

The Two Worlds.

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CONTENTS.

The Haunted House of Ben's Hollow	613	A Photographic Ghost Story	620
Unseen Visitants	616	The Backwoodsman's Story	620
Strange Freak of Spirits	616	Strange Rooms	621
How Prayers are Answered	617	Hauntings and Ghostly Visitations	621
Christmas Revised	618	Christ the Sun	622
An Instrument of Fate	618	Prospective Arrangements	623
		Passing Events and Comments ..	624

"The Haunted House of Ben's Hollow."

By "ANITA AND LENNARD."

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.—THE CARMAN'S STORY.

It was in the dusk of evening that we first saw the old house known as "Ben's Hollow," and my friend Jack Masters always declared that this fact fully accounted for the vague sense of horror that we both experienced as we looked down upon its dilapidated portico, broken windows, and garden overgrown with rank grass and tall weeds. A more dismal-looking place it would be difficult to imagine, or one more suited to be the scene of some great crime. It lay in a hollow between two low hills, and was so surrounded by trees that we seemed to come upon it quite suddenly and unexpectedly, as the road we were driving along took a sudden sharp turn round the spur of one of the hills.

There was a small dark-looking lake about 300 yards from the house, and the hills were the barest and bleakest-looking I ever saw, with jagged tops like the teeth of a saw. We had just crossed a large bog, and the sudden change to the hills and the lake was most unexpected.

My friend and I were on a sketching tour through Ireland, and we had chosen our present route through the west country as being as much out of the beaten track as possible. We had been "dodging" about as the fancy took us, and were now on our way to a small country town where we intended to put up for the night. Our car driver, a very loquacious young specimen of the Emerald Isle, had been entertaining us with numerous stories about all the places we had passed. So remarkable a house as this was sure to have a story attached to it, so I said to the driver—

"Tim Kelly, my man, what's the story you can tell us about this old house? It looks quite a fair-sized place, and surely worthy of a better fate than to be left to the rats and owls. Who does it belong to?"

"Is it the story of the ould house you'd be after knowing? Sure, thin, it's meeself can tell you that, for me own grandmother was own sister to Mary Machree that was nurse-girl to his honour, Captain M'Murrough, the last of his name that lived there, and it's many's the ghost that she's seen there."

My friend Jack Masters gave a great "snort" of contempt at the mention of ghosts. "I knew there'd be a ghost somewhere about the place," he said. "I never knew a dirty old house that hadn't a ghost of some kind—if the place was only dirty enough and shabby enough! What's this one up to? Eh! Waving a white sheet about and howling, I suppose. Rather an idiotic way to spend one's time, even if you are a ghost, I should say."

"Ah! sure it's more than that thim ghosts is up to," said Tim Kelly, lowering his voice and glancing cautiously and fearfully around; "and it's maybe just as well to be careful what you're afther saying of thim sort of people."

Jack laughed at this, and was about to try to take what he called "a rise" out of Kelly. But I, being anxious to hear Tim's story, stopped him, and after a little pressing Kelly told us the following narrative, which he interspersed with so many reflections of his own, and so much of his

grandmother's opinions on every possible subject, that I think it will be more intelligible if I tell it in my own words.

It seems, then, that the house we had passed had been built in Oliver Cromwell's time by a man named Ben or Benjamin Holdfast, one of his troopers, to whom the land had been given as a reward for services rendered during the invasion of Ireland. This man had settled down on his property, ruling his tenants with a rod of iron, and making himself most unpopular everywhere. He died somewhat suddenly, not without suspicion of having been poisoned. He left one son and a daughter. The son died in childhood, and the daughter grew up and married one of the neighbouring squireens of the name of McMurrough, and her descendants continued to occupy the house and estate known as "Ben's Hollow" for several generations—marrying amongst the original Irish families, and becoming, in the course of time, as thoroughly Irish as though Ben Holdfast had never had the honour of being their forefather. In the year 1798 the property had passed into the possession of a certain Martin McMurrough, who, with his twin-brother John, were the sole representatives of that branch of the family. Martin, as the eldest, had inherited the house and estate; while John had been left with a small amount of cash for his share. He very soon lost this in the dissipations of fashionable life in Dublin, and before long he was deeply in debt, without the means or desire of earning an honest living for himself. In this state of affairs he used to brood over the injustice, as he considered it, of his brother's enjoying the sole benefit of the family property—a brother who was his elder by so short a time, too—and from thinking what a benefit to himself the death of that brother would be, he came to thinking at last that there might be some way of getting rid of Martin without becoming a murderer in actual deed, though at heart he was one already. He and Martin had never been fond of one another even as boys, and they were as different as possible in character and appearance. Martin was gay, easy-tempered, and frank; while John was silent, *dour*, suspicious, and very grasping, and seemed to have inherited the cruel and unscrupulous character attributed to the original Ben Holdfast, the stories of whose oppressions were still told and shuddered at by the peasantry.

John had not long to wait for his chance. It seemed as though fate and his evil genius had opened up to him a way of getting rid of Martin without any danger to himself. Martin had joined some of those secret societies known as the "Whiteboys," "Ribbonmen," &c., which were so plentiful all over Ireland, and Ben's Hollow was a place where their secret meetings were often held. John also belonged to the society, but, living as he did in Dublin, and only coming to see his brother at times, he was not so well known to the local members of the society, though his relationship to Martin, in whose confidence he was, enabled him to learn all their secrets.

Now it occurred to John that a very easy and safe way to dispose of Martin would be to betray him to the Government, in which case he would mostly likely be hanged, even if he were not shot in attempting to escape, and in any case he would lose his property, which he, John, could arrange to receive as payment for betraying the society.

I suppose John must have felt some scruples about taking such a course, and no doubt he hesitated for some time over it, but his necessities and his hatred of Martin were equally great, and I dare say he even told himself that he was doing his country a patriotic service in giving up these rebels to the English Government; but anyhow he contrived to satisfy his conscience, or at least to smother it sufficiently to allow him to give the information which sent a party of

soldiers down to Ben's Hollow on an expedition to arrest Martin and his friends when they were holding one of their secret meetings in a small cabin near the lake. A sharp resistance was offered, but they were so completely taken by surprise that they were at once overpowered, and in the scuffle Martin was shot, and his body carried up to the house, where it lay in great state till the funeral, being "waked" in the most approved fashion of the time. Tim Kelly said, "There nivver was such a foine wake, and the whiskey that was drunk was of the best, and without any stint at all, at all." John was most liberal in all the arrangements, and sent word that he wanted all respect shown to his poor brother's remains, but he excused himself from coming to the funeral on the ground that he was too ill to travel, and so poor Martin was buried in the family vault with all due honours, and John reigned in his stead.

John stayed in Dublin for nearly a year, and then sent word quite unexpectedly that he was about to come at last to live in his own house, and would be down the next week. John had always been of such a very unsociable nature that his arrival with a large party of friends was a matter of some surprise. A queer set of friends they were, too—the noisiest and most reckless of his Dublin associates—and for over a month they kept it up in fine style at Ben's Hollow. Such hunting and shooting, and eating and drinking as went on! you would have thought that poor Martin had come to life again, and they were feasting over his return, instead of him not being dead quite a year, and as Tim Kelly remarked, "scarce settled like in his grave."

John McMurrough seemed to have a strange dislike to being left alone; so great indeed was his antipathy to solitude that he even got one of his friends to share his room with him. Well, one night between five and six weeks after John and his friends came to Ben's Hollow, when as usual they had spent a jolly evening, and had all gone or been carried up to bed—"just between one and two o'clock in the morning," said Tim—the whole household were awakened by the most awful noise like a lot of men swearing and fighting, and guns going off, and things rattling about as if the place were besieged. It happened that that night was the anniversary of Martin's death, but no one remembered it or thought of it until afterwards.

Of course the guests who were not too drunk to stand rushed out of their rooms to see what was the matter. Some went downstairs and through the rooms, but nothing was to be seen, nothing was disturbed, no strange men were found in the house, nor any outside, and yet even while they were searching the noise began again, right in the midst of the guests themselves. They heard loud, angry voices, the trampling of many feet, the sound of shots, and then a deep groan and a wild shriek. Every one heard it; then all of a sudden a cold wind seemed to sweep through the house, though it was in the month of August, and a close hot night, and the frightened guests who were standing in the hall saw the door of their host's room open suddenly and violently, and John McMurrough rushed—or rather, as it seemed to them, was dragged out struggling and fighting violently with a tall figure in a sort of black cloak; a tall figure that looked "in a way solid," said Tim, and yet they could see the walls and doors through him. It was like a great black shadow rather than a real man. Well, these two figures came out on to the top of the stairs, wrestling and struggling in their horrible death struggle, while in the doorway of John's room stood the friend who shared the room with him, ghastly white and scared, speechless with terror, but making vain efforts to speak. Then all of a sudden it seemed as if the black shadow got all round McMurrough, and lifted him up and threw him right over the railing down into the hall, where he fell with a sickening thud at the feet of the horrified guests. At that moment the black shadow vanished, the noises ceased, and nothing was there but the dead man lying at their feet with his neck broken, and a most awful look of horror on his face.

The friend who slept in John's room said afterwards that he had been wakened by something moving about the room, and had then seen the tall figure standing beside McMurrough's bed. He seemed to be speaking to him, but he could not hear what was said, and then Mr. McMurrough tried to get out of bed and away from the tall man, and then they began fighting—and it was all over before he could do anything.

Of course there was an inquest, and the story of the tall man was repeated, but as he had vanished when McMurrough fell over the stair rails, the jury and many people came to the

conclusion that McMurrough had been drinking and got delirium tremens, had thrown himself over, and that the others, who were probably not too sober themselves, had imagined all the rest. This explanation satisfied every one except those who had been present, and who all declared that they had most certainly heard the strange noises and seen the dark figure, and they always stood out that there could be no mistake at all, what they had heard and seen was no delusion.

John McMurrough was buried in the family vault beside Martin, and the property passed into the hands of an obscure cousin, who belonged to a distant branch of the McMurroughs. This cousin lived in France, his native talent for getting into debt having caused his retirement to the Continent advisable. As Martin and John had both contrived to mortgage the estate pretty deeply there was not enough left to pay off the new heir's own very considerable debts and enable him to return to Ireland, so he continued to live abroad, and the estate was managed by an agent for some years. An attempt was made to let the house, but no one seemed to fancy it, and the only tenant who did at last take it left it in a short time, saying that there were so many unpleasant noises it was not fit to live in.

For twenty years or more the house stood empty, and then Ben's Hollow had a fresh owner in the person of a Captain McMurrough, the son of the distant cousin, "and a foine gentleman he was," Kelly said. He had served in the army abroad, and had married a French lady of fortune, and he was now coming with his wife to pay a visit to his ancestral home. Great were the preparations made for their arrival. The house was cleaned from top to bottom. Painters and paperhangers were got in to brighten it up, and by the time Captain McMurrough and his wife and servants arrived it was like a new place, so bright and cheerful did it look.

The captain had one child, a daughter, and he brought over a fine-looking Frenchwoman as maid to his wife and head nurse to the child, and Tim Kelly's grand-aunt was engaged as nurse girl at Ben's Hollow, and it was from her that he knew all about the disturbances in Captain McMurrough's time.

At first everything was quiet and there no signs of ghosts. The large room, that had been the state bedroom where Martin and John had both lain in state and been "waked," was shut up. In going over the house, Madame had taken a strange dislike to the room. She said it seemed cold and damp, and gave her a *frisson*, so it was shut up, and she and her husband occupied another large room at the back of the house. The county families called, and there were balls and dinners and visitings, so Madame found the place quite lively, and was well satisfied in her new home; and then, just when no one was thinking of them, the ghosts began their disturbances again. Heavy articles of furniture would be carried out of one room into another. Feet would be heard coming up the stairs and walking about the rooms when no one was to be seen, and many other sounds common to such cases of hauntings. But as these things did no harm, Captain McMurrough refused to be turned out of his house by them, and so for eight or nine months this state of things went on. The household were afraid to go about alone, or sleep by themselves, but they became in a sense quite used to the noises and did not mind them.

Suddenly the hauntings took a new and more alarming form. It was now the month of July, and the comparatively harmless noises were succeeded by a perfect pandemonium. Loud mocking laughter, and heavy trappings, as of a score of men hurrying up and down the rooms and staircases. Then doors were violently opened and shut, loud knocks were heard, then sounds as of some one groaning and sighing. This went on for several days. The servants talked of leaving, and Madame herself begged the captain to take her away. He refused for some time, and talked loudly of finding out and punishing the rogues who were creating all this annoyance, but all his efforts were in vain. He not only watched by himself, but got several of his friends in the neighbourhood to help him; but though the noises, &c., still continued, it seemed impossible to find out how they were made.

August came, and on the tenth of that month the captain, with a couple of officers from the County Barracks, resolved to sit up all night and watch. The tenth being the anniversary of the death of both Martin and John McMurrough of tragic memory, it was suggested that the ghosts were likely to make some special disturbance, as it was reported in the neighbourhood that on that date Ben's

Hollow had for years past shown strange signs of life when no one was living there. People passing on the high road had seen lights in the windows and heard many loud and singular noises, and it was felt that now, if ever, was the time to detect the authors of these seemingly unaccountable things.

Captain McMurrough, his two military friends, and Mr. O'Brien, a local squire, arranged to sit up and watch. They were all well armed, and let it be understood that whoever or whatever was seen would get a bullet into it to begin with. They were to station themselves one upstairs on the landing, where the noises were loudest, one in the front hall, and the other two in the dining room, and whoever heard or saw anything of a really alarming nature was to fire and the others would at once hurry to his assistance. Madame McMurrough and the child and servants had been sent in the afternoon to the agent's house, about a mile away. The captain and his friends carefully locked and barred all the doors and windows, pocketed the keys, searched every nook and corner to guard against the possibility of concealed intruders, and then settled down to their watch.

All was quiet till between one and two o'clock, and then they heard most distinctly the sounds of a fight, loud shouts, sharp cries, and then pistol shots, so close that it seemed to be going on all around them. They rushed with one consent into the hall, where the noise was loudest, and though they saw nothing they felt themselves pushed and thumped by unseen hands, and were conscious of a crowd of people hurrying and struggling around them. Then, all at once, the door of the "Haunted Room," as it was called, was burst violently open, although they had carefully locked it and the key was in McMurrough's pocket, and two figures, just as they had been described nearly thirty years before, came fighting and wrestling out of the room on to the landing; then one seemed to throw the other over, and they saw him fall at their feet. So solid and real did the fallen man look that they bent over him to raise him; his eyes seemed to look up at them in agony, and his lips to move as if speaking, and yet when two of them tried to lift him their hands went *through and through* the figure, and it seemed to shrink up and vanish gradually and slowly away before their eyes, while the other sounds suddenly ceased.

Considerably startled and puzzled the four gentlemen agreed that two of them should remain in the hall, while the others searched the haunted room. Accordingly Captain McMurrough and Mr. O'Brien went upstairs, and the captain took the key from his pocket and tried the door. It was still shut and locked exactly as they had left it. The captain opened it, and while O'Brien searched the room the captain stood at the door to see that no one left the room. A strict search revealed nothing. There was clearly no one there, and yet as Mr. O'Brien went from place to place a heavy foot-step kept following him, and they were both startled by a low chuckling laugh, now close to them and again far off in a corner of the room. While they were thus trying to find what caused these sounds, loud cries of "Help! help!" from one of their friends in the hall, made them rush out and down the stairs, where a strange sight met their eyes.

Lieutenant Bennett was lying helpless on the floor, while Major Myers was struggling with a rather short, broad, powerful-looking man, dressed in the style of one of Cromwell's celebrated Ironsides. The major seemed almost exhausted, and his cries for help were already growing quite faint. To reach forward and grasp the figure was the work of an instant. Captain McMurrough was ahead of his friend, and got hold of the man first, and as he felt what a solid, real figure it was, he made sure he had at last found the author of these disturbances. He had his loaded pistol in one hand, and as he seized the man with the other, he put the muzzle of his weapon to the figure's head and fired. The bullet passed through the head, and at the same time a wild mocking laugh rang out through the hall, and the figure turned round a horrible, evil-looking face, and looked full at McMurrough. At this instant O'Brien, who was on the stair, fired his pistol, and his shot too passed through the figure and went into the wall, where it was found the next day. At that instant, and while McMurrough and O'Brien were actually touching the figure, it melted away in their grasp and vanished, as the man they had seen fall over the banisters had done, and where it had stood there was nothing. As for Major Myers he was so exhausted with the struggle he had gone through that he was sitting dazed and helpless, while poor Lieutenant Bennett seemed to be in a sort of fit.

In these circumstances a retreat from the house was the only course to be taken, so Bennett was carried down to the house of the agent, Mr. Murphy, where Madame McMurrough and the servants were, and a doctor was at once sent for. In spite of all that could be done Bennett continued to pass from one fit of convulsions into another for some hours, and at last fell into a deep death-like trance in which he lay for two days, waking at last very weak but otherwise fortunately restored to his normal state. Bennett, it seems, had neither seen nor heard anything. He had felt a cold wind pass over him and a sort of shivering seize him, and he had then become unconscious and knew nothing till he wakened from his trance. Major Myers said that he, too, had felt the cold wind, and at the same time a vague sense of horror and dread overcame him such as he had never experienced in his life before, though he had fought and distinguished himself in several battles and faced death many times. The fear he felt was of some kind quite different from the fear of death. It was more a nameless horror of some terrible unknown *thing*, that he felt closing round him, and could neither see nor resist. He had looked round at his friend, and had seen him slide rather than fall upon the floor, as though he had gone to sleep, and as he took a step forward to touch and rouse Bennett he suddenly found himself face to face with the evil-looking creature seen also by McMurrough and O'Brien when they came to his assistance. He at once seized this man (as he thought him), and to his touch he had seemed as real and solid as he did to McMurrough and O'Brien's, and yet they had fired two shots right through him, and he had vanished even while they were looking at and holding him. With this figure it was that Myers had struggled, while it made every effort to get at his throat and strangle him with its long claw-like fingers, Myers growing more and more strangely weak and exhausted, while the horrid face was close to his and the awful eyes were glaring at him. He said *he* felt and could feel no doubt of the reality of these things, nor, he declared, could anything human have vanished from them as this thing had done; and, for his part, nothing would tempt him to sleep another night in the place. McMurrough and the other two felt a similar disinclination to pass another night under that roof, so when Madame added her persuasions, and declared that any attempt to return to Ben's Hollow would kill her, the Captain was rather glad to avail himself of the excuse and abandon the house. For, in truth, he had for a long time been more shaken and perplexed by what he had seen than he had cared to admit.

So Captain McMurrough and his family went abroad, and Ben's Hollow was shut up once more. One or two bold people tried to live there and defy the ghosts, whom they scoffed at, but they invariably left in a week or two, sometimes sooner, so at last the furniture was sold and only a few old things of no value were left to moulder away undisturbed. It was accepted as a fact that Ben's Hollow was "troubled," and no one could live there.

(To be continued.)

Christmas Hymn.

BY ALICE HADFIELD PETSCHLER.

OUR Christmas Carol, Lord, we bring,
To Thee our Father and our King;
For mercies past we thankful raise
Our grateful voices, tuned to praise.

In excelsis gloria.

Another year draws near its close,
Its joys, its griefs, its unreprieve,
Have pass'd away, all known to Thee;
Their impress we but blindly see.

In excelsis gloria.

This festive time, our hearts renew
To actions right, and motives true;
The Prince of Peace on us bestow,
That we may live in love below.

In excelsis gloria.

A Son-ship, Father, Light divine
Grant us, and keep us ever Thine;
Let herald angels now proclaim
The glory of Thy gracious name.

In excelsis gloria.

Thou great and mighty One, may we
With faith serene, have trust in Thee.
Thy wisdom give to do Thy will,
And strength to banish selfish ill.

In excelsis gloria.

Unseen Visitors.

By A. E. FITTON.

IN the castle of Chillon, on the lake of Geneva, immortalised by Byron in his poem, the Prisoner of Chillon, the visitor is shown a dungeon wherein an earlier captive than Bonnivard was immured—a political offender in the reign of Charlemagne. His biographer, who was a contemporary, in describing his captivity, says: "During this long period of years he had no visitors save the angels, who in every place know how to find their way to the hearts of the upright."

A beautiful sentiment, coming from the remoteness and the comparative darkness of the eighth century. Surely the writer must have been in advance of his age, and the unfortunate prisoner, languishing the best years of his life in the darkest depths of that lonely castle, a man of much nobility of character to have inspired so delicate and touching an eulogy. One wonders if the poor captive was conscious of those angels of consolation, whether they took visible shape and relieved the weariness of his confinement by their tangible presence and communion. We do not know, but the words quoted are very suggestive. That old writer evidently believed in the ministry of angels, and associated it very closely with uprightness of conduct and purity of heart. And was he not right? Did he not touch a truth which Spiritualism has declared again and again—the attraction of like for like, and the power which goodness has for drawing to itself, all unconsciously it may be, those unseen presences whose mission it is to help and inspire, and to give of their abundance to earth's needy ones?

While the old belief in the direct interposition of Providence, when confronted with what is known of the working of the laws governing this life and the great hereafter, must seem irrational and at variance with those laws, man is not necessarily left to work out his own destiny unaided because Deity stretches forth no visible hand to save him, and prayer brings forth no tangible response.

God uses instruments for the working out of His designs, drawing into His service agents both seen and unseen; the golden chain which binds humanity to His feet has many links, each one of which may be a living human messenger of good to those who seek it in earnestness and sincerity.

To the poor captive in Chillon's dungeon no angel of deliverance came as to Peter in the Jewish prison, but if his thoughts were released from the perpetual brooding over his hard and unjust fate, and were uplifted as on wings beyond the four walls which confined him, until perchance he, too, could realise what another captive in a later century has expressed, that "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," the service done him was not to be despised. It is something to be freed, if only for a short space of time, from uncongenial influences and the depressing weight which they are apt to impose; and it seems to me we might be more receptive to these unseen uplifters without in any way becoming impractical, or failing to respond to the urgent demand which life in its many phases makes upon us.

"Man does not live by bread alone." No greater truth was ever uttered than this. It is a truth which needs emphasizing and reiterating, and forgetting it, we starve and dwarf one portion of our nature while satisfying the cravings of the grosser and more material. Content to stifle in a narrower area we lose the sense of expansion which the more ideal and spiritual part of us is capable of bestowing. The creatures of habit, we fix our eyes so often and so long upon the refuse at our own feet that we lose imperceptibly the power and even the desire to look up, and so miss the crown of beauty that is held above our heads. So, in other words, wrote John Bunyan in his immortal allegory, touching upon a truth which has been proved individually again and again, that habit is a gaoler whose fetters are hard to break, and that if we would grow and develop we must not rest satisfied with a dust-heap for a pleasure ground, but look up instead of down, stirred by that Divine discontent which ever strives after an ideal and dreads stagnation as akin to death.

As the dreamer sat in that gloomy chamber in Bedford gaol, weaving his vivid life dramas, in which to him the actors would be almost as real as the world from which he was for twelve years shut out, he proved in his own person how the mind may rise above circumstances, and the thoughts unchained wing their flight into other realms. Nor are the barriers which material things interpose any barriers to the ingress of spirit; it is the more subtle and potent obstruction of minds engrossed by the things of sense and impervious to higher aspirations which separates

the material from the spiritual, and makes of our surroundings prison-houses.

To the seekers of good the angels of deliverance are ever at hand, and that power which "makes for righteousness"—that Divine Spirit indwelling every soul—seconds each upward impulse, and aids every effort to throw off the galling fetters which habit and heredity have forged, and which the longer worn the more tyrannous and *obstructive do they become.*

Strange Freak of Spirits.

By A. M. STEIN.

A RATHER singular story has been given to me by an intimate friend of the people in whose house the incident occurred. We know the story to be perfectly true.

The residence of one of the oldest county families in the south of Ireland possesses, like other great old houses, a haunted room. As the mansion is very large, this apartment is seldom used, but it was found necessary to use it on one occasion when an unusually large party of guests had assembled. It was decided to give it to one of the guests who was a stranger in the neighbourhood, and not likely to have heard anything to prejudice him against it.

Like many other Irish parties, this one was very noisy and very lively, and there was no end of eating and drinking. In accordance with an old custom of the house a large amount of wine was at a certain hour placed on the table, the doors were locked, and no guest was allowed to leave the room till all this wine was drunk. As a natural consequence, few of the guests could be said to go to bed sober, and the gentleman who was to occupy the haunted room was as open to the suspicion of having taken too much as any of his neighbours—in fact, he had to be carried up and put to bed by two of the footmen.

At breakfast he did not make his appearance, and that caused little remark, as it was by no means an uncommon occurrence in this hospitable house, but shortly before luncheon a frightened housemaid came down to say that when she was doing up the bedrooms she had found Mr. F——'s room empty, and supposing he had gone out, she was proceeding to make the bed when she was startled by hearing groans, and knowing the reputation of the room, she was so frightened she had run downstairs at once. The host and several of the guests at once proceeded upstairs. They, too, heard groans, but where they came from they could not imagine. The bed was an enormous old-fashioned four poster, with the woodwork of the top covered with drapery, and not four inches from the roof of the room. They searched thoroughly both in it and under it, in the wardrobe, and in short, everywhere they could think of. But no sign of the missing guest could be found, only somewhere about the bed the groaning, mixed now and then with swearing, was very distinct. The party were completely puzzled till the bright idea occurred to one of them that as he was not in the bed, nor under the bed, nor anywhere else that they could see, he must be on the roof of the bed, which they could not see. This idea was at once scouted by all the others as a perfect impossibility, because the space between the roof of the bed and the ceiling of the room was so small—not four inches—that a child could not be squeezed in between them, much less a great, stout, heavy man like this. Against all these arguments stood the fact of the dreadful groans, so steps were brought, and on climbing up them, there sure enough the gentleman was discovered lying in a sort of well or hollow formed by the drapery of the roof of the bed. The space was so small he could not move in any way, and it was found impossible to get him out till carpenters were brought, who removed the roof of the bed. He had nothing on but his nightshirt, and as the night had been very cold it was small wonder he had been expressing himself forcibly.

How he could ever have got there was a perfect mystery to every one. He could give no explanation of it himself. He only knew that he awakened and found himself there. He had been much too drunk to climb up, and if he had he could not possibly have forced himself in between the cornice of the bed and the ceiling. The only solution that could be offered was that the ghosts or spirits, who were said to haunt the room, had somehow put him there for a freak. The haunted room has never again been used as a bedroom.

How Prayers are Answered: a Christmas Story.

BY E. W. WALLIS.

It was Christmas eve. Mrs. Evans sat by the fireside in her parlour, knitting leisurely, her face lit with a happy smile. She looked across at her son, a stalwart young fellow about twenty years of age, and as their eyes met a fond look of love flashed into hers, and he nodded and smiled in return in a cheery fashion. But, suddenly, unbidden tears filled her eyes, and she heaved a deep sigh that was almost a sob.

Fred noticed the change and exclaimed, "Why those tears, mother mine?"

"They are tears of joy, my lad," she answered. "The contrast between my state of mind now and a year ago, when I was all alone and you were lost to me, came so vividly before me that I could not prevent them. But, Fred, I am not blaming you," she said, wistfully. "I am glad and happy. You make me so happy."

Poor Fred's cheeks flushed and burned as his mother spoke, and he hung his head with a feeling of shame; then, with a shake, as though he would cast off the fetters of memory, he arose and crossed the room, and, bending down, placed his hand under her chin, turned up her face, and kissed her lovingly, almost reverently. Kneeling down and leaning his elbows lightly on her knee, he looked steadily into the old lady's eyes and said—

"I too have been thinking, mother, of this time last year, and how but for your great love I might have now been in prison, or in my grave; and when I think of the suffering I caused you, of how I am responsible for turning these locks so grey," and he gently passed his hand over her hair, "I feel sad, and should be unhappy only that I know your loving heart has forgiven my wrong-doing, and I pray that God has done so too. But, mother dear, 'let the dead past bury its dead.' We should be happy to-day; you have me and I have you, so let us lay the ghosts of memory, and we will think of the future."

Three years before Mr. Evans died unexpectedly, and when his affairs were gone into it was found that he had left very little to maintain his widow. Fred was put into a bank and worked steadily for twelve months, but, unfortunately, he became entangled with a set of fast fellows and was inclined to fall in with their habits. A considerable sum of money being missed at the bank suspicion fell upon Fred, and, although nothing was proved, he was dismissed. This fact acted upon his proud and sensitive nature with injurious effect, and instead of trying to live it down he lost heart and joined with his old comrades in gambling, drinking, and other practices. His mother gently expostulated with him, but Fred turned upon her in anger, and finally forsook his home without giving his mother the slightest idea of his whereabouts. As may be supposed, the poor woman was broken-hearted, and her only refuge and stay was in prayer. Fortunately, a small annuity enabled her to live in tolerable comfort, but the strain and anxiety about Fred caused her to lose health and strength, and as months rolled past and he did not return, she feared that he was dead.

On the Christmas eve before the one on which our story opens, she had prayed with her whole soul. She felt as if she could not pray again if this petition were not answered. For a long time, in a perfect agony of spirit, she "wrestled in prayer," weeping bitterly while she poured forth her supplications.

That same evening, Fred, with some boon companions, had been drinking heavily, and about ten o'clock was reeling along a street in a Staffordshire town, when the sound of the beautiful singing of a lady attracted his attention, and he felt impelled to step inside the hall to listen. When she finished a gentleman made a very earnest address about the evils of the drink traffic, and appealed, in kindly and sympathetic tones, to the young men present to abandon the intoxicating cup. His words struck Fred as if they had been directed to him personally. He felt the speaker's eye was fixed upon him. He was fascinated, sobered, and deeply affected, and went forward and signed the pledge. The speaker engaged him in conversation, applauded his action, and, after sympathetically hearing Fred's story, urged him to go home.

Towards evening on Christmas Day, Fred knocked timidly at his mother's door, but she heard him. She had felt sure he would come, and everything was ready for his comfort. Mrs. Evans asked no questions, and Fred sat silent for a time, but at last he could hold out no longer, and his confessions were listened to by his mother with very mixed feelings, in

which, however, joy at his return and hope for the future predominated, and she did all that her love could suggest to strengthen his good resolutions.

The mystery about the money had been solved at the bank, and, after Mrs. Evans had interviewed the manager, Fred (who was now cleared of all suspicion) was re-instated in his position, and became as careful as he had previously been careless, working steadily and gaining the approval of his employers, and thus a year rolled away, during which he and his mother became acquainted with Spiritualism, through their neighbours, who were firm upholders of its principles, and several satisfactory sêances had already been held. Fred had "fallen in love" with the young lady medium, but feared lest she might refuse him if she knew of his past escapades. He felt that she *ought* to be made aware of them before he permitted himself to think of her in any lover-like fashion, and was considerably perturbed in spirit in consequence. A sêance had been arranged for the Christmas eve, and mother and son were awaiting the coming of their guests, when the scene referred to in the opening occurred. Shortly afterwards, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Edmonds arrived and the sêance began. Very soon Miss Edmonds was entranced and made signs to Mrs. Evans, who watched her movements attentively, and was soon satisfied that the spirit seeking to make his presence known was indeed her husband. The features of the sensitive appeared altered; posture, gestures, manner, *all* were *his*. Then came the representation of his dying moments, and finally the ejaculations which he had made before breathing his last on earth were uttered by the sleeping medium. Mrs. Evans was overpowered by her emotions, and Fred looked on and listened in awed silence.

Then the medium turned to him, and, in his father's tones of voice, addressed him: "Well, Fred, you made a grave mistake, but you suffered for your sin, and have learnt wisdom by your experience. Thank God for it; it will serve you for the rest of your life. I tried to save you, but you shut me out. It was your mother, lad, who helped you. By her loving prayers, her faith in you, she sent out the silent influence that found you. By its aid I was able to impel you to enter that hall. I inspired the speaker and directed his eyes and influence towards you, and your mother's great love drew your heart homewards. It *was* an answer to prayer—not by God direct, but by his loving angels; your mother first, and, under his providence, myself, assisted by other ministering spirits. God bless you, Fred; be brave, sober, vigilant, and true. Take care of your mother, my lad; she has been your guardian angel. Good-bye."

By this time Fred was broken down in a perfect *abandon* of grief, and no one present was dry-eyed save the medium (who, when she became conscious, wondered what it was all about), and the little party broke up with very varied emotions.

Mrs. Evans had received much light and comfort. Fred, too, although overcome at the time, felt strengthened and much happier, and on Christmas Day, when the little party re-assembled, the story of the past was told to the sympathetic ears of the good friends who had heard the spirit's message, and had wondered what it could mean. They united with Mrs. Evans in rejoicing over her prodigal's return and his reformed life, and all were deeply impressed with the wonderful revelation of the presence and guiding power of guardian spirits, and the striking explanation of how prayers are answered and inspiration responds to aspiration.

Fred was filled with anxiety as to the effect this spirit revelation was likely to have upon Lucy, but when he saw the sympathetic tears in her eyes, and noticed the shy glances in his direction, and the modest blushes of that young lady when she saw that he was looking at her, he took courage, and when opportunity served he asked her if she thought "she could learn to love and trust him sufficiently to let him woo her for his wife." She must have given him a satisfactory answer, for he did not need any mistletoe to claim the privilege of imprinting his loving kisses upon her responsive lips, as a seal of their mutual affection.

WHAT I *must* do is what concerns me, not what people think. You will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. Socrates and Jesus were misunderstood; to be great is to be misunderstood.—*Emerson*.

THE TWO WORLDS.

The People's Popular Penny Spiritual Paper.

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EDITOR AND GENERAL MANAGER:

E. W. WALLIS.

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Christmas Revised.

There is in humanity a natural, original, and indestructible sense of religion which blossoms out into faith in Deity, immortality, and the laws of right, just as normally as affection, intellect, or any other of the soul's powers.

CHRISTMAS has well-nigh lost its theological significance. The world has marched onward during the last quarter of a century with rapid strides towards—

The larger faith, the sweeter manners, and kindlier laws of which the spiritually illumined poet sang.

Facts are admitted on all hands which prove that the festival observed at this time of the year is but an adaptation of the old Roman rejoicing which, as Mr. Junor Browne clearly shows, in the extracts we print elsewhere, originated in the ancient Sabæan worship. Our forefathers hailed the birth of "the God of Day" with glad acclaim as "the Redeemer" who by his warmth and life-giving rays saved the people from darkness and fear of death. The strictly orthodox observance of Christmas as being the celebration of the actual birth into mortal life of the "second person in the Godhead," without human paternity, is limited to an ever-decreasing body of persons, and the practical religion of love and sympathy is being made manifest without limit of creed or class.

Surely it is a great blessing that in the depth of winter the grinding wheels of commerce should be stayed, and for a season, all too brief, opportunity should be afforded for good fellowship, for sociability, for fraternal interchanges of little courtesies and acts of kindness, sympathy, and goodwill. It is a distinct advance towards brotherhood that the song of the angels—

PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL AMONG MEN,
is being emphasised, and increasingly numerous efforts are being put forth to embody those principles in our social, commercial, and political relationships.

It surely makes for righteousness when the harsh contentions and rough asperities of theological controversies can be hushed, and people of all creeds co-operate in endeavouring to solve the problem of how to banish poverty and institute happiness upon the earth.

True, there is a long road to travel ere the goal can be reached. True, there are the portentous facts of the millions of men massed under military discipline, and the more numerous millions of treasure expended in manufacturing murderous weapons of warfare; but even these are making for righteousness. No monarch or statesman can calmly contemplate the incalculable horrors which must necessarily ensue when the next European war breaks out, or with a light heart do aught to precipitate the calamity. The responsibility is so great, and becomes heavier every year, that the very perfection of preparedness for war becomes the guarantee of peace, or at least an armed truce. Aye, and the burdens grievous to be borne which are laid upon the shoulders of the rising generation will favour the formation of a court of arbitration and a general disarmament by the nations of the earth.

Men are growing to distinguish between the accidentals and the essentials in religion. Love, Truth, Purity, Righteousness, Honour, Justice, Fidelity, Goodness, Wisdom, these are the qualities of life, the graces of the spirit, the expressions of the diviner elements in humanity which are alone worth fostering and struggling to attain.

Schemes of salvation, theories of inspiration, doctrines of the churches are as nothing compared with the *spirit* and *purpose* with which men and women approach the duties of daily life, and the manner in which characters are formed by persistent endeavours to give expression to the highest ideals of virtue and of truth.

For modes of faith let graceless bigots fight,
He can't be wrong whose heart is in the right.

There is a fundamental harmony in all religions—a oneness of affirmation in the cry of all the prophets. They all

breathe, with more or less intensity, the soul's sympathy with sorrow, the aspiration of the poor and oppressed, the cry of the spirit for knowledge, light, and liberty. Secularism is dying, party lines must be effaced. We are brethren all. Love and right, health and happiness for all should be our religious aim, and it will bring the fruits of the spirit—patience, virtue, mercy, endurance in adversity, victory over temptation, sympathy for others, and Spiritualism helps us to understand and live this religion of the spirit.

Christmas is the time for family reunions, for healing old wounds, for forgiving and being forgiven, for banishing hatred, putting an end to feuds and party strife, for generous thoughts and deeds, and the display of such helpfulness and sympathy one towards the other as will tend to bring joy and blessing to both the giver and the receiver; for the putting forth of those powers of the spirit and the performance of those actions of kindness which help to smooth the brow of care, cheer the heart of the weary, show appreciation of the work of the toiler, and encourage those who endeavour to bless and benefit mankind.

Spiritualism, which is indeed the Comforter, the Teacher, and the Reformer, helps us to understand the need for charity, self-sacrifice, and sympathy; teaches us to banish hatred, malice, envy, and uncharitableness; prompts us to right living and temperate habits, that by example and influence, as well as precept, we may become reformers, and by practical philanthropy manifest sympathy, make hearts glad, and help to bring heaven on earth.

In this spirit of fraternal love and fellowship we greet all our readers. If in our past efforts to serve the cause of truth, to spread the knowledge of Spiritualism, and stimulate reform we have been thought to be harsh, strong, severe, or too emphatic, we plead as an extenuating circumstance that *we are in earnest*. We feel strongly, and are stirred deeply, and express ourselves vigorously in opposition to systems and creeds, but we have no feeling of ill-will towards individuals. If we have made foes by striving to do our duty we bare no sword against our brethren. Towards all humanity our heart is warm, and we sincerely wish every one

A TRULY HAPPY AND ENJOYABLE CHRISTMAS.

An Instrument of Fate: A Complete Story.

[The following complete story is reprinted from CASSELL'S SATURDAY JOURNAL by special permission of Messrs. Cassell and Company, Limited, of Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., to whom we return hearty thanks for their kindness.—ED. T. W.]

ON a bridge in one of the interminable streets of Venice a man lay stabbed to the heart.

A waning moon shone faintly overhead, while under the bridge the dark water lapped and lapped against the piers. The dead man lay face downwards, and beneath him was a dark stain, which grew longer and wider as the hours moved slowly on. As the dawn broke quick footsteps were heard coming through the alley which led to the bridge, and the next instant a young man appeared, who, on seeing what was before him, stopped short. Stooping down he turned the body over, and as he did so, uttered a cry of horror.

"Merciful saints!" he exclaimed; "it is my brother Cornelio."

He stood up and looked anxiously around him. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and kneeling down, he carefully examined the body. On the left temple, half hidden by the hair, was a tiny letter marked in blood.

"It is as I expected," the young man muttered. Then, drawing his own dagger and holding it aloft, he uttered aloud these words: "From henceforth I devote thee to the destruction of the enemy of my father's house. Here, over my brother's body, I charge thee to destroy the slayer and his race. Spare him not, but strike him, armed or unarmed, at all times and in all places, without fear and without pity, until thou art sheathed in the heart of the last of the Roccas."

The next instant a mocking laugh rang through the air, and Bernardo del Salvio turned quickly, but ere he could defend himself received in his breast the assassin's dagger, and fell dead by his brother's side. The murderer picked up his victim's weapon and tossed it over the bridge.

"So much for thine oath," he said, and, wrapping his cloak about him, passed on.

Three hundred years afterwards an Englishman was in a curiosity shop at Rome, making purchases. He was a stout pleasant-faced man, with a genial manner, and was evidently well-to-do, to judge by the price he was paying for his antiquities.

"That's a curious old dagger you have there," he remarked, just as he was leaving the shop.

"Yes," replied the proprietor of the shop; "I got it in Venice from a gondolier. It is a sixteenth-century weapon."

"I should like to have it," said Mr. Baring, and accordingly the dagger was put up with the other purchases.

Six weeks later the collector was in England, and almost the first thing he did was to invite a brother enthusiast to come and inspect his treasures. This was a Mr. Hubert Rocca, a gentleman of Italian descent, whose ancestors had come over from Venice during the latter part of the sixteenth century, and had founded a family in Essex.

They spent a whole morning together looking over them, and when Mr. Rocca rose to leave, his host begged him to stay and lunch with him.

"I am afraid I cannot stay to-day; I have an engagement at three," was the reply.

"Well, wait a moment," said Mr. Baring, "I have one more thing to show you," and he produced the dagger.

Mr. Rocca took and examined it.

"It is a curious thing," he remarked, handing it back to its owner, who made some observation about the engraving on the handle as he took hold of it. Suddenly he started violently, and laid it down on the table.

"What is the matter?" enquired Mr. Rocca.

"Nothing," replied the other confusedly; "a disagreeable thought crossed my mind, that was all."

When his guest departed Mr. Baring remained alone in deep thought, until his servant informed him that lunch was waiting.

"It is very strange," he muttered as he went downstairs, "very strange."

After lunch he went upstairs again, and carefully cleaned and oiled the dagger. Finally, he sharpened it on a fine hone, and locked it away in a drawer.

A day or two later Mr. Rocca called again.

"I should like to have another look at that dagger of yours," he said.

"Did you not examine it sufficiently the other day?" rejoined Mr. Baring, rather irritably.

His companion looked at him in some surprise.

"If it is troubling you—" he began.

"Oh, it's no trouble at all," returned Mr. Baring. "I will fetch it at once," and he did so.

"Why what on earth have you done to it?" inquired his friend in astonishment; "you have quite spoilt it as an antique specimen."

"Give it back to me," answered the other, in suppressed tones, and snatching it away, left the room.

Puzzled, and somewhat offended, Mr. Rocca went home, resolved not to visit Mr. Baring again until he had apologised for his strange conduct. About a week later, however, he met him out walking, and was shocked to see the change in his appearance.

"What is the matter with you?" he inquired, forgetting his resentment in his alarm at seeing how ill his friend looked.

"I am very ill," replied Mr. Baring, scarcely looking at him.

"But what is it? Why do you not consult a doctor?"

"I daren't. He would say I was going mad."

"My dear fellow, I am very sorry," said Mr. Rocca, in concerned tones. "Come and dine with me this evening and have a game of piquet."

"Thank you. You are very kind, but I would really rather not."

"Oh, nonsense! I shall expect you."

The other smiled faintly, but made no reply.

"Come, say yes, like a good fellow."

"If I must, I must," rejoined Mr. Baring, speaking half to himself.

"That is right. At seven o'clock then you will be at my house."

Mr. Baring went home, and on reaching his room drew the Venetian dagger from beneath his coat, and flung it on to the floor.

"Curse you!" he cried. "I believe the foul fiend himself forged you."

Then he sat down, and drawing paper and ink towards

him, began to write. At a quarter to seven he rose, dressed, and placing the dagger in the breast of his coat, set off for Mr. Rocca's house, where he met with a most cordial reception. They sat down to an excellent dinner, and afterwards adjourned to the library.

"Tell me," said Mr. Baring abruptly, "do you believe in possession?"

"In possession?" repeated his companion wordlessly.

"Yes, yes; you know what I mean—demoniacal possession."

"I do not quite follow you," answered Mr. Rocca.

"I mean by 'possession,' a sort of horrible and unearthly influence, compelling a man to commit a crime."

His host looked at him in some alarm.

"My dear Baring, I really think you ought to see a doctor," he began, but the other interrupted him.

"Yes, I daresay; and be clapped into a lunatic asylum. No, thank you. Upon my soul, though, I half believe I am insane, sometimes," he added, with a dreary laugh.

Mr. Rocca was silent for a moment. "Let us have a game of piquet," he suggested at last.

"Very good; and let us play pretty high. I want excitement and distraction."

"Anything you please."

Mr. Baring won considerably, and towards midnight rose to take his leave. His host followed him into the hall, and stood talking while the butler helped him on with his coat, and unbarred the door.

"Take my advice," said Mr. Rocca; "consult a doctor, or go for change of air, and forget all about demoniacal possession."

Mr. Baring turned and looked at him with a strange expression. "There," he whispered, excitedly; "did you see it—hear it?" and with a wild cry he drew forth the dagger and stabbed his friend to the heart.

Mr. Rocca fell dead without uttering a sound, but the butler gave a loud shout of horror and alarm, and this seemed to rouse Mr. Baring, who had stood still, gazing vacantly before him. He sprang forward, evading the man who tried to stop him, and fled.

As soon as assistance could be procured the butler went to Mr. Baring's house and had him arrested. They found him sitting in his room, busily engaged writing. He offered no resistance, and, indeed, scarcely seemed to understand what the constables had come for, or where they were going to take him.

An inquest was held, but when brought before the magistrates afterwards, Mr. Baring said that he would reserve his defence.

The county assizes took place in due course, and the court was densely packed when Mr. Baring's case came on. There was a breathless silence when he rose to read his defence. After relating the circumstances in which he had procured the fatal weapon, he continued thus:—

"Before describing to you the events which ended in the death of my unfortunate friend, it will be necessary for me to ask you, Gentlemen of the Jury, to consider certain scientific facts. You are all aware that the human voice can be stored up for an indefinite time, and by means of the phonograph, reproduced over and over again; also, that if you stand for the fraction of a second before the exposed plate of the photographic camera, your likeness is impressed upon the sensitive surface.

"I need not multiply instances. All I wish you to realise is this—An impression, be it a touch, a sound, or a thought *never dies*. Place your hand for a moment upon a looking-glass, and when you remove it, you will see the impression which gradually fades away until it is no longer visible. You can put away that glass for weeks, and when you bring it forth again you have only to breathe upon it to see the impression of your hand appear once more. The words 'temporal,' 'transient,' 'fleeting,' should be expunged from the dictionaries. Every thought, word, and deed exists in some form to all eternity. The effects of good are everlasting; the effects of evil," his voice dropped, and became hollow with emotion, "are everlasting too. The day I invited Mr. Hubert Rocca to my house and showed him the dagger which was produced in court just now, I felt the impulse to plunge it into his breast, and from that hour scarcely any other thought possessed my brain. I used to hear a voice continually uttering these words, 'Fulfil mine oath. The dagger has slept too long; rebaptise it again in blood.'

"After awhile, my eyesight seemed to fail. I beheld everything through a faint mist, which often assumed fantas

tic shapes. By-and-by it took a more defined form, and at last resolved itself into the appearance of a tall man, dressed in the Venetian costume of the sixteenth century. This spectre never left me until the night I committed the crime with which I am charged. Since then I have not seen it, neither have I heard the voice which was always in my ear, urging me to bury the dagger to the hilt in Rocca's breast. Gentlemen of the Jury, my defence is this: I was but an agent in the hand of fate—fate which is inexorable, and from whom no man can escape."

Concluding thus, he sat down, and the judge having briefly summed up, the jury retired to consider their verdict.

On their return, the foreman replied to the usual question:—

"We find the prisoner guilty, but are of opinion that he is of unsound mind."

Accordingly the sentence was delivered that he should be "detained in a criminal lunatic asylum during her Majesty's pleasure."

A Photographic Ghost Story.

From "Allgemeine Anzeigeblat für Photographie Frankfurt a.m."
Copied into *Neue Spiritualistische Blaetter*.

I HAVE been established for a number of years as a photographer, but my business has very much languished in later times. People say I drink too much and don't attend to my business, which is of course pure envy.

One day as I was finishing my frugal breakfast there came into my rooms a beautiful lady, and requested to have a sitting, as her husband must have a picture of her. I acceded to her wish, and took her in several positions. When I came out of the dark chamber the lady had entirely disappeared. The case was a serious one, for I feared I should receive no pay. Nevertheless I finished up the picture in the hope that the lady would some day appear again and pay for them. And sure enough some days after they were finished up the lady came. She was astonished very much at the finish, although the pictures appeared to me to be a little too dark. At the close of the interview she selected one of the photographs with the expression, "Hang this picture in your showcase and write on it Margaret Arlington." This surprised me, as you know ladies are usually quite annoyed if their pictures are thus hung up in a showcase. I believed, therefore, that I had before me an actress. I thanked her, and she offered me a 50-mark bill. As the order came to 25 marks I hastened into a drug store on the street to make the change necessary, as I had not the amount in my pocket. On going out I took the selected photograph with me to put it immediately in the showcase, so that the lady on leaving the house might see it put up there.

"Herr Pilmeyer," said I to the apothecary, "will you be so good as to give me the change for this, so I may return 25 marks of it?" and offered him the bill, or supposed at least I was doing so. "How much is it?" asked the apothecary. "Fifty marks," I answered. "But where?" I looked at my outstretched hand; it was empty, and I held nothing in my hand. I looked on the counter. We both looked for it. The assistant helped. The bill was not to be found. I hastened back and looked over the entire way I had come, but in vain; the bank-note was and remained a vanished thing. What would the lady say, who was waiting upstairs for the change? I resolved at last to tell her about the matter. Perhaps I had not received the bill at all from her hands.

"Gracious lady!" I began, stepping into the room. But the lady had vanished, while the five pictures were lying on the table. A mysterious affair! Finally I quieted myself with the thought that some actress had played me a trick to bring her some fame. I resolved at all events to leave the picture in the showcase, and it was well that I did so. Daily, almost, people came to get pictures taken with the words, "The picture of the beautiful blonde in your case is so wonderfully finished, &c." The story brought me much money, and I really cherished no grudge against the lady. I would have been glad to give the five pictures and thank her besides.

I also had the thought I should hear from her again, and so it came out. A year afterwards there came one day a gentleman in a long overcoat and travelling cap into the studio. He was pale, and very much excited. "You have a photograph of a pretty blonde lady in your showcase. Is its name not Margaret Arlington?" "Yes," I answered, "so the lady was named. Do you know the lady?" he continued. "Only through the taking of the pictures," I answered. "Is she, perhaps, an acquaintance of yours?" I inquired further. "It is my wife," said the gentleman, "but I did not know of this picture being taken. So?" said I. "The lady said to me that her husband desired a picture of her, since she had been separated from him for a long time." The gentleman grew pale. "When was the picture taken?" he inquired trembling. "A year ago," I answered. "My wife died five years ago," said the gentleman, "and you may think me crazy if I relate to you that she appeared to me last night in a dream, and said to me, 'Go to the city, examine all the showcases of photographers, and you will find my likeness.' The dream was so vivid that I obeyed, and found at your place the likeness." I related to him the circumstances, and we were at the close convinced beyond a doubt that the spirit of the lady had come to have her picture taken. I handed him the five photographs; they were in fact the best photographs I ever took, and he insisted on paying for them. I refused, but he placed a 500-mark bill on the table and departed.

This is my ghost story. Every one has experienced something of the same thing, but no one believes what the other relates, and yet mine is the sacred truth.

The Backwoodsman's Story.

"SELL him? my dog?"

The man stepped down from the prostrate tree trunk, leaving his axe where his last vigorous stroke had buried it to the eye in the clean, solid timber, and removing his hat, slowly wiped the perspiration from his brow and face; then, running his fingers through his short, thick hair, and regarding the two young sportsmen with a good-natured, quizzical expression, he continued:

"Well no—not much, I think. I couldn't do it, gentlemen, even to oblige a friend. You see he belongs to the family, and it might cause hard feelings."

The quizzical manner suddenly changed to one of eager interest, as his eyes wandered to their splendid Remington breech-loaders, and he civilly asked permission to look at them, at the same time inviting the young men to take seats on the fallen tree and rest themselves, and chat awhile; the dog—a pure Newfoundland, by-the-way, a splendid fellow, as large as a yearling calf, with a broad, well-rounded forehead, and full, brown eyes of almost human intelligence—standing by and looking on with the mien and gravity of a judge.

The backwoodsman examined the elegantly finished fowling-pieces, one after the other, giving vent to his admiration by short ejaculatory remarks the while.

"Pretty pieces," he said, as he returned the last to its owner; "and I judge they do good execution, too, by the looks of your game-bags. Ah, there ain't much game about here now. Ten years ago it was different, though then the large game was about all gone. Oh, yes, I shoot—I use a rifle, though"—this last was spoken hesitatingly, as though deprecating the implied assumption of superior skill. "I never owned a shotgun. I've got a good rifle; she ain't showy—she wouldn't look like much beside those pieces of yours—but she's true as steel."

"See here! you asked me if I would sell my dog. Now, just let me tell you a little experience of mine, that'll convince you that money can't tempt me to part with him or my rifle."

"It was a little over four years ago that it happened. We'd lived here two years, my wife and I, and had got quite a sizable clearing made, and I was cutting my first wheat crop—about two acres, and pretty grain, too. The field was some forty rods from the house, most of the way through a grove of maples I had left standing for a sugar-bush. I'd finished cutting my wheat in the forenoon, and as I was about going out after dinner to rake and bind and put it up, my wife asked me if I couldn't take the child with me for a while, he pestered her so about a piece of work she was in a hurry to get done. He was our first boy, a keen little fellow, three years old, and nothing pleased him better than to go out with me; but I didn't take him often for fear of rattlesnakes. I hadn't seen any that summer, and we began to think less about them. I said I'd take the boy, and Monarch—that's the dog here—could watch him. Having the child to carry, I suppose, was the reason I forgot my gun; for I almost always took it with me."

"Well, I'd been at work about an hour, probably, the boy keeping close around me for a while—bothering me like the mischief, too—when he got to amusing himself by picking up straws and flowers, and one thing or another, and playing with the dog, who kept close with him, and I forgot all about him for a few minutes."

"Suddenly remembering, I looked around, and saw him sitting, or half lying rather, leaning against a clean smooth stump, fast asleep, his feet spread apart, and his lap full of wheat-heads and flowers and things that he had been playing with. Monarch was lying a little way off, winking sleepily, but watching him faithfully between winks. I thought to myself I'd stop in a few minutes, and carry him to the house; so I said to Monarch, 'Take care of him, old fellow,' and turned to my work again."

"It couldn't have been five minutes, and I'd glanced that way several times, though I was working further away from them all the time, when the first I knew the dog was a-hold of my sleeve, whining and trembling, and his bristles raised, as though in the greatest terror."

"I dropped the bundle I was binding, and started toward the child, but stopped when I got within about two rods or so of him, almost paralysed with horror: for there—my God! I hope I may never see such a sight again; it makes my blood curdle just to think of it now—right between his legs, almost touching his white, tender flesh, was an enormous rattlesnake, coiled and ready for his deadly spring."

"Without doubt it was the starting up of the dog that arrested it and put it on the defensive—though why he did not discover it sooner is what I can't account for. He was young then, and hadn't had much experience, and he might have dropped asleep for a minute, and the snake being to leeward of him, he didn't get the scent of it until it was close to the child."

"If it had been a common black snake, or any kind but a venomous one, he would have made no bones of shaking the life out of it, but all animals, as far as I know, have an instinctive fear of a rattlesnake, and probably of all poisonous reptiles."

"As for me—well, I've been in situations that were trying to a man's courage, and I flatter myself that no one who knows me would call me a coward; but there's something about a snake that chills my blood—fills me with such dread and horror as nothing else can. It is a feeling that has nothing to do with cowardice or fear. It is a magnetism—a devilish magnetism—a magnetism of horror, or something past explaining."

"My mind was a chaos. I could realise but one thing, clearly, and that was the peril of my child, and my inability to rescue him without hastening the catastrophe which I would have risked my life to avert. I wrung my hands in despair, my eyes fixed, as though fascinated, upon the terrible spectacle!"

"All at once, at some noise which either I or the dog made in moving, the reptile raised its head, evidently to listen. 'Oh, my gun! my gun!' I thought, and I suppose I said the words. It was the first time I had thought of it, and I fairly gnashed my teeth in rage at having left it at home. I cursed myself, and tore my hair. 'Oh!' I thought; 'with only my faithful rifle in my hands, how quickly I would make an end of the devilish thing.'"

"I dared not go to the house for it, for the child might move a hand or foot at any moment; and that moment I knew would seal

his death-warrant if I were not there to snatch him and run to the house with all my might for antidotes for the poison. Suddenly it occurred to me to send Monarch for my gun—we had taught him to carry things to and from the field—a basket, or my coat, or such like—and I turned, expecting to find him at my side. He was gone, nowhere to be seen.

"Again I fell into a frenzy of rage and despair, and cursed him as an ungrateful, cowardly brute, thus to desert me in the time of sorest need, and I vowed in my heart that I would shoot him the moment I could again lay hands upon my gun.

"Talk about moments being hours! they were years, centuries—those that followed, while I walked back and forth there, moving cautiously from mere instinct more than design.

"I stopped at last, and said to myself: 'I will think! I will do something! There must be some way that I can destroy it without hurting my boy!' and then a panting, sobbing breath, close beside me, made me turn to look, just as Monarch, the grand old fellow, sunk breathless at my feet, my rifle dropping from his jaws as he fell.

"Yes, he'd been to the house to get it, the noble fellow. My wife said he was nearly frantic till she gave it to him. He barked and whined and dragged her from her chair and across the room to where the gun hung, tearing her sleeves and wounding her arm with his teeth in doing it. She wound a large cotton handkerchief about the lock of the gun to guard it, and to give him a better hold, and gave it to him, and then followed as fast as she could, knowing that something unusual was the matter.

"You may easily believe that I was not long in picking up that gun and tearing the handkerchief from around it. I had put in the charge that morning, but I took off the cap and put on another, to make all sure. I was nearly wild with haste, but I did not make one false motion, and my nerves were steady as a clock, I hadn't the slightest misgiving as to the result of my shot, after I had made sure all was right about the gun. I took a position where I could shoot across the boy's legs, of course, and then laid myself at my length upon the ground, and drew the breech to my shoulder.

"Oh! the sensation of perfect rapture that I felt when my cheek pressed the cool, polished wood of the stock! Never was touch so sweet as that! I'm ashamed to tell it, and I could have pounded myself at the time for being so womanish, but the tears sprang to my eyes and blinded me, so that I was obliged to wait and dry them by my shirt-sleeves before I could distinguish the sights of the rifle. Oh, how I grudged the time thus wasted, for every moment was priceless. If the child should stir now, when a moment would save him! Again I drew the gun into position.

"There, you devil!' I said, through my shut teeth, 'now raise your head again!' and with my foot I snapped a stick which I had in readiness for the purpose. Up went the cursed head, and the next instant I pulled the trigger. Simultaneously with the report, it seemed to me, I sprang to my feet, and with three bounds I snatched my boy away from the touch of the writhing monster before he was fairly awake. I remember that much, and then I grew deathly sick, and I vow I did faint that time. And the next I realised I was lying on the ground, my wife bending over me, Monarch licking my hands and whining, and my boy standing by his mother, holding to her dress, looking on with big, wondering eyes. There were one or two spots of blood on his dress and limbs, spattered by the writhing serpent, but he was safe and sound, thank God!"

Strange Rooms.

A PECULIAR feature of many old country houses is the so-called strange room, around which the atmosphere of mystery has long clung. In certain cases such rooms have gained an unenviable notoriety from having been the scene, in days gone by, of some tragic occurrence, the memory of which has survived in the local legend or tradition. One of the most remarkable rooms of this description is that of Glamis Castle, the seat of Lord Strathmore. It is known as the "Secret Room" of the Castle, and although every other part of the Castle has been satisfactorily explored, the search for this celebrated chamber has been in vain. It is said none are supposed to be acquainted with its locality save Lord Strathmore, his heir, and the factor of the estate, who are bound not to reveal it unless to their successors in the secret. According to one tradition, it appears that during one of the feuds between the Lindsays and the Ogilvies, a number of the latter class, flying from their enemies, came to Glamis Castle, and begged hospitality of the owner. He admitted them, and, on the plea of hiding them, he secured them all in this room, and there left them to starve. Their bones, it is averred, lie there to this day, the sight of which, it has been stated, so appalled the late Lord Strathmore on entering the room that he had it walled up. A room of a similar nature exists at Netherall, near Maryport, Cumberland, the seat of the old family of Senhouse, its exact position being only known to two persons—the heir-at-law and the family solicitor. This strange room has no window, and, despite every attempt to discover its whereabouts, has hitherto baffled detection. At Rushen Castle, Isle of Man, is said to be an apartment which has never been opened in the memory of man. Various explanations have been given to account for this circumstance, one being that the old place was once inhabited by giants, who were dislodged by Merlin, and such as were not driven away remain spellbound beneath the castle. But most of these mysterious rooms, like the locked chamber of Blue Beard, are not open to the vulgar gaze, a fact which has naturally perpetuated the curiosity attached to them.

Walpole, writing of Berkeley Castle, says: "The room shown for the murder of Edward II., and the shrieks of an agonising king, I verily believe to be genuine. It is a dismal chamber, almost at the top of the house, quite detached, and to be approached only by a kind of footbridge." At Broughton Castle there is a curiously designed room, which at one time or another has excited considerable interest. According to Lord Nugent, in his "Memorials of Hampden," this room is so contrived, by being surrounded by thick stone walls and casemated, that no sound from within can be heard. The room appears to have been built about the time of King John, and "is reported, on very doubtful grounds of tradition, to have been the room used for the

sittings of the Puritans." Occasionally, no doubt, some of the rooms which have attracted sightseers, on account of their architectural peculiarities, were purposely intended for concealment in times of political commotion. Of the numerous stories told of the mysterious death of Lord Lovell, one recorded by Andrews, in his "History of Great Britain" (1794-5), tells us how, on the demolition of a very old house, formerly the patrimony of the Lovells, about a century ago, there was found in a small chamber, so secret that the farmer who inhabited the house knew it not, the remains of an immured being, and such remnants of barrels and jars as appeared to justify the idea of that chamber having been used as a place of refuge for the lord of the mansion; and that, after consuming the stores which he had provided in case of a disastrous event, he died unknown even to his servants and tenants. Some rooms, again, have acquired a strange notoriety from certain peculiarities of a somewhat gruesome character. There is, for example, at old Osbaldeston Hall a room whose walls are smeared with several red marks, which, tradition states, can never be obliterated. They have some resemblance to blood, and are considered to have been caused when one of the family was brutally murdered. The story goes that, during a great family gathering at Osbaldeston Hall, differences arose which terminated in a fatal quarrel—Thomas Osbaldeston drawing his sword and slaying his brother-in-law without resistance. Ever since that ill-omened occasion the room has been haunted. Littlecot House, the ancient seat of the Darrells, is renowned, writes Macaulay, "not more on account of its venerable architecture and furniture, than on account of a horrible and mysterious crime which was perpetrated there in the days of the Tudors." One of the bedchambers, which is said to have been the scene of a terrible murder, contains a bedstead with blue furniture, which time has made dingy and threadbare. In the bottom of one of the bed-curtains is shown a strange place, where a small piece has been "cut out and sewn in again." The crime alluded to by Lord Macaulay in connection with this room was first divulged to the general public in a note which Sir Walter Scott appended to the fifth canto of his "Rokeby." But since the publication of that poem the whole subject has been re-examined, with the result that the mysterious story of murder associated with this room in Littlecot Hall is, in its main and most prominent features, true, the bedstead, with a piece of the curtain cut out and sewn in again, identifying the spot as the scene of the tragic act—full particulars of which will be found in the early volumes of the *Wilts Archaeological Magazine*.

With such tales of horror attached to their guilty walls, it is not surprising that many of the rooms in our old country houses have long been said to be troubled with strange noises, and to have an uncanny aspect. Wye-Coller Hall, near Colne, which was long the seat of the Cunliffes of Billington, has a room which the timid have long avoided. Once a year, it is said, a spectre horseman visits this house, and makes his way up the broad oaken stairs into a certain room, from whence "dreadful screams, as from a woman, are heard, which soon subside into groans." The story goes, that "One of the Cunliffes murdered his wife in that room, and that the spectre horseman is the ghost of the murderer, who is doomed to pay an annual visit to the house of his victim. She is said to have predicted the extinction of the family, which has literally been fulfilled." A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* gives a curious account of a house at Taunton which possessed a "luminous chamber," for, as common report said, "the room had a light of its own." Indeed, as an eye-witness observed, "after dark a central window was generally illuminated. All the other windows were dark, but from this was a wan, dreary light visible; and as the owners had deserted the place, and it had no occupant, the lighted window became a puzzle." At Creslow Manor House, Buckinghamshire, there is a mysterious room, which, although furnished as a bedroom, is rarely used, for it is said that it cannot be entered, even in the day time, without trepidation and awe. According to common report, this room, which is situated in the most ancient portion of the building, is haunted by the restless spirit of a lady long since deceased. Then there is Caverley Hall, in Yorkshire, which was the scene of a terrible tragedy in the seventeenth century. One room is noteworthy on account of its fine oaken panelling specimens of fresco work, and also because it was in there that the blood was shed which has ever since rendered the room "for ever dreadful and dreaded." Rooms which have thus acquired an unenviable notoriety are to be met with throughout the country; while legendary lore has curious stories to tell of certain strange rooms in houses built under peculiar circumstances. A German tale relates how a house in Eiderstedt has 99 windows, having been built by Satanic agency. Just, however, as the hundredth window was about to be put in, a cock crew, whereupon the Evil One took his departure. No one has ever been able to put in the pane, nor will any furniture remain in the room where it is wanting. Despite all efforts to complete the room, it still remains in its unfinished state.—*Evening Standard*.

Hauntings and Ghostly Visitations.

A few months ago Mr. W. H. Robinson lectured on the above subject in the Cordwainers' Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. He commenced by reading Longfellow's poem, beginning "All houses in which men have lived and died are haunted," and told of two cases of house haunting in the locality. The late Alderman Barkas was permitted to see the manifestations in one of the houses. He saw the door of a press thrown open by invisible hands, and pots and pans tossed into the middle of the floor. The figures of two ladies were often seen moving about the house. In the Gateshead house the apparition of a man was often seen. He had heard of a case in Newcastle where a professional man had to leave his house on account of unaccountable noises that kept his children from sleeping. Naturally, they did not want it to be known, and it was out of regard for the wishes of the family at Birtley that he refrained from going into the case, which a broad and liberal newspaper, *The Leader*, had published. Mr. Robinson referred to the sixty authenticated cases noted by Mr. Robert Owen in his "Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World," and said he believed that in every case of house haunting it would be found there was either a spirit in trouble and wanting release, or for some purpose of revenge or retribution. He instanced the case of haunting in the house of the Wesleys, recorded

in their journals, and said he thought (contrary to the belief of the elder Wesley, that it was because of his wife's disloyalty to the sovereign) they were signs of the readiness of spiritual powers to aid the Wesleys in the mission which they were to undertake. It was not gifted to every one any more now than of old "to see visions and dream dreams." Scientists spoke of two facts in nature—matter and force; they added a third—spirit—and maintained that in man was the trinity. Spirit was an essence from God that would be found not only in this world, but throughout the universe. There was first, he said, their material body. Within that there was an astral body, which could be seen by the clairvoyant. The spirit was always invisible. Science asserted the existence of a material medium—the luminiferous ether—and ascribed to it powers and properties which were as utterly incomprehensible as spirit. It told them that this ether was of so attenuated and elastic a nature that the granite rock or the hardened steel could not exclude its presence and impede its motion; that its power of resistance to pressure was upwards of seventeen billions of pounds, and yet they moved through it constantly without feeling it; that though it touched them on every side no touch of theirs could detect it; that its vibrations were so rapid that trillions of them entered the eye in the briefest glance they could take at any object; that it could convey a message to a distance equal to the circumference of the globe in the seventh part of a second. In short, science told them that there were about us sights to which we were blind, sounds to which we were deaf, heat, magnetism, and electricity to which we were insensible. With such facts as these, how could there be any scientific objection to the properties of what they meant by a spiritual body? He held that this spiritual power could be developed by faith and prayer; that the Pentecostal power was as possible now as at the dawn of Christianity; and that, apart from dogma and sectarianism, ministers should be reservoirs of spiritual magnetism sufficient to regenerate the world. (Loud applause.)—The President (Mr. Kersey) said that the Proctor family had a journal, kept by the late Mr. Proctor, of the hauntings at Willington Mill, and which he hoped and believed would one day be published. It would be a record from as reliable a source as it was possible to have.

Christ the Sun.

BY HUGH JUNOR BROWNE.

TRACING religion back as far as we possess materials for so doing, Phallic worship, in which the sexual organs formed the leading symbols, appears to be the most ancient, and this in the course of time merged into the astronomical religion.

The Sun, it must be admitted, is the best emblem that man possesses of divinity, as it is it that supplieth "that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is this great orb that shines upon every nation, savage and civilised, that supplies those fructifying rays that give food to all—to the just and to the unjust; it may therefore be truly said to be no respecter of persons. The Sun also is the best symbol for that everlasting truth which will in time enable man to walk uprightly without stumbling, and unite all in one grand universal brotherhood.

The magi, or wise men of the East, whom we read in olden times—viz., the ancient sages of India, Persia, and Egypt—were the *savants* or philosophers of the times and countries in which they lived. They worshipped the Sun, Moon, and stars simply as visible representatives of ideas. Thus, while to the initiated the worship of the Sun was merely as the symbol of light, intellectual and spiritual, the ignorant and uninitiated worshipped the Sun, the Moon, and the stars as actual deities.

The successors of these sages—viz.: the priests—in like manner, continued to control the minds of the masses by forming the primitive theologies into systems and creating gods and goddesses to suit their own purposes. These priests were perfectly aware of the underlying truth beneath all these images, but from interested motives they sought to hide the truth from the vulgar, giving their dupes merely the outward symbols so as to keep them in ignorance and thereby subservient to priestcraft.

At length, through the advancement of Grecian philosophy, the absurdities of the various pagan religions became apparent to the more enlightened and wealthy, who in consequence withdrew their countenance and support from the different pagan temples. Owing to their withdrawal, the priests of the various pagan sects combined, in order to preserve their status, to formulate and proclaim a new religious system, which, while it retained esoterically the leading symbols and doctrines of the old religions, embraced also the highest teachings of the philosophy of the age, thereby to secure its acceptance by all classes of society. It was in the time of Constantine that the numerous pagan gods and goddesses merged into the new virgin-born God, the ancient astronomical symbols being perpetuated in the new religion.

Grecian philosophy was to the ancient world what scientific investigation is to the modern; being opposed to superstition, it was vindictively crushed out (at a terrible cost to humanity) by ecclesiasticism, by which it was superseded. While philosophy taught that all distinctions which existed among men were chiefly the results of natural conditions, ecclesiasticism impudently denied the inherent right of man to the possession of individual mental freedom, and found favour with the world by pandering to its ignorance and credulity with specious promises of absolution from sins and future rewards to all who would acknowledge its claims to jurisdiction over the race.

The conception of the new man-God was evidently borrowed by his priestly creators from the Egyptian theology, in which Horus is represented as the son of Osiris (the Sun) and Isis (the Earth). Thus the sun-God, or son of God, became the offspring of the Sun and Earth, the union of the Sun and Earth being the apparent source of creative power by whom all things are made, and without whom was not anything made that was made; so all life centres in them. These subtle priests, therefore, gave to their God incarnate (in whom they comprised the fulness of the Godhead bodily) power over all things in heaven and on earth; at the same time they knavishly assumed to themselves, as his deputies, the power of remission of sins. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they

are retained." This was their great master-stroke, as it held out an inducement which the older forms of paganism did not claim to possess.

The popular religion of our day is, therefore, merely reformed paganism, or civilised heathenism, and, like all other established religions, its origin is astronomical, and in order to preserve the old ideas all religions (including Christianity) have been veiled under astronomical signs. Consequently, the various ancient Scriptures are, to a very large extent, merely allegorical representations, the exoteric or literal meaning of which is not the real one.

The Old Testament is simply Hebrew mythology, or the Jewish version of an astronomical allegory; for, taken in its esoteric meaning, it is largely composed of the most absurd fables, that are a standing disgrace to the intelligence of the age we live in. Take, for example, the stories of a serpent speaking to a woman; of an ass talking to a man; of a whale swallowing another man, &c. In a few instances we find the esoteric meaning openly given; for instance, in Job (to prove that heavenly laws never alter), we find it written: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"—(Job. xxxviii, 31, 32.)

It is worthy of remark that there are twelve signs in the zodiac, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, and that Elisha, which means "God that saves," or the Sun, is anciently represented as ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. Moses represents Aquarius, or Neptune, whose dwelling is where the Sun rises at the equinox; he is, therefore, said to be saved from, or drawn out of, the water. Esau represents Hercules with the lion's skin, and therefore is all over like a hairy garment. John the Baptist also represents Aquarius, or the water-bearer.

Mr. W. Oxley has clearly demonstrated the astro-masonic character of the leading Biblical statements. He declares them to be "an intellectual and spiritual adaptation of solar, sidereal, and planetary motions and positions, which form the base, scientifically true, of an allegory that has supplied the moral and physical life-force to hundreds of thousands of human beings." He further observes: "All ancient Scriptures bear the same impress, which is at once astronomical and astrological. . . . We are now in actual possession of the veritable system on which the whole of the Bible was based."

The sacred bull of the Brahmans, the Apis of the Egyptians, the Baal or bull of the Chaldeans, the bull sacrificed by the Persians in the symbolic mysteries of Mithra, and the bull seen by Ezekiel in the heavens (see Ezek. i.), represented both the active or masculine principle in nature and likewise the constellation Taurus, or the bull, in the zodiac, styled in the Jewish Scriptures Jehovah, or the Great I Am, who was jealous of the bulls of Bashan, and of all other bulls or gods. The bull was the emblematical symbol of the Sun at the vernal equinox in the sign of Taurus, the celestial bull. As has been truly remarked—"The bull certainly did pertain to astronomical myths among those nations who made him an object of worship; otherwise, why those extended wings attached to the bulls of Chaldea and Persia in every instance, if they were not flying bulls that were represented? and what bull other than the bull of the zodiac ever so much as appeared to fly? The outward worship of the celestial bull was twenty-one hundred years older than the outward worship of the celestial lamb; the bull having preceded the ram at the vernal equinox by that period. In Persia there was a religion in which the bull was the leading symbol, contemporary with the Baal or Bel of the Sun-worship of the Chaldeans; which at a later period, when the vernal equinox occurred in the sign of the lamb, or agni of the Zoroastrian religion, gave place to the worship of the lamb. So in Egypt the worship of the sacred bull, Apis, was contemporary with the Baal or bull-worship of Chaldea and Persia, but was afterwards substituted by the ascendancy of the ram, when the latter took the place of the bull at the vernal equinox. The Sun, whether at the vernal equinox in the bull or the lamb, or ram, was the same Sun and the same object of worship." In Revelation iv. 6 to 9, the second beast, the celestial bull-calf, is manifestly referred to as having relation to the worship of the celestial lamb, the Anointed One, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world by dissipating the cold of winter. This vision evidently related to the state of the heavens at the vernal equinox some eighteen centuries ago, when the Sun reached that point of its apparent annual course, no longer in the sign of the bull, but in the sign of the lamb, as the celestial sign in which the Sun at that time rose to reign in glory during the summer months was regarded by the Persians and the Jews. The sea of glass represented the azure dome of heaven, and the throne the position of the Sun in the sign of Aries or Agni. The four beasts stood for the four seasons, or the zodiacal constellations—Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, and the Eagle or substitute for Scorpio. There were also four evangelists. The six wings of each of the four beasts represented the six hours which each of these constellations occupied in passing from the horizon to the zenith, making together twenty-four hours, or length of time of the diurnal revolution of the earth, which like the beasts and the four and twenty elders, rests not day nor night, for it revolves unceasingly around the Sun—the king of heaven—which, either symbolically or otherwise, has been the object of veneration and worship for ages of millions upon millions of earth's inhabitants.

The Sun is the fundamental symbol of every religion; from its being everywhere a visible manifestation of God it has been accepted as "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." It is upon this kingly orb that man depends for light and life, through the influence of which are produced all things needful to existence. To this day the course of the Sun not only controls both the secular and ecclesiastical calendars of the Christian Church, and the character and times of the festivals held in honour of Christ, but actually coincides with the main circumstances narrated of his life, from his conception and birth to his ascension and reception into heaven; and the same remarks apply equally to Krishna of the Hindoos, Mithra of the Persians, Osiris of the Egyptians, and other ancient man-gods.

Sir Isaac Newton was the layman who first announced to the world that the Christian festivals were determined upon an astronomical basis. The day assigned to the birth of the Sun-God of all the other religions was the same as that assigned, without a particle of

historical evidence, by the Church to Christ. The shortest day (i.e. north of the Equator) being December 21st, his birthday is put on to the 25th, the first day that shows any elongation, and which is, therefore the actual commencement of the year; the 21st, on which the Sun reaches his lowest point—when his worshippers are supposed to be filled with alarm lest their lord and master fail to rise again—is assigned to the doubting apostle Thomas.

Christmas has come and the Sun is born; but winter has still a long career to run, and consequently the Sun, as yet a feeble infant, has to undergo a series of struggles with the powers of darkness. And just as we find the infant Christ exposed to the perils celebrated on Innocents' Day, we find the various representation of the Sun with difficulty and danger emerging into childhood. In the case of the Hindoo deity Krishna—who was also said to have been born on the 25th December, cradled among shepherds, and greeted at his birth by an angelic chorus—a massacre of children was ordered by a jealous king named Cansa, in exact correspondence with the slaughter afterwards ascribed to Herod. In every case, however, the Sun-God escapes all dangers and grows in stature and favour with God and man, the days gradually gaining on the nights as he rises higher above the horizon until the vernal equinox, when they are equal.

This period of equality constitutes in all the solar religions a serious crisis in the Sun-God's history. For a time things seem to go against him, and mankind are in despair. The change to the south-west monsoon brings equinoctial storms which hide the Sun from their sight. He has succumbed to his foe. They fast long and mourn him dead (as in Lent). But being a God he cannot be holden of death. Nay, by his dying he shall prove himself conqueror over death, and his very death shall be a blessing and redemption for the nations; for the rains by which the Sun has been obscured are essential to the life of the Eastern world. Thus hope returns and despair is changed to joy as, from a point still higher in the heavens than that at which he had disappeared, he shines out with new and greater effulgence. His rising is followed by his final triumph and continued aspect towards the zenith, his kingdom of heaven, whence, in the heat and fruitfulness of summer, he sends down sustenance and comfort for men. But during the equinoctial period of the Sun's rising and ascension he is in the constellation of the *lamb*, as Aries used to be called. This also his is time to *pass over* the equinoctial line from the southern to the northern tropic. Now does the orb of day begin to attain his full powers. Thus in the Apocalypse we find the Lamb adored in the presence of the throne by four living creatures, the cardinal constellations of the heavens, corresponding with the four archangels—viz., Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, and Raphael—and representing the four seasons of the year; and twenty-four elders, who fall down before him crying, "Worthy is the Lamb," &c., representing the twenty-four hours which constitute the solar day, the twelve apostles representing the number of months of the year. The constellation Virgo (the virgin) represents the ideal woman—the Divine mother. Osiris, Mithra, Bacchus, Krishna, and Christ are all represented as having been born at midnight, between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, in a cave or stable. At this moment the constellation Virgo is cut exactly in half by the eastern horizon, the sun itself being beneath the Earth, in the sign of Capricorn, or stable of Augeas, the cleansing of which constituted one of the labours of Hercules, who also represented the Sun. Justin Martyr boasts that Christ was born when the Sun takes its birth in the stable of Augeas, coming as a second Hercules to cleanse a foul world. The Church celebrates the Assumption of the Virgin on 15th August, which is exactly the time of the disappearance of the zodiacal constellation Virgo. 8th September, the date at which Virgo emerges from the Sun's rays so as to be distinctly seen, is the day appointed for the observance of the nativity of the Virgin Mary. The Sun in his descent or passage across the equator is always represented as crucified between the two evil months of November and December. It is the constellation of the serpent, or scorpion, that ushers in the winter, which afflicts the earth five months, and whose tail draws a third part of the stars of heaven.—(See Revelation xii.)

(To be concluded.)

PROSPECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

BATLEY.—Dec. 25: First annual distribution of prizes to the Lyceum scholars in the afternoon. At 6 p.m. Mrs. Taylor, trance speaker and clairvoyant. Monday, Dec. 26, public tea at 4-30, and jollification. Tickets for tea, 6d. and 3d.—J. C.

BATLEY CARR.—The mothers' meeting will hold a pie supper and social on Boxing Day (the 26th). Tickets before the day 9d., on the day 1s. All welcome.—A. S.

BELPER.—Dec. 25, at 6-30 p.m., Service of Song, entitled, "Arnold Christmas Carol." Monday, Dec. 26, tea for Lyceum leaders, elder members, and friends. On Tuesday, for the junior members, teas at 5 o'clock.

BLACKBURN.—All communications for Freckleton Street Society on and after January 1, 1893, to be sent to 43, Roney Street.—Hugh Smith, cor. sec.

BLACKBURN.—The Spiritual Hall (late Good Templars Hall), over Technical Sale Rooms, off Northgate, will be opened on Sunday, Jan. 1, 1893, by the newly formed Blackburn Spiritual Progressive Society. Any mediums desirous of rendering assistance (for expenses only) kindly communicate with the undersigned; also contributions in aid of the furnishing fund may be sent to same address.—Thos. Shepherd, hon. sec., Jubilee Street, Blackburn.

BOLTON SPIRITUAL HALL.—Dec. 24: Sale of work. Tea party at 4-30. Entertainments at intervals by the Lyceum Dramatic Society. Admission: Tea, 8d.; children, 6d.; after tea, 3d.—T. T.

BRADFORD. Boynton St.—Saturday, Dec. 31, New Year's Eve, a ham tea. Tickets, 8d. Public speeches afterwards by several good mediums. Reply to the Rev. Ashcroft's lectures in West Bowling.

BRADFORD. Spicer Street, Little Horton.—Grand social and musical evening, Dec. 26. Refreshments, tea, coffee, cakes, fruit, &c. Games, songs, and phrenological delineations by Mr. A. Widdop. Admission, 4d. each. Come and spend a pleasant evening.

BRIGHOUSE.—Annual tea party and entertainment in the new Spiritual Church, Martin Street, Saturday, Dec. 24. Tickets, 6d.,

children under 12, 4d. Dec. 26 and 27, a grand Christmas tree and sale of work in aid of the furnishing fund. Tickets, 3d. each. Refreshments and amusements provided. Pleased to see friends.—J. Shaw.

BURNLEY. Guy St.—Dec. 24: A potatoe pie supper, at 6. Tickets 6d.; children, 4d.—J. Smith.

BURNLEY. Robinson St.—Dec. 26: Tea party and entertainment.

CARDIFF.—Lyceum tea and Christmas tree, Wednesday, January 4.

Members of Lyceum, free; visitors, 1s. Tickets from any of the officers.

CLOCKHEATON.—A public tea and entertainment in the Oddfellows' Hall, on Dec. 26. Prices, 9d. for tea and entertainment. Entertainment only, 3d.

DARWEN.—Conversazioni, Dec. 24 and 26. A good time expected.

DEWSBURY.—Tea party and fancy stall on Monday, Jan. 2; Tuesday, Jan. 3, a public circle and coffee supper.

FELLING.—Monday, Dec. 26: Annual Tea, at 4 p.m., and Concert. Adults 9d.; children half-price. Friends, honour us with your presence.

HALIFAX.—Grand tea at 4-30 and entertainment at 7, on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. Admission: Adults, 1s.; children under 12, 6d. Entertainment only, 4d. and 2d. Members' free tea, Monday, Jan. 2, at 4-30, after which the election of officers and half-yearly meeting will be held.—F. A. M.

HECKMONDWIKE. Blanket Hall Street.—Tea (at 4-30) and entertainment, Dec. 24. Tickets, tea and entertainment, 9d.; entertainment only, 3d. Christmas Day, 2-30, Mr. Ramsden on "Sociability." 6 p.m., Service of Song, entitled "An Angel in Disguise, or Did He atone." Specially trained choir. Clairvoyance will follow.

HECKMONDWIKE. Thomas Street.—Monday, Dec. 26: Grand tea, at 4-30; entertainment, at 7, by the Lyceumists and amateurs, to consist of a fairy play, "Little Jessie's Dream," concluding with the Costume Choir and Minstrels. Tea and entertainment, 9d.; children, half-price. All welcome.

HUDDERSFIELD. Brook Street.—Monday, Dec. 26: A Tea at 5 p.m. Entertainment and Dance. Tea and Entertainment 9d.; children, 6d. including dance 1s. All cordially invited.

LANCASTER.—Annual Tea Party, Jan. 2. Tickets for tea and entertainment, 9d. The Lyceum children's tea treat, Jan. 3. Teas at 5-30.—J. C. Watkinson.

LEEDS. Psychological Hall.—Monday, Dec. 26: Public Ham Tea. Tickets: Adults, 8d.; children, 4d. Followed by a social evening. Collection. Jan. 1, speaker, Mrs. Beanland; and Monday, the 2nd, for clairvoyance and psychometry.

LEICESTER. 67½, High St.—Tuesday, Dec. 27: Tea party. All welcome.

LEICESTER.—Dec. 29: Professor and Mrs. Timson's annual phrenological banquet, at the Christian Institute, Alfred Street, at 6-30. A long and varied programme of amusement and instruction, songs, recitations, sketches, and instrumental music. Professor and Mrs. Timson will read heads, hands, photos, and handwriting. Refreshments 8-30. Tickets 1s., children 6d.

LONDON. 311, Camberwell New Road, S.W.—A watch night séance, Saturday, Dec. 31, at 10 p.m. for Spiritualists only. Tuesday, Jan. 3, New Year's Social Soirée and supper, at 7 p.m. Tickets, 9d. All friends welcome.—W. G. Coote, hon. sec.

LONDON. Federation Hall, 359, Edgware Road.—Christmas Day, no meeting. A singing class meets every Thursday, at 8-30. For terms, etc., address me as above. With the new year we shall form a new circle for Saturday evenings. Those wishing to join, please write to me at once. It is necessary before joining a circle to become a member of the Federation.—A. F. Tindall, A.T.C.L., hon. sec.

LONDON. Marylebone. 86, High St.—Mr. C. Petersilea, the great inspiration pianist, will give a series of grand concerts on Tuesdays, 27 Dec. and 3, 10, and 17 Jan. Tickets: Reserved seats, 1s.; body of hall, 6d.; and gallery, 3d. Commence at 8. Anniversary tea and social, 31st. Jan. 1: Mr. C. I. Hunt, "O Grave, where is thy victory." 8: Rev. Rowland Young.

LONDON. Shepherd's Bush, 14, Orchard Road.—Jan. 2: At 8, Christmas entertainment, "Nero, or the adventures of a Ghost," interspersed with vocal and instrumental music, by Mr. H. Hunt in character. Tickets 1s., reserved 2s.—J. H. B.

LONDON.—New Year's Ball on Jan. 23, at Portman Rooms. Particulars next week.

LONDON. Islington. Wellington Hall, Upper St.—Jan. 6: Social gathering. Pianoforte recital by Mr. C. Petersilea; New Year's greetings, songs, etc. Cinderella dance. Tickets, 1/-. Commence at 8.

MACCLESFIELD.—Dec. 25, 6-30, Locals. Jan. 1, Special New Year Services, at 2-30 and 6-30. New Year Solos and Anthems from the "Spiritual Songster" by the choir, with orchestral selections and accompaniments. Mr. E. W. Wallis at 2-30, "Is there a Hell?" and at 6-30 on "Ring out the old, ring in the new;" he will also sing two solos. Tuesday, Jan. 3, Annual Tea Party at 5 p.m., and Entertainment at 6-30. A capital programme. Tickets 1s., after tea 6d.—W. Pimblott.

MANCHESTER. Palmerston Street, Greame Street, Moss Side.—Dec. 26. Combination Spiritualists and Lyceum Christmas tea party and entertainment at 5 p.m. Entertainment after. Tickets, adults, 1s., children (not members of Lyceum), 6d., members do., 3d. Members and friends will contribute provisions, fruit, flowers, and necessities for tea. Contributions received by Messrs. Longstaff, Braham, and Leigh.

MANCHESTER SOCIETY.—Annual Tea Party (at 5) and Ball, Monday, Jan. 2, Co-operative Assembly Room, Downing Street. Dancing, 8 till 2 a.m. An efficient band. Tickets: Gent's, 1s. 3d.; ladies, 1s., from the committee.

MANCHESTER. 12, Grosvenor Square, Lower Broughton.—No séances until Jan. 6.

MR. W. NUTTALL, 89, Ramsay Street, Rochdale, is open for dates for 1893. State terms and dates. Mr. Nuttall is an inspirational speaker.

MR. F. W. READ will deliver a course of eight lectures on "Ancient Egypt: its Language, Literature, History, and Religion," on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., in the South Place Institute, Finsbury, London, E.C. First lecture, Jan. 10—admission free. Lime-light illustrations. Tickets for the course of eight lectures, 4s.; single lectures, 1s.

NELSON. Bradley Fold.—Christmas tea party at 4-30, on Dec. 24.

Songs, recitations, and dialogues will be rendered by scholars and friends. Tickets for tea and meeting: adults, 9d.; children under 12, 6d.; meeting only, 3d. All are welcome.—D. H. B.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. — Dec. 24, Mr. E. W. Wallis, at 7-45. Pleasant Saturday evening. Songs, recitations, and a brief discourse on "Making the best of this world." Christmas Day, at 10-45, "How Spiritualism can help us." At 6-30, "The Coming Man and Woman."

NOTTINGHAM. Morley Hall.—A New Year's party will be held in the South Lodge Room, Albert Hall, Monday, Jan. 2. Tickets 1s. and 6d. Help is earnestly solicited. We hope to have a good time.

NOTTINGHAM. Masonic Hall.—Tuesday, Dec. 27: Tea Party, at 5-30, at Albert Hall. All welcome.

NORTH SHIELDS. Camden St.—Tuesday, Dec. 27: Coffee supper, at 8. Tickets 1s.

OLDHAM. Bartlam Place.—Christmas Eve, a coffee and sandwich supper and entertainment. Tickets 6d. Grand tea party and entertainment on Dec. 26. Tickets 8d; children under 12, 6d. New Year's Eve, children's tea party and jollification. Tickets 6d.; children, 4d.

OLDHAM. Temple.—Dec. 25, P.S.A. Miss Papworth will sing "My Bud in Heaven." Mrs. Wood will recite. Mr. Clark and his string band. Mr. Clark will give a violin solo. Tea party on Saturday, 24, at 4-30. Entertainment at 7 prompt; dance at 8-15. Jan. 1, Mr. J. Kay, of Salford.

PENDLETON. Co-operative Hall.—Annual tea party and ball on New Year's Eve, at 4 p.m. Dancing at seven. St. George's band will play for dancing. Gentlemen, 1s. 6d, ladies, 1s. 3d., double, 2s. 6d.

ROCHDALE. Penn Street.—Jan. 1: Anniversary services. Miss Jones, speaker. Special hymns by the choir.

ROCHDALE. Regent Hall.—Christmas Eve, a potato pie supper at 6-30 p.m. Tickets 8d. The proceeds in aid of the sale of work to be held on Good Friday and Saturday. All are welcome.—F. B.

ROCHDALE. Water Street.—Dec. 24: Soirée. 25th, Public circle at 6-30 only. Jan. 1, Opening of the Lyceum at 9-45 a.m. At 3 and 6-30, Madam Henry in place of Miss Walker, as advertised.

SLAITHWAITE.—A Sale of Work in the Meeting Room, Laith Lane, Dec. 26 and 27. To be opened on the 26th, by Mr. J. B. Tetlow, at 2 p.m. Tea provided each day at 5 p.m., at 6d. Admission: Monday, 6d.; Tuesday, 3d. Old friends and new will all be welcome.—S. H. S.

SOWERBY BRIDGE.—Monday, Dec. 26, the annual tea at 4-30, and entertainment. Admission: Tea and entertainment 1s.; entertainment only 6d. Fruit at the interval. Monday, Dec. 19, Mrs. Green, of Heywood, at 7-30.

STOCKPORT.—Dec. 26: Social tea and high class entertainment by Lyceum. Special programme. Sandwich tea, 9d.; children, 4d.; entertainment only, 3d.

WANTED, some really good comic and humorous sketches, laughable and side-splitting; also some good comic sketch songs, with music. Write to Henry Stone, 16, Island Street, Salcombe, near Kingsbridge, S. Devon.

PASSING EVENTS AND COMMENTS.

NO REPORTS NEXT WEEK.

MEDIUMSHIP.—Next week we shall publish a series of important questions regarding mediumship which the *Religio-Philosophica Journal* submits to its readers.

PASTOR FRANK SMITH has at last replied to our demand for his authorities for the charges he made, but fails to supply any evidence. Next week we hope to print his letter and our comments thereon.

MR. GOTT'S BARGAINS.—We have seen samples of cloth, &c., offered by Mr. Gott, and are satisfied that the prices he names are cheap and the materials are good.—(See Advt.)

THE MANCHESTER DEBATE last Tuesday was opened by Mr. J. B. Tetlow in an interesting speech on "What Man has Done for Woman." A lively discussion followed. These meetings will be suspended for a fortnight.

MR. P. S. SMITH has undertaken to superintend the musical department in connection with the Manchester Lyceum. He is a thoroughly competent musician and the singing and other exercises should be greatly improved under his direction.

MRS. GOLDSBROUGH, we regret to learn, has been very unwell, but is now at work once more attending to her numerous patients. She is still weak, and requires all the help and sympathy they can afford. We trust she will be speedily fully restored to her wonted health.

OUR NOTICE LAST WEEK that we should not print reports in this issue has been overlooked, as numerous reports have come to hand. We shall devote four pages to the index next week, and shall not be able to print reports, especially as the monthly plans will occupy considerable space.

MR. F. HEPWORTH, of 151, Camp Road, Leeds, writes: "I am exceedingly obliged for your kindly notice in last week's *Two Worlds* concerning my illness, and, through you, desire to thank all friends who have expressed such heartfelt interest in my health, as their communications have indicated during the past fortnight. I am glad to assure those friends that I am recovering most satisfactorily and have resumed platform duties, and trust I shall be spared a recurrence of the past three weeks' experience." To which we cordially say, Amen.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Friends with poetical inclinations will much oblige by giving us a rest for a month or two; we are overstocked.—J. D.: Many thanks; will do our best to oblige in time.—C. Hunt: Trust you will soon be better. Mrs. Wallis enjoyed her visit very much and is well. Best wishes to all friends.—Jas. Robertson: Yes, was contemplating something of the sort.—H. A. Kersey: Many thanks; will draw special attention to it next week. Hope the *Spiritual Songster* is selling well, as it deserves to do. The new service of song, "An Angel in Disguise," should help to bring it into notice and public favour.—H. Golding: Will try and arouse some interest.—A. C. Helm, Blackpool: You must not suppose you can command entrance into our columns. Discourtesy will certainly not secure that privilege. Your last was written on both sides. We printed what was on the first, but had no time to copy the rest. We also exercise our right to insert as much as we deem we can spare space for. If we printed all that is sent we should need to enlarge our paper by one half at least.

THE SPIRITS TRIUMPHANT: ADMITTED AT LAST BY PSYCHICAL RESEARCHERS.—Rev. Savage discovered facts he was "utterly unable to explain without supposing the presence and agency of invisible intelligences." These facts, he says, "seem to point directly to the conclusion that the self does not die, and that it is, in certain conditions, able to communicate with those still in the flesh." "Mr. F. W. H. Myers," says Mr. Savage, "has published the fact that, as the result of his investigations, he has become convinced of 'CONTINUED PERSONAL EXISTENCE, AND OF AT LEAST OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION';" and Mr. R. Hodgson, LL.D., has given to the world a similar conviction." Let it be borne in mind that Mr. Myers is the leading Psychical Researcher, and Mr. Hodgson is secretary of the American branch of the P.R.S. The spirits are again victorious.

THE ACCIDENT TO MR. WILLIAM WALLACE, THE PIONEER MISSIONARY MEDIUM.—Dear Sir, referring to the serious accident to the above veteran worker (now in his 40th year of mediumship), reported in your last issue, allow me to say that I visited him at 24, Archway Road, Highgate, London, on Sunday last, and found him somewhat improved in health, being able to sit up in bed for a few minutes. His fall, however, has given him a terrible shaking, as might be readily understood, considering his advanced age, viz., in his 78th year; but, as his friends have already remarked, "his face will be seen again in Hyde Park." I was curious to know his treatment (so successfully conducted without the aid of a medical man), and found it to be for internal application aloes, arum maculatum; externally, poultices night and day, with ulmus fulva (slippery elm) fomented with calendula officinalis (garden marigold).—Yours, &c., H. M. B.—The following letter tells its own story: "311, Camberwell New Road, S.E. Your appeal on behalf of the veteran medium, Mr. Wallace, has been responded to here, and he will receive 16s. from the South London Spiritualists' Society. Kindly insert in *Two Worlds*, so that other societies may go and do likewise. Wishing *The Two Worlds* continued prosperity, and yourself and family a happy Christmas, yours sincerely, W. E. LONG."

NATIONAL FEDERATION.—Propaganda meeting in Darwen, Wednesday, Dec. 14. A capital audience assembled. Mr. A. Cooper, a well-known local Secularist, presided. Mr. E. W. Wallis gave a capital address on the benefits to be derived through the teaching of Spiritualism being applied to our every-day life. Mr. J. Pilkington followed with an able and interesting speech on "Spirits in Relation to Matter." After an earnest appeal from Mr. J. Swindlehurst for an examination into the facts of spirit communion, Miss Janet Bailey gave seven excellent clairvoyant descriptions to members of the audience, five of which were readily recognised. The two not recognised were given to well-known local Spiritualists, thus disproving the common idea that Spiritualists are prepared to say "yes" to any description given them. Several persons availed themselves of the opportunity to make remarks and to ask questions. A cordial vote of thanks to the Federation, to the speakers, and to the chairman closed a pleasant and instructive meeting.—J. S.

SUITABLE BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS.—Florence Marryat's "There is no death," 3/6; post free, 3/9. "Judge Edmonds' Tracts and Letters," 3/6; post free, 3/9. "The Discovered Country," 5/6.

IN MEMORIAM.

IN loving remembrance of my dear father, Mr. Townsend, late president of the Batley Carr Society, who passed on to the higher life, Christmas Day, Dec. 25, 1891. "I miss thee at morn, I miss thee at night, I miss thee here, I miss thee there, dear father, I miss thee everywhere."—M. E. Townsend.

CARDIFF.—On Tuesday morning, Dec. 13, Frederick, the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Phillips (old and respected members of the Society), owing to injuries received by accidental burning and the consequent shock to a young and sensitive organism, passed over to the spirit-land. Widespread sympathy is felt with the family in these sad circumstances. The interment of the body took place on Friday, Dec. 16, at the New Cemetery. The service (which was in accordance with the spiritual philosophy) was compiled by Mr. E. Adams, but in his absence through illness Mr. Robt. Mark very kindly and ably conducted. A wreath was sent by the Lyceum of which he was a member.—E. A.

PASSING ON OF MR. GROOM.—Mr. Richard Groom, the beloved husband of Mrs. Groom, of Birmingham, the celebrated medium—one of the oldest Spiritualists in the Midlands—passed to the higher life on December 15, at the age of sixty-two years, and his remains were interred at Key Hill Cemetery on Sunday morning last. Among those at the graveside were Mr. and Mrs. Venables and Mr. Flint from Walsall; Mr. Finley, Mrs. Morrell, and several other friends from Smethwick; and about a hundred Birmingham friends, including Mr. and Mrs. Smyth, Mrs. Roberts, &c. Mr. Aldridge, of Wolverhampton, conducted the service. After the hymn, "Welcome, Angels," he read "The Philosophy of Death," by A. J. Davis, America's greatest seer; also a poem from a collection given under influence. After another hymn an adjournment was made to the graveside, where Mr. Aldridge said that life here was a preparation for the life beyond, where the consequences of our motives and deeds would have to be faced. We should therefore do all the good we could while upon the earth. He then read another poem, "I still live," and Mr. Smyth spoke of the commingling of feelings on these occasions. The severance of the spirit from the body was divinely appointed in the wisdom of the Great All. Spiritualists know there is no death, and that our loved ones come to us for help, and also to assist us. Mr. Finley referred to the physical suffering Mr. Groom had undergone for a long time, and said that Mr. and Mrs. Groom had been bright lights in the Spiritual cause in Birmingham for a great number of years, and at times had stood almost alone; but now he had gone to reap the reward of his labours. Mrs. Groom said no doubt the friends were wondering why she shed tears, but they were not tears of sadness. She knew Mr. Groom still lived. After another hymn, the coffin was lowered, and the friends dispersed. There were several wreaths and crosses of flowers, including two from the Smethwick Association of Spiritualists, one from Mr. and Mrs. Smyth, one from Florrie, and one from Lizzie. No less than four clairvoyants saw Mr. Groom in the company of Mr. Roberts, Mr. Hawkes, and the celebrated George Dawson. Mrs. Groom and family wish to thank all kind friends for the loving sympathy shown them, and also for the many wreaths &c., sent.—H. E. Kent.