly hand on my shoulder that kept me moving down the hall.

Then I saw what I had not noticed before. There was a bright light in the room where the boys slept!

Startled by it, I went quickly to the room. Standing on the threshold I saw that one of the boys had been studying lessons in bed, and had dropped asleep without turning off the large student lamp on the stand nearby. The alarm clock ticked noisily away, the hands pointing to a quarter to three.

As I stood watching him, my son threw his arm out over the table, knocking the lamp over. I leaped forward just in time to keep it from crashing to the floor.

He was dreaming of some work he wanted to do, he told me, when I awakened him. He was greatly surprised to see me, saying that he must have just dropped off to sleep.

I showed him the clock, and he was both startled and ashamed.

"And I went to sleep and left it burning all this time!" he said in a frightened voice.

I soothed him, and told him how I had been forced to get up. We called the others to tell them about it, and we had a real thanksgiving there at three in the morning.

It is highly improbable that any of us would have been left alive to tell the story, if I had not been awakened just in time—for the fire would have trapped us all before we could have escaped.

As we talked over the narrow escape which had been ours, I knew for a certainty who it was that saved us.

My dear uncle, the brother of my mother, had had the habit of waking me with a kiss when I was a tiny child.

He had worn a soft, full beard with which he used to tease me as long as he lived.

I hope that he was able to look deep into our grateful hearts that night when he came back to save the lives of eight of us—"GHOST STORIES."

The Christmas Festival.

CHRISTMAS is coming; the time for celebrating the advent of Him who came to establish Peace, Kindness and Goodwill upon this earth! Our annual epidemic of spasmodic altruism is at hand, and we shall soon be busily engaged in manifesting our desire to lessen the suffering, or promote the happiness of others!

Our hearts are inclined to beat true to the ideal suggested by this festival, but our spiritual perception has become dimmed, and we do not apprehend the tragic pathos of many things that are taking place in our midst, or realise the illogical limitations of our benevolence and our compassion. Ought we not, in these days of progressive thought, to consider whether our prevalent methods of celebrating the incarnation of the Messiah are not, in some respects, as irrational and incongruous as are our conventional conceptions concerning his message and life-work?

He came to deliver the world from transgression and suffering by proclaiming the supremacy of love, and the divinity of life, by exalting mercy and spirituality, and the efficacy of obedience to God's laws of health (on all planes). Yet the anniversary of his birth is signified by obtrusive manifestations of our disregard of the Creator's intention that we should eat of the fruits of the earth and exist as NON-CARNIVOROUS beings. Such intention is clearly evidenced by our physical structure, yet we inflict needless pain and death upon millions of His creatures, in order that their corpses may constitute an unnatural banquet at this festival.

He came to preach Peace—to herald a golden age when AMITY shall reign in place of ENMITY, and the groaning of creation shall cease. Yet his professed followers make ruthless war upon almost every sub-human race which cannot escape their murderous hands. Instead of manifesting kindness towards their earth-mates, they regard it as their prerogative to exploit and rob and kill any fellow-mammal whose shape, or mode of mental communication, happens to differ from their own. Thus they uphold the barbaric doctrine taught by certain modern Huns—that might transcends right, and that the strong may trample upon the weak.

Especially is this so at Christmastide. Without pausing to consider whether these less fortunate inhabitants of our planet—who were apparently in possession before man came to share their tenancy—can feel pain, and suffer like ourselves, or whether they possess any rights as ancient and intelligent beings, they murder them with callous indifference and heartlessness.

From every part of the world, during the coming week will vast numbers of these victims of human tyranny be conveyed by cattle boat and train to the centres of "Christian" civilisation. At many of our "model abattoirs," as well as at our innumerable private slaughter-houses, the animals who are condemned to be butchered in order to make a Christian holiday, will literally quake with fearful anticipation as they see their companions taken from their side, one by one, and dragged to a cruel death at the hands of overworked executioners.

These barbarities will be the preliminaries to the Christmas celebration. These bloody sacrifices which so disgrace our religion and our humanity, and which are offered up on the unholy altar of degenerate human appetite—the modern Moloch—will involve the death of millions of sentient victims, who love their lives and dread the knife just as we do, but who are massacred to provide unnatural and injurious food for devotees who will throng our churches on Christmas morning and sing with thoughtless sentimentality about

"Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

The angels are foolishly supposed to look down upon it all with holy joy, and to enter into the spirit of these

Christmas "festivities"; to watch with complacency the terrible scenes enacted in the slaughter-yards of Chicago and Kansas and London, and a thousand other cities and towns throughout Christendom; to share the hilarity of the gaping crowds of ghoulish human beings who perambulate the streets of our provincial towns, when the frightful slaughter is over and the butchers' shops are crammed with fat-laden carcasses which have been hideously decorated with garlands and flags—feasting in anticipation upon the corpses displayed, and staring with imbecile pleasure at the sight of it all.

Surely the measure of mental and spiritual delusion which enables us to consider such a celebration as this to be acceptable to the God of Love, and in harmony with the real spirit of Christianity, might also justify the decoration of our churches with the mortal remains of slaughtered animals. Why, from any sense of aesthetic squeamishness or religiosity, stop short at mere holly and mistletoe? Is the living temple of the spirit less sacred than that constructed of inanimate stone? Or is the former dedicated to idol worship and only the latter to God?

—SIDNEY H. BEARF.

Camilla's Gifts.

By W. GEO. WHEELER.

CAMILLA CARMICHAEL was not a particularly handsome girl, but tall and strong, of a long-lived family on her father's side. She possessed a vigorous and sound constitution. Camilla was extremely fond of sport, full of energy and resourcefulness, yet free from selfishness. Her motto was "Crowd your life with divinest service." She had played a splendid part in the great European war, putting heart into the circle of men with whom she had to do—a healthful friend. If she had remarkable psychic forces, she was always practical and always physically fit.

Camilla, strolling along the embankment on a dark night, became conscious that a young fellow was about to commit suicide by throwing himself into the river. She moved silently, and in the very act of desperation pulled him back, redeeming his life from destruction. Then she put some of her strong, hopeful, healthful personality into him, imparting a forceful taste of her mind as to moral cowardice. "You can't end life," she said. "You must show your manhood, and face it here and hereafter. Count me among your friends." He never saw her again, but there was an occasional correspondence. He returned to his wife and family.

Camilla's life was full of remarkable things. She was visiting her Aunt Fordham. Jane Fordham had been an energetic chapel-goer for many years, thus spending her time and money. She was not of the narrow school of Nonconformity. Her views were benevolent. She did not fling her beliefs into others' faces. People respected her. Then it happened that a new pastor came to the chapel, Pastor Greenleaf Gregory. His was the old theology. He inquired of Jane Fordham if she had been converted, properly saved. It was a difficult question to answer. He considered her standing in the church and the "kingdom" doubtful. Jane was a conscientious, benevolent, noble minded woman, and felt greatly hurt. In intention she had served the Christ. Her withdrawal from the chapel—it was too uncomfortable to remain—proved a terrible grief to her, it unnerved her.

Then Jane's health completely failed. Her medical attendant could not understand it. It was a mental rather than a physical complaint. Hers had always been a bright, hopeful disposition. The lamp of hope suddenly burnt dim, vigour of life fled, there was a breaking up of the constitution. Then Camilla Carmichael came. From that hour Aunt Fordham rallied. God renewed in her a brave heart. There was a living wave of optimism, a final complete recovery. She connected herself with a broader religious organisation. It was the work of Camilla. She had cast her strong, buoyant personality, and brought newness of nature. Camilla brought people good luck.

Camilla was a healer. She could not say exactly how she healed, or how she watched over people, or why she became their guardian angel, yet it was so. She had been an angel to the lads at the war front. "I thought about those boys individually, every day at a certain time. I centred my mind on their special and peculiar welfare, for their health, happiness, and return. They all came home safely, every individual of my circle." That's what she told a friend.

Camilla's friends—some of them—were inclined to smile at her psychic gifts, but it was found she wonderfully anticipated events, perceived things coming for good or ill, generally for good. It was really remarkable. Camilla studied medicine. Study came easy to her. She had a strong, capable, intellectual type of brain. "I ought to have been a man," she said.

By chance Camilla met the new chapel pastor, Greenleaf Gregory. He interested and amused her. There was something very quaint about these out-of-date theologians. Camilla was psychic, yet intellectual. She was half angry too; she would use the mental whip. Her reading was far wider than Gregory's. He was shocked. The girl seemed to him hopelessly lost. This was not the end. Camilla had gone to the seaside for a brief holiday. She entertained some children with donkey rides. She was fond of the donkeys as well as the children. Then she strolled among the people on the beach, and used her critical and humorous faculties. It seemed incredible. She spotted Pastor Greenleaf Gregory fast or partially asleep. It was really too funny. She laughed within herself. Then approaching quietly she hypnotised him, and suggested—not that he was a great big donkey, as she felt inclined—but ideas for a broader, nobler outlook. A little time after this Gregory enlarged his theology. His soul broadened out. Camilla had played a bigger part than he was aware of. She had lifted his spiritual ideas.

Camilla Carmichael crowded her life with interesting things—intellectual and psychic—but she always made a point of keeping herself physically fit.

Patriotism.

By EVA C. DEAN.

THE word patriotism is usually associated with war. A French statesman seems to suggest that patriotism is the cause of war. When an injustice is committed, and Governments are endeavouring to fight the wrong, a wave of patriotism sweeps the country, bringing volunteers to fight for justice, and the Governments yield to the demand. After weary fighting and despair, with no object achieved, as in the last war, an armistice is declared. For many years we suffer from the aftermath of war, and a great deal is written about the futility of war.

A German writer has published a book, "All Quiet on the Western Front," which has made interesting reading. The writer, referring to the lads of eighteen who served in the German Army, points the accusing finger at the older men who were teachers and leaders, and were convinced that they were acting for the best, but the youth considers that they were let down badly.

The German writer thinks that the youths were badly let down, but the survivors of the Boer War, who related the sufferings from fever, etc., did not deter the youth of fifteen years ago from entering into war, and in twenty years hence the youth will have no regard for the last war, the idea being that he possesses a fighting spirit, and will use it for war.

If we are to escape the effects of war, we must remedy the cause. If patriotism and a fighting spirit is the cause, then we must divert it from destruction to construction. If patriotism means love of country, then all people should so love their country that they will not degrade it by warring with another.

We certainly possess what may be termed a fighting spirit. As evolution tends to an upward grade, we have to strive towards a goal of perfection, in which we have to

fight all that is impure, to overcome sin and disease and its attributes, poverty and crime.

There is a great deal of talk about International Peace. The League of Nations has helped to pave the way, and the Prime Minister is desirous to bring about this state, that all nations may be on amicable terms. As this is vitally important, what is the attitude of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union? How does it teach its youth? In the "Lyceum Manual," in the Golden Chain Recitation on "Brotherhood," the conductor finishes with these words: "Ever hold in remembrance this talismanic sentiment, making it a part of your being: My country is the universe; my home is the world; my religion to do good; my heaven wherever a human heart beats in harmony with mine" (Thomas Paine). It also teaches the nature of man, that he is a trinity in unity—spirit, spirit body and earthly body. It teaches their functions and the kingdoms of nature.

The Lyceum is the school of a liberal and harmonious education. Its object is the unfoldment of the faculties in their due order and degree. It has a twofold aspect—the physical and mental; the physical, by a series of calisthenics arranged so as to exercise various portions of the body; the mental advancement, by such instruction as calls forth the powers of the pupils through judicious information and careful discussion. Its outstanding feature is its comprehensiveness, variety and tolerance, and its perfect accordance with the laws of nature. It teaches a religion of reason, beauty, truth and goodness. Its aim is the spiritual, moral and intellectual elevation of its members, and through them of the world at large. It has ten laws of right:—

- 1.—Manifest temperance in all things.
- 2.—Give justice to all creatures.
- 3.—Show gentleness in speech and act.
- 4.—Speak truth in every word or thought spoken or acted.
- 5.—Exercise charity in thought, striving to excuse the failings of others.
- 6.—In almsgiving, be generous.
- 7.—Exhibit self-sacrifice at all times.
- 8.—Be temperate, yet firm, in defence of our views of right.

9.—Display industry in following any calling we may be engaged in.

10.—Manifest Love—above and beyond all.

This teaching should tend to make useful and good citizens, and should not in any way be handicapped by obsolete laws as the Vagrancy Act. If the Prime Minister desires International Peace, Spiritualism is an aid, as it thinks universally for the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.



THEREFORE, I cannot think thee wholly gone;
The better part of thee is with us still.
Thy 'soul its hampering clay aside hath thrown,
And only freer wrestles with the ill.

—LOWELL.

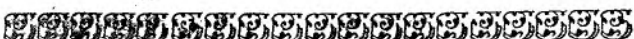
LET me not say—

"Heaven is remote on high,
Nor notices men's way."
There in the starlit sky
It round about us moves,
Inspecting all we do,
And daily disapproves
What is not just and true.

—CHINESE. 12th Century B.C.

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY OCCULTIST.—"Nature," in its review of Mr. Stanley Rehgrove's small book on "Joseph Glanvill and Psychical Research in the Seventeenth Century," says: "Joseph Glanvill is, no doubt, best known to the modern reader as the source of inspiration of Matthew Arnold's well-known poem, and secondly as author of a treatise on Witchcraft, which W. E. H. Lecky describes as 'probably the ablest book ever published in defence of superstition.' He was not only a Fellow of the Royal Society, being elected in 1664, and a friend and admirer of Robert Boyle, but in addition to making three communications to the Society, which appeared in the Transactions, he was the author of an account of the advances in the various departments of scientific knowledge since the time of the ancients."

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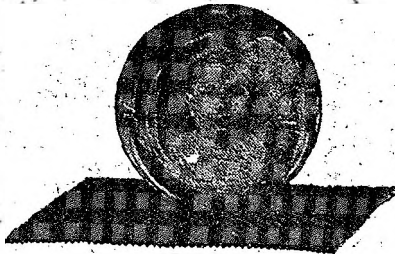
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