

# OCCULT REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INVESTIGATION OF SUPER-NORMAL PHENOMENA AND THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

EDITED BY RALPH SHIRLEY

*"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri"*

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH

CONSIDERABLE interest was aroused some two years ago by certain articles which appeared in my contemporary, *Light*, in connection with a recent scientific invention of Mr. David Wilson, which has been termed "the Psychic Telegraph," and which may be briefly described as a medium for the ethereal transmission of thought. Notes and observations with regard to this instrument appeared in a considerable number of issues

of the above-mentioned journal for a period of some ten months, during which time the inventor found it possible very greatly to improve his original somewhat inadequate and defective apparatus. The original discovery was, however, made by means of the apparatus when in a comparatively primitive state, and subsequent improvements were introduced mainly with a view to simplifying and rendering less erratic the communications received by means of the Morse Code through this remarkable scientific invention.

Mr. David Wilson, it may be well to state, for the benefit

of those who are not readers of *Light*, or who have not followed the developments in connection with this new invention, is the son of a barrister and literary man, Mr. David H. Wilson, M.A., LL.M., of Cambridge, and grand-nephew of the late Mr. Alexander Calder, one of the pioneers of the modern psychical research movement. Mr. Wilson himself is by profession a solicitor, but does not practise, his main interest in life being centred in electrical research, and the study of hypnotism. Though his recent experiments have drawn him into the vortex of psychic investigation, previous to his new invention he took no special interest in this matter, and his views on the subject appear to have been rather of a materialistic or at least of a sceptical kind.

Mr. Wilson's original discovery dates back to December, 1914, when he was experimenting with a milli-amperemeter and a collection of chemicals, the nucleus of the present apparatus, when, for no assignable reason, the needle of the galvanometer gave a pronounced jerk. First Mr. Wilson imagined that this was due to the table on which the instrument stood having been shaken. Some time after, however, the needle was again deflected, and on this occasion several times in succession. The

obvious view of the matter was to put the phenomenon down to terrestrial vibration, but at the end of a week further movements of the needle were observed, and these showed more method than the previous ones. At this point the deflections seemed to run in groups of four, of which the first three were quick, whilst the fourth was more protracted. These deflections, in the order indicated, continued to follow each other without a break for six minutes, after which there was no further movement. What naturally struck Mr. Wilson was that this grouping of three short deflections and one long one was in effect the three dots and the dash constituting the Morse "call" signal. Three days after this, i.e., January 10, 1915, the needle again gave out the Morse call signal for eight minutes in succession, after which it continued with the following message, of course in the Morse equivalent, "Great difficulty . . . await message five days six evening." There was no name or initial appended.

Before this time arrived [to quote Mr. Wilson's own account of the matter] I invited to my house a very reliable witness whose testimony could be trusted to carry weight, and suggested that between then and the time appointed the witness should learn the Morse alphabet—at any rate sufficiently to be able to check letters if they were given slowly by the deflections of the needle of the galvanometer.

When the day arrived I felt extremely dubious as to the outcome of

the affair, because the deflections of the needle seemed to have degenerated into utter incoherence, such as one might imagine would be created by vibrations from ordinary causes, if such a thing had been feasible.

I was astounded, therefore, when at 6.4 p.m. by my watch the dial once more recorded slowly and unmistakably the Morse call signal, which it continued to do for nearly half an hour. At 6.31 the dial recorded the following letters in Morse, which were taken down independently both by myself and the witness to whom I have referred, and of which the following are letter-for-letter versions :—

1. Version by witness—

TRZELIOININAMEVIVRATIMNS.

2. My version—

RYELIMINA-E-BRA-IONS.

These two versions were taken down quite independently of each other. From a comparison of them both it is obvious that wherever the message came from it could only mean one thing, viz. :

“ Try eliminate vibrations.”

Mr. David Wilson states that up to the end of June, 1915, i.e., during the six months approximately in which he had in use the apparatus in its primitive form, he received messages in no less than thirteen different languages besides English, as follows :

MESSAGES IN MANY LANGUAGES. French, Russian, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Greek, Swedish, Norwegian, Esperanto, Japanese, Kaffir. Of the majority of these he has obtained translations, and in a number of cases they have been sent to the people for whom they were intended, and identified by them. In more than 95 per cent. of the cases Mr. Wilson states that the recipients of the messages were total strangers to him. It may be added that of the languages in which they were communicated, French and English alone are familiar to the inventor of this remarkable instrument. The apparatus in its earlier form is thus described by the Editor of *Light* :—

It is an easily portable machine contained in a wooden box lined inside with green baize. The parts consist of a copper cylinder, three inches in diameter, which contains a substance discovered after careful experiment to emit an “ aura ” or radiation essential to the results. This cylinder is fitted into the upper part of the box. Below it is a steel box containing two oscillation detectors of an original type. . . . Beside the steel box stands a dry battery connected up with the detectors and with a small telephone which enables one to hear the sounds produced in the machine—the “ makes ” and “ breaks ” of the current as it passes.

The difficulties in the way of receiving communications through the machine, as at first constituted, were exceedingly great, and appear to have involved considerable strain both on the communicator and on the recipient. In addition to this it

was found that communications came almost exclusively in the night hours; i.e., that daylight of any sort acted as a serious obstruction. Besides this, the instrument was gravely affected by weather conditions, a low or rapidly falling barometer making communication impossible. Thunderstorms also rendered the working of the machine very unreliable and erratic. Neither of these two obstructions appear to have been eliminated in the new machine, but after the alterations had been effected, messages were received with much greater regularity and accuracy, and there was a much smaller percentage of defective or undecipherable communications. In its new form the machine is thus described by its inventor:—

(a) The apparatus (apart from the battery, consisting of four Leclanche cells) is contained in an oak box. The point that this box is made of hard wood as distinguished from soft is not immaterial to the proper working of the machine.

(b) This box is lined first with baize, and over that with sheet copper one millimetre in thickness. Between the copper and the baize may be stored, when necessary, certain small quantities of some radiant matter which for the present we will term R.1. The dimensions of this interior in the present model (August 1915) are—height 12in., breadth 12in., depth 9in.

(c) In the roof of the interior is bolted what I will call  
DESCRIPTION oscillator No. 1.

OF THE (d) From the roof hangs a thermometer, the use of which  
is essential to the steady working of the machine.

APPARATUS. (e) On the floor of the box rests a low enclosed platform  
of rosewood (12in. by 3in), in the base of which is enclosed  
oscillator No. 2; and it is in the adjustment of oscillators Nos. 1 and 2  
that while cutting short a message from one seeming intelligence it is  
still possible to receive messages from others.

(f) About five inches from the left hand end of the platform and 1.5 inches from the front is mounted (on the platform) a brass pillar rising to a height of 8.25 inches above the platform (which is itself 1.25 inches above the copper floor of the containing box). From the top of this pillar are slung one or more little booms on which are twisted, at about 5mm. intervals, lengths of copper wire, the lower ends of which spread in radiating fashion from the boom and are fixed along the whole length (12 in.) of the under side of the platform. This pillar with its radiating wires I will call the "absorber," but I will leave the mention of its particular function until we come to consider various hypotheses, and in particular that upon which I built the machine.

(g) Then there is the telephone receiver of the ordinary watch type; which is in parallel with—

(i) An ordinary milli-ampere metre; and both are in series with—

(f) A device which for the moment I will call an inhibitor, since its object is to prevent the flow of psychic force through the entire system.

(k) Now we come to an aluminium double-cone-shaped receptacle, held vertically in a holder (but insulated, electrically speaking, from the holder) which stands on the copper floor at the back of the containing box, and as nearly as possible under oscillator No. 1. The top half of this receptacle contains radium, the lower half contains—

(l) A substance which has several peculiar properties and which resembles, perhaps, more nearly than anything else the emanations of certain metals observed by the late Baron von Reichenbach. It forms, together with the radium (in the earlier models the radium was represented by thorium), the vital principle of the machine—in short it is the *Metallic Medium*.

Among the earlier messages received through Mr. Wilson's machine were a number purporting to come from various individuals with Egyptian names; but subsequently the communications from the Egyptian group ceased entirely, and gave place to others of a more modern character, not always of equal interest to the occult student, but of much more value evidentially, as

SAMPLE  
MESSAGES.

the people for whom they were intended were on numerous occasions in a position to substantiate their *bona fides*, and it was obvious that Mr. Wilson could have had no normal means of ascertaining the contents of the communications which, as already stated, generally came from people of whom he had never heard. Of the first class of communications mentioned, the following are interesting and characteristic examples:—

“All personalities are differentiated in consciousness, but are united in sub-consciousness into one absolute complete and indivisible unity.” This observation would certainly have made a very direct appeal to the early Neoplatonists.

Another is as follows:—

. . . Verily I say unto ye that if a soul cometh into Amenti not knowing sympathy, then shall it abide even until it cometh by that knowledge. O ye living ones on earth, if ye but knew it, each little sympathy ye do have for others bridges many worlds between ye and those long lost when ye come into Amenti. There is an ancient fable which runs in this wise: A certain rich and powerful prince died and after seventy-six days came into Amenti, but could of his own efforts in no wise succeed in passing beyond. Whereupon he importuned the great scribe, who thus replied, “Thou mayest leave Amenti if thou wilt but answer with truth this one question that I do put to thee: ‘What is life?’” And the soul of the rich man answered immediately, as he had learnt from the philosophers, “Life is the will to live.” “No,” said the great scribe, “for that is pride,” and straightway the god vanished. And the time passed and the soul reflected more and more on this matter. At length, after a hundred years, the god appeared again unto the soul, saying, “Before thou goest hence say, what is life?” And the soul, in fear lest it be again in error, replied “Good Lord, life is toleration for all men.” “No,” said the great

scribe. "for that is only justice," and away he went. And yet another hundred years passed before once again the soul stood in the presence of the god, whereupon it cried out "Great One! Life is sympathy." Then said the God, "O soul, go thou upon thy ways and work, for thou hast learnt the language of all creation!"

Still another fragment runs:—

There once came a prince of Egypt unto Ptah-mes of Memphis, saying, "How many slaves shall attend me when I go forth from Abydos to serve me on the great journey as befits my state?" "Prince," saith Ptah-mes, "empty handed and alone shalt thou journey through Amenti, save sympathy be thy retainer."

Of instances of the other type of message I will proceed to give several examples. One was received by the machine for Mrs. Susannah Harris. The first portion has reference to the state of her health. The latter portion, which is of more interest, as containing a prediction, ran as follows:—

Our tidings from Chicago will be sad and heartbreaking. (Signed) Harmony.

The explanation of this communication was received by Mr. Wilson in a letter from Mrs. Harris, who wrote as follows:—

"'Harmony's' message referred to the coming disaster to the Chicago excursion steamer. She told them at a circle in Bfighton last Wednesday that she had sent the message, also that she and her spirit friends hope in a short time to be able to manipulate the instrument to such an extent that people can be warned of coming disasters in sufficient time to avoid accidents and death."

Another of these messages was sent to the Countess of Tomasevic, a lady of whom Mr. Wilson had never heard, but whose name and address he subsequently succeeded in tracing. The message was of a very private character, but on receipt of it the Countess wrote a letter to the Editor of *Light*, in which she said: "The occurrences to which they, i.e., the communications, refer, were known only to the owner of the signature they bear, and myself. I have derived great comfort from these messages."

It may be well to mention that the owner of the signature in question was a distinguished prelate who has been dead some considerable time. Other communications were received addressed to Count Miyatovich, one from the "spirit of a Serbian" and one signed "Michael Obrenovich," i.e., the Prince Michael of Serbia who was assassinated in 1868. A message of rather special interest was given in the name of E. Branly. This doubtless refers to Professor Edouard Branly, member of the French Academy of Sciences, and a name well known in connection with

wireless telegraphy. Part of the message, which is too long to quote *in toto*, runs as follows :—

The machine creates enormous interest here amongst all classes, especially amongst the members of the Society interested in observing new phenomena. We have formed a group with myself as communicating operator, to endeavour to co-ordinate our efforts to further the perfection of this discovery. We thought it utterly impracticable to communicate with the world in this manner, until several of us, unknown to any one else, sent messages by the machine to friends of ours who have replied by psychic means to those very messages which had only come to them on the machine. The Committee therefore regarded the possibility of communications by physical means as established so far as reception as distinguished from transmission by you is concerned.

There follow the names of a number of men well known in science and other walks of life who have "passed over," as members of the Committee.

Of communications in foreign languages I may give the following as examples :—

"Seien Sie vorsichtig das Licht ist zu stark—Heinrich."

(Be careful, the light is too strong—Henry.)

"Nyet leezdyes Kogoneebod Kto govoreet poroosky."

(Is there any one who speaks Russian here?)

"Parooski Parooski Parooski tyerpee Kazak atamanom boodyesh."

(Patience and perseverance bring all things to pass.)

"Si je pourrai vous être de quelque utilité veuillez disposer de moi sans réserve. Henri Juat ancien (?) (Incoherent—D.W.)  
8 Rue du Valentin, Lausanne."

There are several points to notice in connection with the apparatus of Mr. David Wilson, and one of the most important has reference to the light conditions in which it will work. Mr. Wilson finds that in order to operate, it requires the absence of (a) diffused daylight; (b) coal gas light; (c) light of an ordinary electric glow lamp; (d) light from an oil lamp. "It will be seen [observes Mr. Wilson] that the principal exceptions to this list are sunlight, arc light, and acetylene gas light; but it is a condition precedent that such light be concentrated into the interior of the machine and not diffused on the outside."

EFFECT OF  
VARIOUS  
LIGHT RAYS. This necessarily excludes sunlight. Arc and acetylene gas light, therefore, only are available. Light reflected back from the polished copper into the room does not seem to militate against the working of the machine.

The machine will, indeed, work in total darkness, but the results are far inferior to those obtained when working the instrument by the aid of acetylene light. Another point of great importance is that the machine will not work even in an absolutely dark room if there is daylight outside. This seems to show that the wave by which, presumably, the message is conveyed through the ether, requires conditions of darkness for its passage, or alternatively that the spirits require conditions of darkness under which to travel.

Here we come to an important point. It is, I am sure, familiar ground to all my readers that a parallel has frequently been drawn between telepathy on the one hand and wireless telegraphy on the other, and it is in any case an undoubted fact that the discovery of wireless telegraphy had led to a much more ready acceptance by the world generally of such phenomena as fall under the head of telepathic messages. There is, however, a difficulty in accepting the comparison between these two forms of communication. The parallel drawn assumes, of course, that what we call in common parlance "brain waves" are similar in nature to Hertzian waves; i.e., that they are infinitely minute waves in the ether that fills all space. If this is so, however, we should naturally conclude that they would obey the same natural law; i.e., the Law of Inverse Squares. If they do this, however, we are face to face with what looks like a fatal

objection to the popular theory, which represents them of a similar character. If the Law of Inverse Squares holds good with regard to brain waves they will become attenuated in proportion to the square of the distance from their source. In other words, at 1,000 yards distance the effect produced on any receiver will be a million times less than the effect upon the same receiver one yard away from the transmitting source. This is admittedly the case in wireless telegraphy, and the consequence is that to transmit wireless telegraphic messages over great distances requires an enormous output of energy at the originating source, otherwise the distance in space which they traverse would practically obliterate the waves. Now for a telepathic message to be conveyed from London to New York does not, apparently, demand any such enormous effort; nor have we any reason to believe that the human brain would be capable of such intense concentration as to produce an appreciable effect at such a distance. The telepathic message, in fact, can apparently be communicated almost, though possibly not quite as easily, from one end of



England to the other as from London to New York. I think that the results of the experiments made so carefully by the S.P.R. justify me in assuming that there is actually greater difficulty in communicating at a greater distance; but this difficulty is clearly not such as to render impossible telepathic communications from any part of the world to any other. I think we are justified in saying that if the Law of Inverse Squares prevailed in this case, it would be an impossibility to convey a telepathic message from London to New York. What is the solution of this difficulty? Sir William Barrett takes a view of this matter in his very illuminating little book on *Psychical Research*\* which I confess I find myself quite unable to endorse.

The fact is [he says] in my opinion that the supernormal phenomena we are discussing in this little book do not belong to the material plane, and therefore the laws of the physical universe are inapplicable to them. It is hopeless to attempt thus to explain telepathy and other phenomena which transcend knowledge derived from our sense perceptions—though these latter are the foundation of physical science and the proper guide for our daily business here on earth. It is highly probable that the conscious waking self of those concerned takes no part in the actual telepathic transmission. The idea or object thought of in some way impresses the subliminal self of the agent and this impression is transferred, DOUBTLESS INSTANTANEOUSLY ACROSS SPACE, to the inner sub-conscious self of the percipient. Though here a favourable moment may have to be awaited before the outer or conscious self can be stimulated into activity.

Sir William Barrett's view, then, is that there is a radical and essential difference between what we call "brain waves" and Hertzian and other waves of a similar character which obey the ordinary laws of nature. The brain wave, he tells us in effect, is not a phenomenon of the material plane, and therefore must be assumed to be independent of all natural law. I cannot think that this is true. All the evidence we possess points to the fact that natural laws are things which we cannot escape any more in psychical than in ordinary physical science. In the case of such psychical phenomena as brain waves we must admit modification by the medium through which they pass, no less than by the character and nature of the transmitter; but we have no justification in postulating for them an independence of natural law. How, then, it may be asked, do brain waves differ from the Hertzian waves in

\* *Psychical Research*. By Sir Wm. Barrett, F.R.S. London: Williams & Norgate. Price 1s. 3d. net.

use in wireless telegraphy? Simply, I think, in this, that the impulse of the brain wave is propelled by the concentrative power of the transmitter direct from one point of the compass to another, on which the transmitter's mind is concentrated. It is, in short, of the essence of these waves or rays that they are not diffused, or at least not unduly diffused. The instrument employed in wireless telegraphy sends out a message which, like a stone thrown into a pool, impels the waves which it creates equally in all directions. Not so the human telegraphist, who by his own mental powers of concentration is enabled to direct the brain wave to the particular point at which it is aimed, just as the gunner directs his shell, or the archer his arrow. This brain wave may reach the recipient in the form of a message. On the other hand, it may reach him in the form of a representation of the sender, or again, as in the case of some of the Psychical Research Society's experiments, in the form of a definite diagram. But in every case the action of this natural law is the same. It is a case of direct transmission from point to point, operated by the directing energy of the brain of the sender.\*

It is obvious, I think, in cases such as those above cited in which the transmitter concentrates his thought on a certain place or person, that the Law of Inverse Squares will not apply, and it is for this reason, I have little doubt, that it is possible to "telepath" a message from one end of the world to another, without the enormous amount of energy being involved which general diffusion throughout the ether would undoubtedly necessitate. I am quite ready to admit, though I am not ready positively to maintain, that the thought wave may travel through an ether thought medium of a less dense character than that traversed by the Hertzian waves. What I would, however, lay stress upon, is that this wave obeys its own natural law, and does not travel through vacant space or under immaterial conditions. I cannot, therefore, see my way to accept Sir William Barrett's idea that the transmission is instantaneous, however brief the period of

\* There are many students of these subjects who have argued that it is only the idea which is conveyed. I am convinced, however, that this is not necessarily the case. In an instance in which I personally received a telepathic message in the nature of a sentence communicated to me by a friend, I was able to cognize before they were uttered the exact words of a sentence which was about to be spoken, without in the least understanding their meaning, the sentence in question not being communicated to me to the very end. I have no doubt there are others who have had similar experiences.

time it may occupy in its transmission. Still less can I accept his theory of what I hope he will pardon me for describing as the "supernatural" character of the agency at work. It is, I think, not beyond the bounds of possibility that some method may eventually be discovered by which the Marconi transmitter may dispatch its message, not as at present diffused throughout space to the world in general, but to the particular point or person for whom the message is intended. It will be obvious that if a discovery in this direction is made, it will be possible at once to effect an enormous saving of the energy generated at the transmitting source.

The most vital part of Mr. Wilson's psychic telegraph appears to be what has been alluded to above as the "metallic medium." He speaks of this "metallic medium" as sending out emanations, and alludes in this connection to the emanations observed by the late Baron Reichenbach, and which he termed "odic rays." Mr. Wilson's suggestion is that the vapour emanating from this metallic medium is of a similar kind to the aura which clairvoyants see surrounding the human form. He further argues that the aura of the materializing medium is the basis of the materializations with which students of the séance room are familiar, and photographs of which are to be found, in various stages of development, in Professor Schrenk Notzing's celebrated work on this subject. The metallic medium in David Wilson's machine is then, according to this theory, a substitute for the human medium which has hitherto been regarded as a necessary condition of psychic manifestations and communications. Should this interpretation prove to be correct—as regards which I do not feel myself at present in any position to form a definite opinion

THE  
METALLIC  
MEDIUM.

—certain very important conclusions will follow. All communications so far from the other side have been subject to the suspicion, frequently well justified, that the medium's personality interfered with the transcription of the message as it came through—either, that is, that the message was unintentionally tampered with, owing to auto-suggestion or prepossessions on the part of the medium; or that it was materially modified through lack of harmony between the mental temperament of the medium, and that of the communicator. It is obvious that if communications can be received through the operation of a metallic medium, what has been termed the "psychological factor" in the case can be entirely eliminated. The suggestion, on this hypothesis, then, is that Mr.

David Wilson's friends on the other side, realizing the difficulties that the psychical researcher on this side is in to receive their messages in a pure and unalloyed form, have combined in an attempt to assist in the manufacture of a psychic machine by the use of which it will be possible entirely to exorcise the subliminal bogey. The hypothesis is put forward purely in the form of a suggestion by the inventor. He has, in fact, not even reached the point at which he is prepared to dogmatize in regard to the origin of the messages themselves. And when I allude to the communicators as Mr. David Wilson's friends on the other side, I am going beyond any confident statement that he himself makes on the matter, which he prefers at present to leave *sub judice*. It would appear, however, that the theory advanced implies in itself the assumption that these communicating entities are, in fact, what they purport to be. Mr. Wilson goes so

INVISIBLE  
AGENCIES  
POSSESSING  
INTELLI-  
GENCE.

far as to claim that "in the cases under consideration we have an electrical circuit which is opened and closed by some invisible agencies possessing intelligence"; but he goes no further. The fact that the existence of daylight outside the room in which the machine is placed inhibits its working seems to show that its action is dependent on some stimulating influence from the outside. Otherwise, in the event of the room being itself in absolute darkness, the presence of daylight out of doors should make no difference whatever. In this connection Mr. Wilson draws attention to the fact that messages conveyed by the Hertzian wave can be transmitted to greater distances by night than by day. The question naturally presents itself whether the prevalent idea that conditions of space present no obstacles in the spirit world is not subject to certain modifications and reservations.

Though the machine has now been in operation in one form or another for upwards of two years, I feel it is too early yet to dogmatize with any great confidence on the effect which this startling discovery is likely to have on the future of psychical research. The fact that attempts in the direction of the making of such an instrument have been "in the air" for some time past is familiar to readers of the OCCULT REVIEW. Last summer I pub-

THE  
DYNAMISTO-  
GRAPH.

lished an article on the "dynamistograph" invented by Drs. Matla and van Zelst, and the idea at the basis of this was more or less the same; viz., the substitution of some instrument for the human medium. As Mr. Hereward Carrington in writing on this subject

well observed, "For the purposes of its manifestation the spirit must obtain added energy SOMEHOW, and the usual method of procedure is apparently to abstract this power from the circle of sitters and chiefly from the medium. . . . If a mechanical energy of any character could be found which would add to the natural energy of the manifesting entity and obviate the necessity of this drawing upon the medium, it would indeed be a great forward step in psychical research." The elimination of the drain on the medium's vitality is not, however, from the psychical research standpoint of such great moment as the elimination of the personal equation which is liable to interfere with the accurate receipt of the messages conveyed. The invention of Drs. Matla and van Zelst appears to be a much more complicated machine than Mr. Wilson's, and its results, as far as I have been able to gather, have been so far rather disappointing, in view of the incoherence of the messages received.

Mr. Wilson had, I understand, already in the course of his electric researches, constructed a galvanic battery possessing curative powers, and his present discovery seems to have been arrived at accidentally while in search for some more potent battery of a kindred nature. The machine which is the subject of the present article has, indeed, itself already been utilized for curative purposes, metals or minerals placed in it being magnetized by the action of the chemical circuit, and subsequently carried on the person of the patient with, I understand, beneficial results. The machine in its very latest form, for it has been continuously improved, includes a lens which is in the nature of a psychic eye, and tests have been applied in this connection, cards, printed matter, etc., having been held up to the psychic eye, the communicating entity responding with a statement as to the contents of the paper or card in question. It is, of course, easy to hold up a card or object of the kind to the lens without the holder seeing what is written upon it, and thus obviating the alternative explanation of telepathy from the reader. Another use which has been made of the machine is to obtain spirit photographs, an unused film being placed in the copper-lined receptacle, and being subsequently taken out and developed. Among numerous other messages received, one, I understand, was in the nature of a complaint and an expression of regret that the machine had ever been invented, in view of the amount of disappointment it occasioned to would-be communicants from the other side who hoped to get in touch with people here, and who were so very frequently disappointed. The experiments show that on many

occasions a number of entities were attempting to communicate at the same time, with inevitable confusion as the result, and in fact Mr. Wilson was able in certain cases to devise means to switch off his more unwelcome astral visitors by the use of the acetylene light.

The drawbacks to such an apparatus as Mr. Wilson has devised when utilized by a scientific investigator whose first interest was neither spiritualism nor psychical research, may readily be understood, especially when one hears that a very large number of the messages received were promptly consigned to the waste-paper basket as being of not sufficient interest for preservation, while others did not contain the necessary address which would have

DISAP-  
POINTED  
COMMUNI-  
CATORS.

rendered it possible to communicate with the people concerned. There were one or two, moreover, which might conceivably have found their mark had they been inserted in *Light* (the address being wanting), but they were unfortunately of too libellous a character for this to be possible. I gather, in fact, that so far did Mr. Wilson go in the direction of destroying messages that he thought were of a bogus character, that in the first instance he systematically threw away all communications purporting to come from people who were known to be dead, on the assumption that these at any rate were to be regarded as fraudulent.

It stands to reason that the subject matter of these notes will arouse widespread scepticism. If we assume that the discovery is a genuine one, it is impossible to exaggerate its importance. The secret, indeed, may be regarded as akin to, if not identical with, that of the fabled Philosopher's Stone, in the pursuit of which so many learned scientists of the past wasted the best energies of their lives; for the metallic medium suggests something in the nature of a creative vital force to the potentialities of which it seems impossible to set any limit. It may, indeed, be

THE NEW  
PHILOSOPHER'S  
STONE AND  
THE POLICE.

that by the use of a machine of the kind on a larger scale, such phenomena as materializations might be produced without a medium. One element in the composition of the circuit appears to be more important than all the others, and this, if I understand rightly, is derived by a process of elimination from uranium pitchblende. It is in keeping with the methods of the twentieth century that the discoverer of the new Philosopher's Stone should have been pounced upon by the police and his invention carried off for investigation by

Scotland Yard, because it had the misfortune among other communications to convey messages from Germans in the spirit world. The apparatus has, I understand, been now duly returned to its inventor, though in the meantime it has suffered from the attentions of the police in their endeavour to probe the mysteries of communication from departed sons and daughters of the Fatherland. They do not appear, however, to have been successful in penetrating into the precincts of Lord Haldane's "spiritual home."

With regard to my remarks in the issue of the month before last, relative to Madame Hands, President of the English Society of Spiritualists in Montreal, Canada, my readers may be interested to know that I have heard from this lady under date March 22, and in allusion to her prophecy about the war, she states that this was foretold by her a year before it took place (about July, 1913) in the *Montreal Star*, the prediction being signed by about twenty prominent residents. I am endeavouring to

MADAME obtain a copy of the number in question. She  
HANDS. states that she has herself forgotten the exact date.

Madame Hands sends me at the same time several predictions for the coming year, given under the control of the Rev. John Whitmore, of which I reproduce the following :—

Russia is in danger through excess of Socialism, but the new Government will go ahead and win out. The Revolution just at this time has assured a speedy end of the war, which will be in September 1917, around the 10th.

Spain and Italy will be the next in Revolution.

The United States will undoubtedly be drawn into the war through a shipping disaster.

There will be an attempt to assassinate the Tsar of Russia in April, and King George may be in some danger in May.

Ammunition factories and bridges will be blown up in April in the United States by the Germans living there, and Canada herself is also in danger from the same source.

The Queen of Spain will have a very serious illness this year.

Germany has one card yet to play, and it is a terrible one. The armies in France must be careful of treading on a bottomless pit.

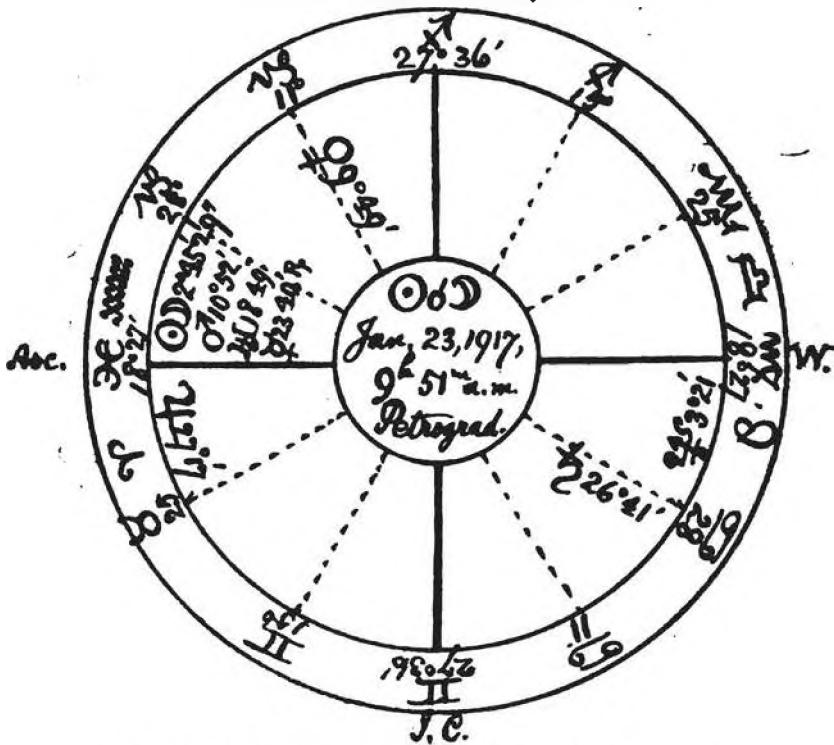
It will be noted that the date of these predictions is March 22, and that two of them have already been fulfilled—though one, the entry of the United States into the war, was almost a foregone conclusion at the date of writing. This method of predicting events has given too large a proportion of misses to hits

in the past to inspire any great confidence. With regard to the meaning of the last of the series, I do not feel myself in a position to offer any interpretation.

I made some allusion in my last issue to the eclipse of the Sun in Aquarius at Petrograd on January 23, in relation to the Russian Revolution, and I think my readers may be interested

*Partial Eclipse of the Sun in Aquarius.*

R. A. of M. C. 267° 23'



ECLIPSE OF THE SUN AT PETROGRAD, JANUARY 23.

to see the appended figure, which gives the positions at the exact time of the conjunction—9.51 a.m. It will be noted that the dominant influences are favourable, Venus being elevated above all the other planets, and Jupiter occupying the ascendant, though in square with Saturn from the cusp of the Sixth House. The eclipse took place at Petrograd in the Twelfth House, or House of Secret Enemies, the conjoined luminaries being in close

THE  
ECLIPSE AT  
PETROGRAD.



opposition to Neptune, and there being a satellitum in the same house, including Mars, Uranus, and Mercury, all these planets occupying the sign Aquarius. The figure is a singular and suggestive one.

Students of astrology will watch with interest the effect of the stationary position of Uranus, already alluded to in an earlier issue of this magazine, on the horoscope of the Austrian Emperor during the latter part of May and first part of June. A crisis is clearly indicated at this period. The Crown Prince of Germany has a conjunction of Jupiter and Venus on the radical place of his Sun, Saturn, and Neptune, at his birthday in May. His revolution occurs at the Full Moon, which is therefore in opposition to the three plants conjoined, whilst Saturn occupies the ascendant at the revolutionary figure—a curious mixture of good and evil. In the Prime Minister's horoscope Saturn transits the opposition of the Sun in the latter part of May, while Jupiter reaches the trine aspect of the same position in the middle of June. The stationary position of Uranus at the end of May and commencement of June throws a favourable aspect to the radical place of the Moon at his birth.

ASTROLO-  
GICAL  
JOTTINGS:

I have already alluded to the entry of Jupiter into the sign Gemini at the very end of June, and the fact that this sign rules not only Belgium but also the United States gives an added significance to this transit. Mars and Jupiter both occupy the sign of the twins during the month of July, Mars passing out into Cancer in the last week of that month. The augury is a favourable one for an early peace, and will lead to a fresh boom in American commercial enterprise, and also favours the return of prosperity to the metropolis of the British Empire.

The entry of Saturn into Leo in the last days of June, where it will remain for a period of some two and a half years, bodes ill for the countries under the rule of this sign. Rumania and Italy may suffer, if the astrological theory that these countries are dominated by Leo is to be accepted as reliable. Rome, at any rate, is likely to suffer from the transit of the major malefic.

# WITCHCRAFT

By J. W. BRODIE-INNES, Author of "The Devil's Mistress," etc.

FAMILIARLY as we speak of witches and witchcraft, few perhaps realize that the word witch probably means no more than a wise woman, as wizard means a wise man; or (if we take Grimm's derivation from *veihan*) one who consecrates. The word has gone far from its original meaning, especially in popular usage. We wonder vaguely how people ever came to believe in such things, they seem so far removed from the practical everyday life of modern times. A witch, so most people think, was a poor woman, ugly and ill-favoured, solitary, probably soured and ill-tempered, possibly mad. How could sane people take her seriously enough to be afraid of her, above all to torture and burn her. We say: "Gross ignorant superstition," and think we have accounted for the whole problem, forgetting that some of the acutest intellects in a very intellectual age—men moreover who were decidedly sceptical in their views—such as the Scottish Lord Advocate Mackenzie, to name only one example, gave much time and thought to the investigation of the subject, and declared their conviction that there was something genuine, and not mere madness in the pretensions of the witches.

If we will but for a moment lay aside prejudice, and look at the subject dispassionately, we shall become convinced that the cult of the witch is as old as humanity, it is as old as the world, and as flourishing to-day as it was in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and as firmly believed. Once realize this and we get a clue to comprehending one of the problems of former ages that has most perplexed historians and antiquarians.

If we try to throw ourselves into past ages, not dropping any of our modern ideas, but rather trying to find their expression among our forefathers, it is possible that in the light of common human nature we may find real living people behind the mists of the ages.

Many will doubtless question the statement that witchcraft is as rife to-day as ever. But it is fact that there is scarcely a witchcraft legend of the Middle Ages that cannot be paralleled by some well-known case now, and finding as ready a belief. Think one moment of all the tribe of palmists, clairvoyants, crystal gazers, sand-diviners, etc., rank impostors, some will say, and

so doubtless a number of them are, but unless they were very largely believed in they could not exist, and unless there were a measure of something that was not imposture behind them they could not find this belief. And between the old spaewife and the modern clairvoyant there is but slight difference.

Well but, you will say, what of the old-time witches, who mounted on broomsticks and rode through the air to carouse on the good wine in some nobleman's cellars. Here again we have only to look over the files of *Light*, or the *Transactions of the Psychological Research Society* on the phenomena of levitation, and you will find many parallel cases. We call these things by learned names now. I have met grave and learned men, whose veracity was unimpeachable, who solemnly declared that they had witnessed levitation, some even who had experienced it in their own proper persons. I do not say the stories are true, but I know that they are very widely believed. And as for the tales of witches who became hares or wolves, I have myself seen in the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris epileptic and hysteric patients who were fully convinced that they were animals, and imitated animal cries and motions with curious exactness, to say nothing of the curious disease known as lycanthropy.

True we do not burn witches nowadays, even if we do more or less believe in them. The manners of to-day are less brutal. But in England they are sorely harried by the police, though the statute is only directed against fraud and imposture.

A witch then, being by the derivation of the word a wise woman, who used formulæ of consecration, or as we should say ceremonial magic, might obviously use it for good or for evil; we see that there may be black or white witches, using black or white magic. Within the latter category would come the bulk of psychic-healers who would unquestionably have been classed as witches in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many women were burned in the persecution days against whom the only proved charges were that they healed sick persons by some ceremonial. A study of a good collection of witchcraft trials, such as may be found for example in Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, will leave no doubt that most of the Christian Scientists to-day would have stood a very poor chance two or three hundred years ago.

The confessions of witches of those days contain lurid and graphic accounts of the worship of the Devil, and there are certain Jesuit writers to-day who would persuade us that all Freemasons are Devil worshippers. But without going this length it is well

known that societies of Satanists do exist in Italy, and in Paris, and are not wholly unknown even in London.

We may imagine then that if we could project ourselves backwards some two or three hundred years we should find much the same phenomena that we are familiar with now, only more universally believed in, and persecuted with very great brutality. And if we ask for the reason of the persecution, there is little doubt that we may sum it all up in the one word "fear." There were unknown dangers that seemed to strike in the dark, and a panic-stricken public opinion called for dire and brutal vengeance.

But to work out all the modern analogies to the old world witchcraft would be far too big an undertaking. I propose to confine myself to the phenomena coming more or less within the popular meaning of the word, and try to show by definite authentic instances that the same thing exists to-day, in almost precisely the same form as in the Middle Ages and much earlier, and that the cult of the witch varies little from age to age.

A great mass of well authenticated stories have come within my own knowledge. But naturally in many cases I am unable to give the authorities. Most people are unwilling to have their names mixed up with anything of the kind, and an account of the experiences of Mr. H. of what happened in the town of W., is singularly unconvincing. I shall therefore for the most part confine myself to cases that I can personally vouch for, and of these the most interesting to the student are those which show the survival of forms current in the Middle Ages, or in remote classical times. Naturally the greatest number occur in the West of England and Scotland among the Celtic population. But witchcraft is far from being unknown even among the Saxons of the east coast. In the Channel Islands it is rife to this day, also in Brittany; and in Morocco (as described in M. Jules Bois' *Sorcellerie au Maroc*) every Mediæval incident, including the Witches' Sabbath, is familiar ground, and universally believed in.

One of the oldest of known incantations is that connected with the casting of the black thread. It was undoubtedly Scandinavian and pre-Christian, referring to some legend of a ride of Odin and Baldur in which Baldur's horse slipped and sprained or dislocated a leg. This was healed by binding round the injured leg a black thread with seven knots. The formula accordingly narrated the event.

Baldur rade. The foal slade (slipped).  
Set bone to bone, sinew to sinew,  
Heal in Odin's name.

The words are given in various forms, but the substance is the same. This spell is to be found in nearly every book on Scandinavian folklore. Afterwards it was Christianized, and referred to an accident in Christ's ride to Jerusalem, "The Lord rode, and the foal slade," etc., "Heal in the Holy Ghaist's name." I have been told that this spell has been practised in Orkney within living memory, but I had not actually met with it until three years ago, when being in Penzance and driving out to see some Druidic remains, I fell into conversation with the driver. At first, with true Celtic caution, he denied that any witchcraft remained in Cornwall. But after I had told him some experiences of my own in the West Highlands he told me that once he had a poisoned thumb that defied all the doctors to cure. He was told that his thumb must be amputated, but before agreeing to this he consulted a "wise woman." She anointed the thumb with a special salve of which she had the secret, and solemnly tied seven knots in a black thread, which she bound round the thumb, chanting something under her breath. I asked him if he could remember the words, but these he had barely heard, only he knew it was something about our Lord riding. Anyhow, the thumb got perfectly well in a very short time. Here then was a well authenticated case of a witch formula, handed down from practically unknown antiquity and practised to-day. Encouraged by my ready acquiescence in the probability of his cure, he told me other stories of cures by the same "wise woman" who seems to have been a white witch, devoting her powers entirely to curing, and taking no fee for so doing.

But the evil witch who does harm is by no means unknown. One such I met with many years ago now, in what was the then little fishing village of Lossiemouth. I was told how she overlooked cattle and they died, how the sheep brought forth no lambs, and the cows gave no milk. With much difficulty and many vows of secrecy I was shown the witch's cottage, and made her acquaintance. However, when after some little conversation on things in general I asked her if she would "spae" my fortune, either by my hand, or the cards, or in any other way, she stoutly denied having any power in that way, and it looked as though we had come to a deadlock, till fortunately I remembered a few words of Romani, picked up when haunting round the gipsy tents at Norwood and Epping Forest years before. These worked the spell, for my witch had a good deal of gipsy blood mixed with a dash of tinker, and she burst into a stream of voluble Romani,

most of which was wholly unintelligible to me, though I tried to look as if I were taking it all in, and in the end she laid down the cards, and looked in my hand, made various conjurations, and told me a most elaborate fortune, some of which at all events came off. We got so friendly that I ventured to ask her about the cattle that had died, and the misfortunes that had befallen sundry folk. She said they were rightly served, being cruel unfeeling people, and that God would never allow such to prosper. I hinted that I had heard among the Romani of certain spells that brought ill-luck on man and beast, whereon she smiled, and said it was useless to tell anything to a person who knew so much. This was a clear evasion, but it came pretty near to an admission. On another interview I asked her whether a cow's milk could be drawn off without touching the cow, and she said of course it could, it only needed a rope plaited backwards, laid between the cow's hind legs and out at the byre door. You could then milk the end of the rope. Only it must be done in the Devil's name. This was, as students of Pitcairn will recognize, one of Isabel Goudie's spells, and it was very interesting to find it still in active use. Many of the farmers used to pay a regular subsidy to this witch to secure immunity from her spells, and overlooking, and I was assured that no misfortune ever came to those who thus bought her favour. In Young's *History of Elgin* a case is mentioned of an honest farmer who was advised to offer a burnt offering to the Devil for protection against the ill fortune that beset him and his stock, and, having done so, his ill-luck ceased, but his conscience troubled him sorely all his life.

A case of a very old formula was told me by the minister of Urquhart. An old man came to him one day who was a notorious unbeliever, and never troubled kirk or minister save to sneer or blaspheme. The minister was pleased at the call, and thought the old man was coming to a better mind. After some irrelevant conversation he came to his errand, which was to ask the minister for an old cock, the minister having a breed of white poultry which he took pride in. Thinking the old man wanted some chicken broth he readily promised the cock, and casually inquired what he was going to do with it, and then it came out that he had been overlooked by a neighbour, and had had terrible trouble, but that if he buried a white cock at his doorstep the evil wishes would have no power. Thought went back to the white cock of Æsculapius, and farther back into the dim past to the witches of Thessaly, and various old classic stories.

Another witchcraft story was told me by the late Sir Archi-

bald Dunbar which was within his own knowledge. When it was proposed to demolish the old castle of Blervie the contractor employed had thrown down half of the castle, when he was warned to desist. He paid no attention, however, till one day he saw a most evil-looking old woman sitting on a stone dyke and grinning at him. She cursed him volubly, whereupon he went with a stick to drive her away, but a black dog with flaming red eyes snarled at him, and would have bitten him, but when he looked again the old woman sat on the dyke as before. Whereupon he was so frightened that he vowed he would never touch a stone of the accursed building again. Certain it is that a man was employed to destroy the tower, that he did destroy only half of it, leaving the part which is still standing, and that in consequence he did not get his agreed pay.

Sir Archibald Dunbar told me also of a tradition of his boyhood of witches holding orgies within the old Druid circle at the farm of Templestones, whereat the illumination was given by candles made of hares' fat, the effect of which was said to be that it constrained the women present to cast off their clothes and never cease dancing till the candles had burnt themselves out. There is little but vague tradition of this formula, but it is interesting that Baptista Porta mentions a similar effect as coming from a lamp filled with hares' fat, and Reginald Scott in his *Discovery of Witchcraft* has some instances of a like character.

From earliest times, and in all countries, stones have been set up for blessing or cursing. But the old rituals have been mostly lost, and modern instances are rare. One such, however, I met with on a farm in one of the wildest districts of West Ross many years ago. About a stone's throw from the farmhouse was a small circle of black stones, about twelve yards in diameter it may be. Thirteen stones there were in all. The number struck me as peculiar, and I asked the farmer if it was a Druidic monument. "No," he said, "my grandfather set those up there. Cursing stones they are. He was tenant of this farm." I asked for more details, and somewhat hesitatingly he told the story which apparently was well known in the district, but seldom spoken of. The old man, the farmer's grandfather, it seems was betrothed to a beautiful girl, but another man carried her off. Whereupon the original lover had solemnly cursed the man who had taken her. I inquired how he had done it, and the details seemed to have been well preserved. It was once a month in the dark of the moon that he set up each stone walking round thrice widdershins and crying to the Devil to curse and blast the

man's life. He also baptized the stone in the Devil's name with water from a certain spring, said to be the haunt of evil spirits. Where he got the ritual from no one knows. I believe there are some spells somewhat similar in the *Grimoire*. I asked whether the curses had taken effect. The man I was told had fallen off a roof and broken his neck, and the girl had died with her first child. The curser married soon after this, but he was a miserable man all his life, haunted with gloomy forebodings, and died more or less insane. I know not whether the stones still stand. Probably not. The family have long ago left the district, and I have never been able to trace them.

The curious student may find many traces of ceremonial magic both black and white in the west, both in England and Scotland, but there is naturally a great reluctance to speak of such matters.

In fact the western Celt in very many cases is at heart a pure pagan. Outwardly he may be an elder of the Free Kirk, or a Wesleyan Methodist, but if trouble comes to him he steals away at night, when no one knows, to the stone circle, or the fairy well, and seeks help from some ritual half as old as the world it may be. I once asked an old man, after many stories of witchcraft and faerie lore had been exchanged, what the minister would say, and how these things agreed with the Kirk. "Weel, ye ken," he said, "a man must have a religion of sorts, for the sake o' the neighbours, just as he must have a pair o' breeks—but it's no hissel." Perhaps as good an account of the matter as many profound treatises.

Going beyond the British Islands we find all the old witchcraft legends, I will not say more firmly believed, but certainly more openly acknowledged, than is usual with us. Barbey d'Aureville's remarkable novel *L'Ensorcelée*, gives a vivid picture of witchcraft as it is, and of the life and nature of the Normandy peasants, among whom the author passed the greater part of his life.

But it is in neighbouring Brittany that we find the hold of the past is strongest. Surrounded by the Druidic relics in the wildest scenes of nature, and cut off from the modern materialism and ignorant scepticism that calls itself progress, the Breton peasant has now the faith and much of the knowledge and power of three hundred years ago. In the Morbihan the "Mait' Jeans" or "Espirits Follets" are the congeners of the Scottish Brownies, doing work for those they love, playing malicious tricks on those they dislike, guarding buried treasure, and the like.

In nearly every Breton village there is a witch, but not shy as



in the British Islands ; she is well known, and to be freely consulted by all who please. One celebrated witch, Annaic of the Morbihan, even had her photograph taken, and articles were written about her in local journals. The tap of her crooked stick on the pavement was some dozen years ago a familiar sound in the village streets, and perhaps may be so still. Any true bred son of the Morbihan would tell you tales of Annaic and her wonderful doings by the hour. She was more of a white than a black witch, curing sickness and troubles of all kinds, and helping lovers to a happy union. Yet at times Annaic could lay a deadly powder at the door of an enemy, on whom unlooked for misfortune fell suddenly and irresistibly.

The student of witchcraft who desires to understand its rationale must seek far and wide. Gathering traces in many different countries he will find his examples in as many different stages of development, and will be able to trace the same spirit in all.

The spells in vogue in Scotland or in England three hundred years ago, and of which we find perhaps only a few obscure traces existing to-day, may be much more clear and definite in Brittany or the Channel Islands. Others again still farther afield. When I was writing *The Devil's Mistress* I found in the Confession of Isabel Goudie distinct traces, but no more, of the "moon paste." But what it was, and how prepared, no testimony in this country gave the smallest clue. Hints in Hesiod, and other classical authors, showed that the formula was used in Thessaly, and Mediæval Italians spoke of bringing the moon down from Heaven. Still they eluded me, till at last I ran it to earth in Morocco, as recorded in the notes of Emile Mauchamp and others. The key fitted exactly : not only Isabel Goudie but the Thessalian witches were justified by the experience of a modern scientific traveller.

But great patience is needed to compare the tales of one country with another, to sift out imposture, and to bring out the residuum of real occult knowledge and power. Yet from my own experience I can say it is well worth while. It is a branch of occultism well defined, on which there is an enormous mass of evidence, and which has existed probably as long as mankind has been on the earth, and will continue to exist with little change when most other material institutions pass and decay. The cult of the witch will still flourish, openly or secretly, it matters little which, the old formulæ will be practised and believed, to all future time.

# SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING PRECIOUS STONES

By KATHARINE COX

THERE has always been a certain fascination about precious stones. What child, reading for the first time that delightful classic, *The Arabian Nights*, is not thrilled to its innermost being by the descriptions of the wonderful treasures of Aladdin? And even the Biblical idea of Heaven, with its walls of jasper garnished with sapphires, emeralds, beryls, topaz, amethysts and chrysolites, seems to have been largely inspired by an almost reverent admiration for jewels.

Few indeed are the women sufficiently strong-minded to resist the spell cast upon them by the seductive beauty of the diamond, or the cold purity of the pearl, and the crimes committed for the sake of precious stones have unfortunately been legion. Souls have been bartered for precious stones, kingdoms lost—and still, all through the ages, these often so treacherous baubles have continued to wield their power over weak humanity.

Some people even go so far as to say that precious stones actually possess life, and there are many who credit them with occult powers. And though the precious stone is so rare and beautiful a thing that it is difficult to believe that any influence possessed by it could possibly be for aught but good, the popular superstition is, strangely enough, that its power is, more often than not, of a malignant quality!

Most of us have heard of the superstition connected with the opal, and there are very few women who would choose an opal betrothal ring—in fact, many women refuse to wear opals at all! Yet in spite of the superstition concerning this really lovely gem, there have been some quaintly pretty ideas connected with it. In ancient Mexico it was considered sacred, and the supposition once prevailed in Turkey that it was found in no earthly mine, but descended from Heaven in a flash of lightning.

Pliny makes mention of an opalus in his possession, stating that "made up of the glories of the most precious gems, to describe it is a matter of inexpressible difficulty: there is in it the gentler fire of the ruby, the brilliant purple of the amethyst, the sea-green of the emerald, all shining together in an incredible union. Some aim at rivalling in lustre the

## SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING JEWELS 273

brightest azure of the painter's palette, others the flame of burning sulphur, or of a fire quickened by oil."

The opal was highly valued by the Romans, Pliny mentioning the selling price of the famous opal of Nonius, which was as large as a hazel-nut, and valued at £20,000 of our money. Nonius was proscribed by Mark Antony for the sake of this coveted jewel, but escaped, carrying the opal, the sole relic left of his fortune, with him, preferring to endure exile rather than appease the Triumvir by surrendering the gem.

In olden times the opal was credited with possessing occult powers for good. Its name, opal, was supposed to be only another form of the ophthalmius (eye-stone), and from this was derived the old spelling of "ophal." In an inventory of Queen Elizabeth's jewels (Harl. MSS.), mention is made of "A Flower of gold garnished with Sparkes of Diamonds, Rubies and *Ophals*, with an Agate of her Majestie's viznomy, with a pearle pendant, and devices painted upon it."

The possession of an opal was supposed to preserve the sight and brightness of the eyes. Petrus Arlenis, a visionary of Henri Quatre's reign, is credited with having said that "The various colours in the opal tend greatly to the delectation of the sight; nay, more, they have the very greatest efficacy in cheering the heart."

It was once also believed that the wearer of a certain kind of opal could become invisible at his will, so that any thief protected by it could carry off his plunder in the open day if he chose, without being detected.

Nowadays the opal, though still admired as much as ever for its beauty and value, is credited with malignant propensities. One of the most famous opals of more recent times was owned by the Empress Josephine, who, though a highly superstitious woman, threw a challenge to Fate by wearing it. The stone was named "The Burning of Troy," on account of a red, fiery light which flickered over its surface, and the unfortunate life of this unhappy lady is a matter of history, though one can scarcely connect her destiny with the wearing of the "Burning of Troy!"

The royal family of Spain was at one time possessed of an opal which was supposed to have brought them bad luck, and the jewel was consequently got rid of—happily, perhaps, for the present royal family. The story goes that King Alfonso XII presented an opal ring to his Queen, Mercedes, on their wedding-day, and her death occurred soon afterwards. He then gave it to his sister-in-law, the Infanta Christina, who also died soon

after her acceptance of the fatal gift. The King then wore the ring himself, with the result that he, too, was in his grave within a brief period. Such an unbroken chain of unfortunate coincidences was disquieting, to say the least of it, and after this nobody seemed inclined to wear the ill-omened ring, so the Queen Regent hung it round the neck of the Virgin of Almudena, at Madrid.

The emerald is one of the most beautiful of precious stones, some people infinitely preferring it to the diamond, and indeed, in its sparkling brilliancy, with its translucent green depths almost like the unfathomable depths of the sea, it possesses a unique fascination. The ancient Hebrews always held, however, that the possession of an emerald brought bad luck, while another of their quaint superstitions was that a serpent became blind if it fixed its eyes upon an emerald.

Jade, on the contrary, is supposed to be lucky, the Chinese women being fond of wearing it for that reason.

The amethyst is also supposed to be lucky, the ancient Greeks and Romans believing that wine drunk out of an amethyst cup would not intoxicate.

The onyx was one of the gems credited with malignant properties, the superstitious folk of the Middle Ages asserting that any unfortunate wearer of the onyx would be visited by demons and evil visions at night, and worried by lawsuits and quarrels by day. The only remedy for this was to wear a sard at the same time, which would neutralize the evil powers of the onyx.

Amongst the Brahmins the ruby was a very favourite jewel, not only on account of its flaming beauty, but also because it was supposed to possess the power of attracting all other precious stones, as the magnet attracts the needle. If any number of jewels were dropped into the sea, they said, and the ruby let down below the surface of the waves attached to a string, the other stones, no matter how widely dispersed, would soon be drawn up again adhering to it. They also imagined that the ruby acted as a charm against fire.

Amber was the first precious stone made use of for the purposes of personal adornments. Homer mentions "the gold necklace hung with bits of amber" which was offered by the Phœnician trader to the Queen of Syra (*Odyssey*, XV. 460), and it is to be seen, to-day, beautifully carved, in some of the most ancient specimens of Etruscan jewellery. Nero, in one of his verses to Poppæa's hair, described it as of an "amber" shade, evidently intending a very high compliment to the beautiful

Empress, and hair of this colour straightway became all the fashion among high-born Roman ladies, who, if it did not grow naturally upon their own heads, donned imported wigs stolen from the female savages of Germany. The Romans believed amber to contain most valuable medicinal qualities; children wore it as an amulet, and it was considered to be entirely efficacious against insanity, either taken internally in the form of a powder, or worn round the neck. It was also supposed, when worn round the neck, to be a cure for ague and to act as a defence against chills, and when ground up with honey and rose-oil it was regarded as a specific for deafness, and when ground with attic honey alone for dimness of sight. It must have been rather an expensive remedy, however, and it is fortunate that doctors do not nowadays order us to mix powdered precious stones with our medicines!

The carnelian—or, as it was called in ancient times, sard—was, according to Pliny, so named after the place, Sardis, where it was discovered, another superstition being that it derived its name from its resemblance in colour to a pickled sardine. This latter idea is ridiculous, however, and neither of them is correct, as its ancient name was undoubtedly derived from the Persian word *Sered*, which means yellowish-red; the modern name, Carnelian, is supposed to be derived from *Caro*, meaning raw flesh.

This stone was credited with the power of curing tumours, and all wounds made by iron. In the eleventh century the superstitious believed that it staunched hæmorrhages, and was an antidote to all poisons arising from the corruption of the blood. It was supposed to be an unfailing remedy for bleeding of the nose, and, until quite recently, rings were cut out of it for that purpose. To this day, I believe, they are still used in some parts of Italy.

The cat's-eye is perhaps not so beautiful as some of our precious stones, but the Hindoos have a great affection for it, which, in consideration of their belief that it greatly strengthens the financial position of its owner, is not altogether unnatural!

The ancient Romans highly prized coral, which they obtained from the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and off the Isle of Hyères. It was also much in demand in India in ancient times, being worn by the men as well as the women, and in those days it fetched as high a price as pearls. The pretty little pink beads, so often to be seen round the necks of children to-day, were worn by the little Indian children as amulets, being credited with super-

natural powers. The Romans had much the same belief concerning the coral, and the tiny branches were tied round people's necks to keep off the Evil Eye. It was also used medically, being taken powdered after calcination in water for colic, and it also had its place as an ingredient in various salves for ulcers, scars, and affections of the eyes. Up till quite recently the small pointed branches, mounted with a silver or gold ring at the end for suspension on watch-chain or bracelet, were extensively manufactured in Italy, and sold as charms and amulets.

Tradition states that the stones lying underneath the Cross at Calvary, which were stained by drops of the Saviour's blood, were afterwards named bloodstones, and, increasing and multiplying, were converted into imperishable monuments of the sufferings of the Passion.

There are many admirers of that exceedingly handsome substance—which when brightly polished can sparkle like the most brilliant diamonds—jet. This—in reality fossilized wood—was first discovered in the River Gages, Lucia. The ancient Romans, who seem to have made a practice of mingling ingredients of great value with their various ointments and potions, prized it for its supposed medicinal virtues, and it was some time before they realized its beauty sufficiently to use it for personal adornment. When burnt, its fumes were supposed to drive away all reptiles; mixed with wine the Romans considered it good for toothache, and mixed with beeswax a cure for tumours. It was also used by soothsayers in the art of divination, for if it remained incombustible when put into the fire they held that the desire of the client who had come to consult them would be accomplished. It was the ancient Britons who first made use of it as an ornament, and they must have done so at a very remote period, for bracelets and anklets made of jet have been discovered in Britain by antiquarians who have dated them long before the Roman conquest of this island.

The turquoise was first introduced into Greece by the Macedonian soldiers, who, returning from their Persian campaigns, brought amongst their spoils goblets, dishes, and gold armour profusely decorated with this beautiful blue stone. It was much admired, and superstition has credited it with many powers. Like the opal, it was supposed to cheer the spirits of its wearer, and it was also said that, if he sustained a fall, the turquoise itself cracked and by its magical influence warded off any injury or fracture of his bones. If its owner sickened, it grew pale, and if he died, lost its colour altogether, regaining its full beauty,

however, if placed upon the hand of another proprietor in good health—so, despite its sympathetic nature it evidently was also fickle!

This chameleon-like propensity, however, was one of its charms, and almost up to the present time it has been a favourite gem for the betrothal ring presented by the lover to his lady, the permanency of its colour being believed to be an unfailing sign as to the state and constancy of his affection.

Pearls are also supposed to possess this curious susceptibility to the physical condition of their wearers. A necklace of pearls worn around the throat of a woman in good health will, it is said, always retain its purity of colouring, but if once the wearer loses her health, the pearls become dull, yellowish, and lose all their pristine freshness and lustre. And the more valuable the pearls the greater their susceptibility.

There have been many famous pearls, including the priceless pearl which, we are told, Cleopatra melted in a cup of wine at one of her gorgeous banquets, with the object of impressing Antony with the fact that she was of such unlimited wealth that its loss mattered nothing to her.

There have also been many famous diamonds. The story of the Hope diamond is a well-known one, but perhaps, as I am dealing with the subject of the occult properties supposed to be possessed by precious stones, it will not be considered out of place if it is once more related here. Certainly this most beautiful and valuable jewel must, if all one has heard about it be true, have been possessed of some supernatural malignant power, for the most amazingly bad luck attended those who had anything to do with it.

There have been many tales concerning this wonderful blue diamond, but one of the best versions was contained in an admirable article on Precious Stones, by W. Hurleston-Jones, in *Chambers's Journal* for February, 1915, and it is from that some of the following facts have been taken.

Brought to Europe first of all by Jean Baptiste Tournier, the famous traveller, the Hope diamond was sold to Louis the Fourteenth, who placed it among the crown jewels. The King presented it to the beautiful Madame de Montespan, who was eventually supplanted in his affections by Madame de Maintenon. The next person into whose possession it came was Nicolas Fouquet, Superintendent of Finance, who borrowed it for one of the sumptuous fêtes for which he was noted, and he afterwards quarrelled with his royal master and ended his days miserably in

prison. The ill-fated jewel was presently presented by Louis the Sixteenth to Marie Antoinette, she in her turn occasionally lending it to her friend, the lovely young Princesse de Lamballe—these three, as we all know, perished on the guillotine. It is stated that during the French Revolution the unlucky jewel was stolen from an Amsterdam diamond cutter, Wilhelm Fals, who had been commissioned to cut it—the thief being his own son. The result of this was that the diamond cutter was ruined and his son committed suicide, but before his tragic death young Fals passed it on to a Frenchman, who sold it to a dealer, who re-sold it to the late Mr. Hope for the sum of £18,000. Curiously enough, so long as the stone remained in the Hope family its malignant powers seem to have been in abeyance, for, so far as is known, no dire disasters befel its owners of that particular period in its extraordinary career, but at the death of Mr. Hope it was sold to an American jeweller in New York, and the ill-luck attendant on the possession of it broke out again! The jeweller got into financial difficulties, and after passing through the hands of a French broker, who, like young Fals, ended in a suicide's grave, the diamond was bought by a Russian prince, who either gave it or lent it to an actress at the Folies Bergères. The first time that she wore it the prince, who was present at the theatre, shot her while she was acting on the stage, and he himself was killed, a few days later, by revolutionaries. One would have thought that after such a catalogue of tragedies following in its wake people would have at last become chary of purchasing the diamond, but after the death of the Russian prince it was bought by a Greek jeweller, who was thrown over a precipice and killed after he had sold the stone to ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid. This latest adventure of the jewel was attended with even greater horrors than its former one, for Abdul Hamid presented the stone to his favourite, Salma Subayha, and she was wearing it when the Young Turks broke into the palace, so Abdul Hamid himself shot her dead. The diamond then passed into the hands of Habib Effendi, and he was drowned in a wreck.

Habib Effendi had been noted for his magnificent collection of precious stones, and in 1909 it was sold. It is said that the Hope diamond then passed once more into American hands, being bought by a Mr. MacLean, of Washington, who gave it to his wife. Since then nothing of great importance has apparently been heard of it, so it is to be hoped that its powers for working evil have at last come to an end!



# HINDU FUNERALS AND HINDU FAKIRS AT BENARES

BY AXEL DANE

THE atmosphere of Benares, the sacred city of the Hindus, is so charged with mysticism and occultism that I do not think any one, whose psychic nature is even slightly developed, can help feeling the influence.

I took advantage of a recent visit to this city to spend the early morning hours on the Ganges in order to see, not only the river and the town in the light of the rising sun, but also the crowd of pilgrims gathered there to pray and bathe in the holy river. I was, however, not prepared to see such a multitude,—there seemed to be thousands of them. Men and women of all ages filled the Ghats \* with the sunlight glistening on their wet, brown, satin-like skins. A great number of priests were sitting about under huge coloured umbrellas, offering their spiritual help to the pilgrims. Most of the people were standing waist-deep in the river, washing their garments, pouring water over their heads from small brass vessels, and all the time reciting prayers.

I was taken down the river in a boat to the different Ghats, all seething with life, and at last reached the "burning" or Yal Sain Ghat, from which I had already noticed a thin column of smoke rising to the clear sky, and knew a funeral was in progress. The orthodox Hindus always burn their dead, and as wood is scarce and costly in this part of India, the size of the funeral pyre is somewhat in proportion to the purse of the deceased or his family. At dawn the corpse is carried down to the Ghat by the bearers and laid on the steps close to the water's edge, the feet towards the river, and the whole family assemble in solemn silence near the pyre,—the corpse of a man being wrapped in white muslin, that of a woman in pink.

When all is ready the body is lifted by the bearers and placed on top of the pyre, a priest walks seven times round it, reciting suitable prayers, and then the eldest son of the deceased steps forward and receives from the priest a lighted torch with which

\* The "Ghats" are broad flights of stone steps leading down to the river.

he sets fire to the wood. When the first thin wreath of smoke shows that the wood is ignited he resumes his seat, patiently preparing for the long hours of waiting, for the relations are supposed to remain to the bitter end. After the body is consumed, the ashes are collected and thrown into the river and the family departs.

On arriving at this Ghat I saw a large bundle in white lying on the steps. My two men brought the boat to within a few yards of the spot, resting on their oars, while I awaited events. A few minutes after my arrival the big pile of wood nearest the river was ready for use, and the body of the man was placed upon it. A dignified priest walked several times around and then a young man came forward to perform his part. He was an extremely handsome youth of about twenty, dressed in snow-white, and with the serious, immovable expression so often seen in the faces of Oriental people.

When the smoke began to curl upwards the young man resumed his seat without showing the slightest emotion. The men who had built the pyre hovered about it armed with long poles, and lifted a piece of wood here and there to allow the draught to get in. After a while the right hand fell off and had to be restored to the pyre; I glanced at the son, but a statue could not have looked more serene.

I had come quite prepared to witness a dreadful ordeal, but found to my surprise that I had alarmed myself unnecessarily. The smell at times was certainly strong, but was mostly that of burnt wood. It was nevertheless rather gruesome to see a hand or a foot drop off and tumble to the ground, to be picked up and replaced on the flaming pyre.

As my boat moved on I gave one last look at the family group, and the feeling of unreality, which so often possessed me in India, was stronger than ever in spite of the teeming life, the brilliant sunlight and the violent noises.

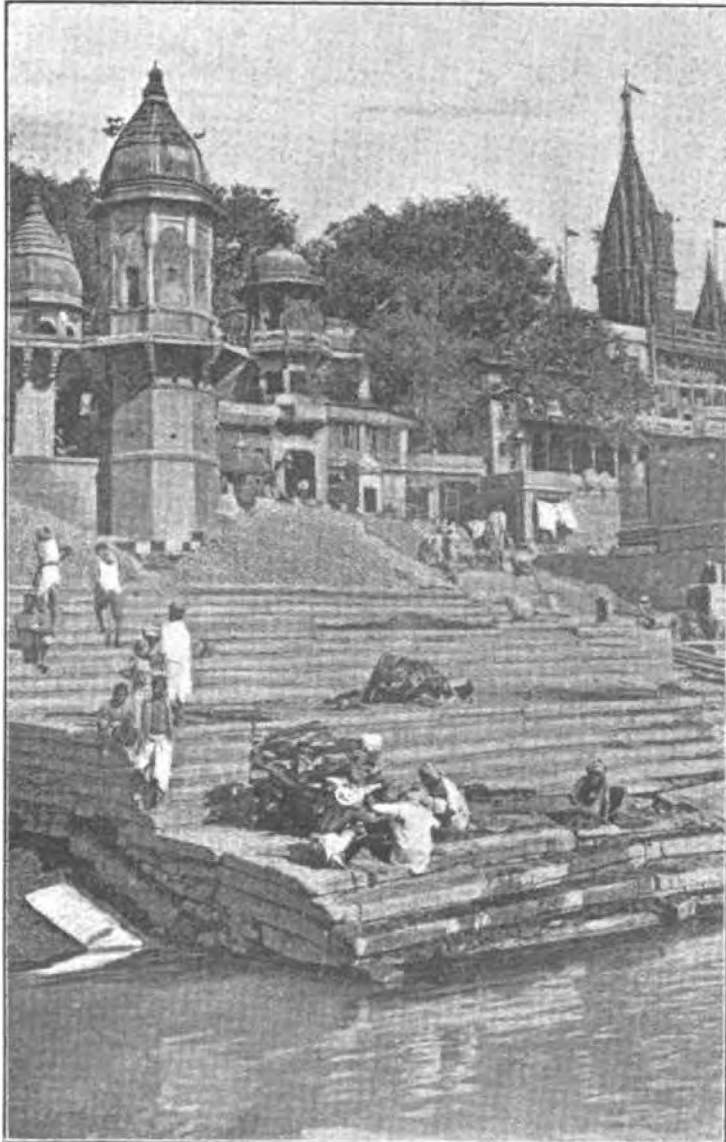
In the afternoon I met by appointment a learned Theosophist in whose company I visited several temples and shrines,—and in Benares their number is legion, it would take weeks to see them all. After a while my friend proposed a walk through the narrow streets behind the river temples, and turning round a corner we found ourselves in a crowd of people surrounding a tall, thin, almost naked man with a wild mop of hair,—evidently a Fakir. He was a head and shoulders taller than those around him, who seemed to be listening to his words with great respect. Close to one side of his head, and rising a foot or more

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above, I saw what appeared to be a brown stick with a knob at the end.

"Why is he carrying that stick?" I asked.

My friend smiled. "It is not a stick," she replied; "let us go nearer and you will see."



BURNING GHATS AND RIVER (BENARES).

It was his arm! Withered and gnarled like the arm of a mummy. All the flesh had wasted away and the bones were only covered by the dry, brown skin. The hand was closed so

tightly that the nails had grown through the palm and appeared on the other side.

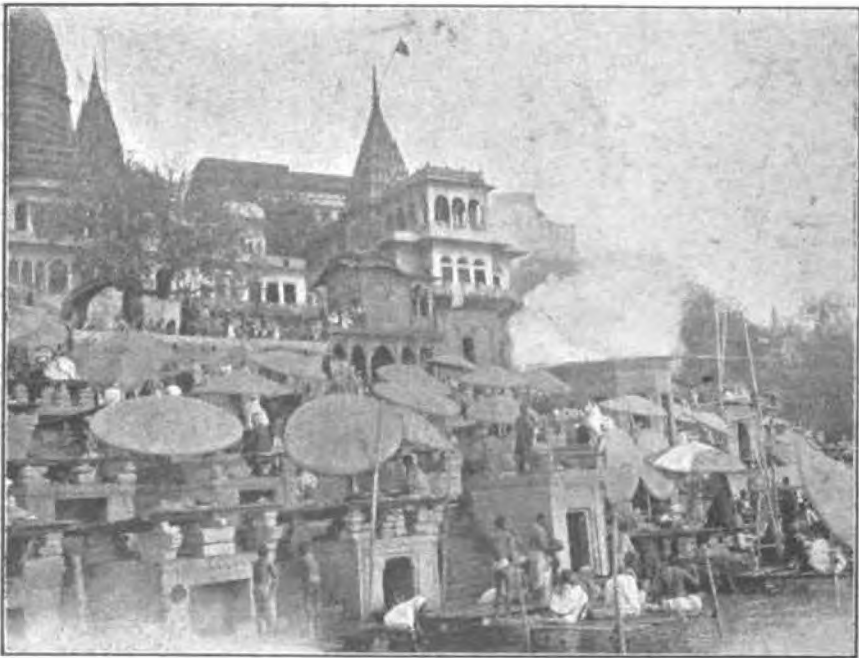
"How has he made his arm like that?" I asked.

"By holding it in the same position for years until it became a fixture."

"And why has he done it?" I asked almost angrily, for curiously enough the sight of this withered arm affected me more than the burning bodies.

"Do you not believe that power is gained for the spirit by mortifying the flesh?" my friend asked.

"No, certainly not," I said; "I do not think we have any



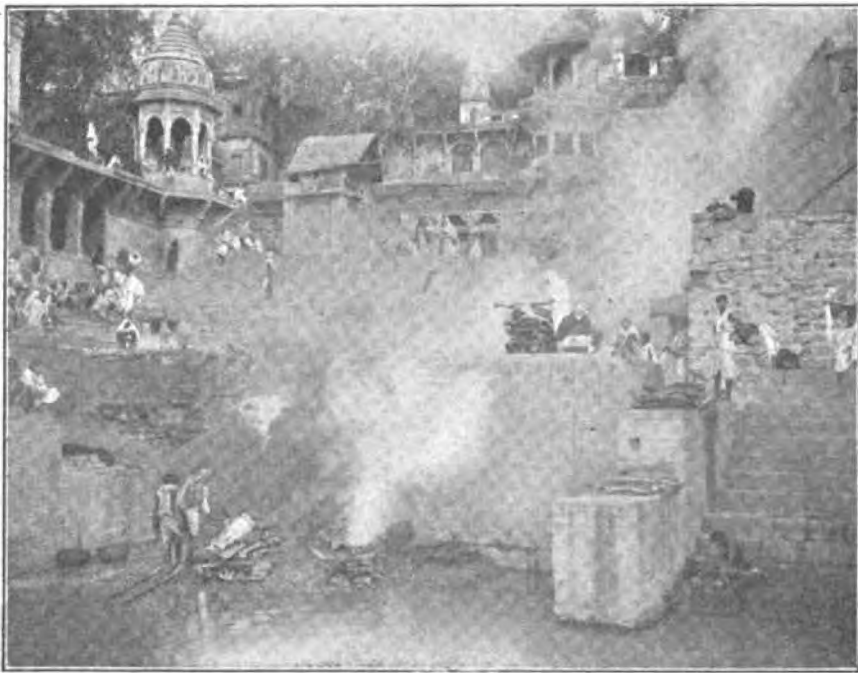
• RIVERSIDE, BENARES: FUNERAL PYRE OF RAJAH IN BACKGROUND.

right to turn ourselves into cripples, and I quite fail to see where the gaining of power comes in."

"That is because you look only at the result,—you forget what went before," my friend answered calmly; "the withered arm, that is neither here nor there, but the will-power that enabled the man to hold up his arm till it became what it is now,—do you not think will-power like that might move mountains? And remember, he himself chose this particular mode of subduing the body, nobody compelled him to begin, and what is still more important, nobody forced him to continue; at any moment he could have stopped. No reward was promised him if he suc-

ceeded, no punishment if he failed. Try to realize the physical torture he must have suffered, and still he persevered. Do you not think that this tremendous output of will-power and endurance will help him in his desire for mental and spiritual growth? You may be sure that in his next incarnation it will all be built into his character, forming a stepping-stone to still higher perfection."

"But what about the other Fakirs?" I asked when I had recovered myself a little,—“those who show you things that are not there and perform apparently impossible feats,—have they also to go through all this terrible preparation?"



BURNING GHATS (BENARES).

My friend laughed. "Oh, dear me, no! They do not prepare for mental or spiritual growth by doing what you call impossible feats. They are men who have certain psychic faculties very strongly developed, and who have acquired knowledge of some occult laws in Nature, the existence of which is unknown to most people; and through their knowledge they certainly produce wonderful results at times."

"And what are the psychic powers they use—hypnotism?"

"Yes—that amongst other things," she said rather hesitatingly, but would not enlighten me any further.

The following afternoon I was sitting on the veranda of

the hotel, reading a belated English newspaper, when I suddenly noticed a dark shadow on the floor, and looking up I beheld a tall, middle-aged native standing a few steps from me. His dress was of the scantiest, consisting only of a loin-cloth and a brimless straw hat, shaped somewhat like a skull-cap.

"What do you want?" I demanded.

He salaamed and asked if he might show me something, and I sat up in my chair, forgetting my fatigue. Here was a Fakir, one of those men who thought they could hypnotize me and make me imagine I saw things! Well, we would see about that! I looked at the bare, wooden floor, innocent of furniture, carpets, matting or any other covering. I glanced at the man's "dress,"—certainly no hiding-places to be found there, and the brilliant Indian sun was lighting up the stage.

"Yes, you may show me something," I said; "but you must stay where you are and you must not touch me."

He took his straw cap from his head and handed it to me, and by leaning forward in my chair I could just reach to take it from his hand. Yes—this was a good distance; he could not possibly touch me, and still he was so close that nothing he did, not even the slightest movement, could escape me. The scull-cap was unlined and the straw so thin that I could see daylight through it,—nothing could be hidden there.

When I gave it back he placed it on the floor just half-way between us, then straightening himself he held his hand above the cap for some seconds. He did not speak,—he did not even look at me.

"Now there is something underneath," he said, and stooping down he lifted the cap carefully and revealed four white hen's eggs on the floor.

"How did they get there?" I asked, when my surprise allowed me to speak. He did not answer, but lifted the eggs and gave them to me, saying I could break one if I liked to see that they were real; but I did not want to do that, for it was not so much what they were as how they came to be there that interested me. He then replaced them on the floor and covered them with the cap, stood upright once more and held out his hand.

"Now there is something else," he said, lifted the cap, and my bewildered eyes gazed on four live chickens about a day old,—two white, one brown, and one grey. They chirped and began to move; he gathered them quickly in his hands and gave two of them to me,—warm, lively little creatures they were, and one

of them tried to crawl up my sleeve. When I gave them back to the man he carefully put them down on the floor and covered them again with the cap. The little birds struggled for freedom, the cap moved and swayed, and did not quite reach the ground now that the chickens were under it ; I could still see their little feet scraping about. For a moment it looked as if they would succeed in making their escape, but the Fakir quickly straightened himself and held out his hand. The cap made one quivering movement, then sank down, touching the ground and lay perfectly still.

" Now there is nothing," he said and lifted the cap.

There was nothing ! The chickens had vanished into space !



BURNING GHAT (BENARES).

I stared stupidly at this wonderful wizard, who in the meantime had put the cap on his head. He then asked me if I could give him a handkerchief. I felt in my pocket.

" No, that is strange," I said, " for I am sure I had one a few minutes ago."

" Perhaps it is this ? " he asked as he raised the cap and took from it a handkerchief, which he handed me. Yes—it was mine ! There was my name—there the fruit-stain I had noticed at lunch-time. I was past speech and returned it to him in silence. He placed it on his head and fitted the cap over it, carefully tucking in every corner. Then both arms with the hands open fell down close to his sides and he stood immovable for about twenty seconds, while I leant forward in my chair

and stared at his head with such concentration that I felt the blood throbbing in my temples.

"Now it has left me," he said at last, took off the cap and handed it to me—empty!

"Where is it now?" I asked.

The Fakir smiled, shrugged his shoulders and threw out his hands. "Who knows?" he said, "perhaps it is back in the pocket."

And there it was,—the very same handkerchief!

All this time his feet had not stirred from the spot on which he had first taken up his position. I then gave him a rupee and he quietly salaamed and went away, leaving me with my brain in a perfect whirl and wondering whether I could ever again trust the evidence of my own senses.



# THE ACTOR AND THE OCCULT

By C. SHERIDAN JONES

FOR many reasons a study of the stage and of the many strange superstitions that haunt it, not excluding the curious fascination that the occult has for the actor, should possess a compelling interest, as well as a vital importance, for the readers of this review. The stage, it is true, is little touched by the scientific spirit. In theatreland, which lives, indeed, by and for its emotions, where so much that is false passes as true, and so much that passes with us for nothing is realized at its true worth; where men and women stumble, almost by accident, on some of the most fundamental parts of human consciousness; where the public appear each night to the player masked in a great darkness, from behind which come bursts of merriment or tears; and where the players are themselves as effectively disguised in a brightness almost as unnatural; here, we may find, it is true, fierce candour, swift intuition, facile emotion, as well as frigid convention as deadening as any in suburbia. But of the quiet detachment of the scientist, of the precision of the investigator, we do not get a trace. On reflection I am not sure that this is not an advantage. Compared with the scientist, the actor is a human person. Though the emotion he simulates is false, yet he feels it—

. . . Ah, think then, sweet people,  
When you look at us clad in our motley and tinsel  
Ours are human hearts, beating with passion.

That would hardly seem so convincing a plea from the *savant* in the laboratory, whose experience, limited to observation, takes no account of those innate feelings and sensations, which after all afford the most valuable clue to the mentality of the common man. The actor, like the scientist, is a specialist. But, if I may be pardoned the paradox, he specializes in common things; in the fundamental, sub-conscious elements of our nature that can be discovered, but perhaps never classified. The very errors that he draws from the psychic experiences that, as we shall see, are part and parcel of his craft, help us to interpret through him the mind of man. In a word, his first value to us

as a scientific investigator is that he himself is thoroughly unscientific and hence a candid and uncompromising witness.

Some of the superstitions that still stalk the stage preceded Hamlet and ante-dated Aristophanes. They are, in fact, as old as man himself, and had their origin in the first beginnings, the earliest awakenings of his spiritual nature. They date back to days when savage rites and customs were the only equivalent for theatrical representation. Just as children's games and nursery rhymes are often the last refuge for older religious rites and songs, so to-day the observances that govern the actor on the stage and in the green room, that require his unfaltering and absolute obedience, his most scrupulous regard, these had their beginnings in beliefs and habits formed before even the most primitive stage was dreamt of. Ask any actor if whistling at a rehearsal is permissible, and he will tell you that it will infallibly bring ill luck to the piece. Inquire the reason and a shrug will be his answer. But the curious in these matters may find in Homer a hint as to the origin of this quaint belief; for the most ancient of all poets indicates clearly enough that to whistle at moments of tension is to summon those evil spirits that a more simple and less distracted people believed attended man's destiny at every point.

The superstition, I may point out, is not confined to actors. By a quaint but significant irony it is shared by two other trades nearly co-equal with his own in point of time; by the miner, who resents the whistle of a mate descending into the pit, lest some of the evil spirits of the mine respond to the call; and by the mariner, who frowns on the sailor whistling for a wind. In these two cases, indeed, time may have blunted somewhat the edge of a custom that was once universal. But not so with the actor. He, the more educated man of the three, is the more unreasoning, the more rigorous in his observation of this empirical caption. Why is this? If we turn for a moment to Professor Ridgeway's account of the origin of the actor, we get at least a possible explanation. The tragic actor had his beginnings, says the Professor, in those ancient religious performances in which the actor appeared as a "medium of a spirit of the dead." This theory, which won the support last autumn of Sir Arthur Evans, the President of the British Association, would give to the actor's calling a new significance and would help us to understand much of the obstinacy with which he clings to antiquated beliefs; for, it will be agreed that, of all traditions, those which have their origin in religious emotions are the

most persistent and remain long after the circumstances that called them forth have passed away.

But fascinating as the theory may be in regard to the hold which this particular observance has upon the actor, I think that it would be straining more than a point, to account for his generous proneness to superstition on the ground of his prehistoric religious associations. For my part, I should feel inclined rather to look for the cause of this phenomenon in the incidents of his profession, which still keep him a nomad in the business world, as much a stranger to the ways of conventional commerce, as, let us say, the gipsy is to the discipline of Kitchener's Army, and I would find the first and most compelling incentive to superstition in the extraordinary uncertainty that has dogged his steps from the time of the barnstormers down to this very period, when, though actor-managers blossom easily enough into baronets, and the bright particular stars of the profession radiate the town in their gorgeous motors, yet their less fortunate brethren may still be found at Poverty Corner, or thronging the rooms of theatrical agents, or up and down the Strand dancing (as did Gilbert's briefless barrister) "a dance like a semi-despondent fury." I do not mean, of course, that misfortune breeds superstition. My point is made clear by the very expressive phrase that has come to us from bygone generations of actors who asked (as do their successors to-day), "Will the ghost walk?" The essence of the inquiry lay in the uncertainty, alike of the appearance of a shade, and of their salary. The actor, in fact, was and is a gambler: a man who will forgo the contentment of a regular income and a steady stipend, if there is still a chance, faint but possible, of his achieving that golden success, which more phlegmatic temperaments would not hope to win. And gamblers, it is an invariable rule, believe in the power of the mascot: they become, the sanest and shrewdest of them, fetish worshippers of the most extreme kind. Such and such things spell ruin: others connote good luck, and must be possessed at all costs. Nowhere is that belief held with more conviction than on the stage. There is a story of a famous *prima donna*, who charmed a foreign sovereign, now deceased, so wisely that the monarch offered her a rope of splendid pearls. But the *diva* begged instead for the pen nib that his Majesty had used to sign the reprieve that day of a popular murderer, whose crime had presumably some redeeming features. The nib had brought life to one unhappy wretch: infallibly it would bring her luck, and she wore it, set in diamonds,

as a brooch at her throat. There are dozens of these mascots that these children of chance, born gamblers all, worship, and dozens of omens that reduce them to paralysis of terror. Irving and Ellen Terry had the greatest difficulty in overcoming alike the objection to the use of peacock's feathers on the stage, and in departing from that unwritten law of the profession which leaves the last line of a play unuttered at rehearsal, while we all know, of course, that the appearance of a black cat in or about a theatre on the first night is deemed an infallible preventive against that "blue ruin," made clear by the display of bills of that colour (as was of yore the custom) announcing the withdrawal of the piece.

Macbeth is, as one might suppose, a fruitful source, if not of superstitions, then at least of those beliefs, which, though powerfully influencing conduct, have yet no basis in reason or reality. The famous music of Locke, little heard nowadays by the public, is still remembered by the profession—and always with a shudder. To open a house with "Macbeth" is, in the view of most histrions, to court bankruptcy, and it is an obstinate and almost invariable rule for the actor who has to proclaim those famous lines in which, through the person of young Lennox, Shakespeare gave perhaps the clearest indication of his belief in a sympathy between man and inanimate nature, to break down hopelessly in their delivery—

"The night has been unruly; where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,  
Lamenting's heard i' the air; strange screams of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say the earth  
Was feverous and did shake."

*Macbeth.* " 'Twas a rough night."

*Lennox.* "My young remembrance cannot parallel a fellow to it."

The "rough night" in question is that which sees the murder of Duncan by Macbeth.

But more impressive than any actual superstition on the part of any actor is, strange to say, the great disinclination on the part of members of the profession to talk about matters occult, or at least to give those definite and specific instances, which they name only with diffidence.

And this suggests that there is a deeper, a more potent reason for the actors' proneness to these beliefs than any I have given. He lives, as it were, on the edge of the occult. Whether or not Professor Ridgeway was right, whether the

actor played a part akin to that of a medium or not, one thing is certain: he obtains his effects to-day largely, and at his best, by the practice of the occult, that is by using faculties or powers that cannot be directed by, and are often independent of, the senses as we know them. He is, he must be, an effective hypnotist, a master of suggestion, or he is no actor, and he must and does convey his suggestion to his audience, not only through the senses, but actually independently of gesture, of voice, of facial expression—of everything but feeling. Consciously or unconsciously, this must be the case. Let me give an instance in point. When Sir Beerbohm Tree essayed the terribly trying part of Hamlet—a part that has reduced the strongest actor to a condition of collapse—he found that by far the most exacting scene was that in which he confronted his father's ghost. The reason did not lie in the dialogue or in the mere physical part of the acting. The strain came in that moment when the Prince of Denmark, standing on the battlements with Horatio, is called on by his friends to turn and face the ghost. During that brief space of time, the actor made it his practice, as he stood with his face turned alike away from the audience and from the spectre, to summon up within him all the surging sense of horror that an instant later he was to express in the immortal line, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" The result repaid the effort, for as he turned and uttered the words, so he could feel the effect upon the audience. One night, however, reasoning that the potency of the words could be enhanced only by his voice and facial expression, he resolved to spare himself the enormous stress of the emotional exercise that preceded the utterance—and at once felt that the words fell flat. Here we have a clear illustration of the actor obtaining an effect, not by known material means, but by the exercise of some quality, which, call it what we will, telepathy, hypnotism, suggestion, conveys elemental ideas from one person to another with a force and directness which speech alone cannot achieve. Let me give another illustration of the suggestive reciprocity that establishes itself automatically between a performer and his audience. In his fascinating reminiscences Mr. Edward H. Sothorn tells how an acrobat noticed that a certain man constantly attended his exhibition. Wherever he travelled, east or west, the same eyes watched him. He became fascinated, then terrified, for he knew the reason; knew it although the man had never spoken to him. The possibility of failure, and of a cruel death, present always to the acrobat's mind, had passed

on to that of his depraved spectator, and, though, at this time, the two men had never exchanged a word, the acrobat knew that those eyes followed him night after night in the hope that at last he would make the fatal slip. Mr. Sothern's book is very eloquent of the hold that the occult has obtained over the profession, and it is clear from his pages, though not explicitly stated, that the appearance of the dead to their friends is regarded as almost a commonplace in the profession. He reminds us how Mr. Edwin Booth was called on by his wife in New York. He heard her distinctly say, "Come to me, my darling, I am almost frozen," and when speeding to her on the train, not dreaming that she was seriously ill, he saw her repeatedly dead with a white cloth round her head and chin. When he arrived in Dorchester, Massachusetts, she was in her coffin. Again he tells us that after Lady Burton's death, she appeared in broad daylight to Justin Huntly McCarthy and his daughter as they walked along the front at Brighton. "There goes Lady Burton," said Miss McCarthy, as she passed. At that moment Lady Burton lay dead in London.

But the most interesting account of an astral appearance in the book, and one of the most remarkable and complete ones that I have ever read, is that for which Mr. Sothern himself vouches.

In the days when he was studying art, partly at Heatherly's in Newman Street, and partly in a studio off Golden Square Mr. Sothern, then a lad, left the academy a little before four o'clock every afternoon, returning again at six. The interval he spent at his studio, where one Monsieur la Tappy, a refugee, ruined by the war of '70, came to talk to him in French by way of imparting the language. La Tappy, proud, poor and well educated, with a trick of saying when he disagreed with one "No, gentleman" (meaning "No, sir") "Pour moi il n'y a pas de dieu" was not only a sceptic, but was familiar with paintings, with literature and with the drama, so that their talks were instructive. One day it was raining cats and dogs, and young Sothern was late in getting to his room, to find, alas, that La Tappy was not there. Presently La Tappy appeared and talked with more than usual interest. "He laughed gaily, he made that curious action of shutting his eyes tight and then opening them wider. He played his five finger exercises in the air, he drank his tea." So the two friends, who had become more than pupil and teacher, talked on about Spain, about a murder young Sothern had seen, about the Alhambra Palace, and other things. At last La Tappy rose to go.

"It was his custom when handling anything to speak its name in French. As I gave him his coat he said 'Mon sur-tout'; on receiving his poor faded slouch hat he said 'Mon chapeau'; then came the umbrella and 'Mon parapluie.'"

"'Ah,' said I, gaily, 'don't leave that behind.' 'No, gentleman,' and I burlesqued his way of saying 'No, sir.' Then I completed the phrase, 'Pour moi il n'y a pas de dieu.' La Tappy had his hand on the door. He turned to me, I fell back in fear. His face was livid, in the dim room his eyes shone like two dull coals. For a second he looked, then he raised his right hand above his head and pointed upwards. He tried to speak, but no sound came; he seemed to fade through the door."

Fearing that he had offended his friend by his burlesque of his manner, young Sothern ran to the door. There was no sign of the visitor. He could not see him out of the window, and he made up his mind to follow him and apologize. "I put on my hat and coat and opened the door of my room. A man met me in the doorway. 'I am Monsieur La Tappy's son,' said he, 'My father had an appointment with you at four, but I have come to tell you he can't be here. He died at three o'clock.'

"'He has been here,' said I.

"'No, he is dead.'

"'He left me only a moment since.'

"'Impossible! He is at home dead on his bed.'

"I could hardly speak; 'He died suddenly? He said nothing?'

"'He died suddenly, and he spoke one word; 'Pardon.'"

It needed an actor to set out this narrative in such detail and with such certitude. A barrister, doctor, or man of business at work on a book would almost certainly have excluded the incident. People would look at him askance, he would reflect, would think him queer and distrust his judgment, and his pocket and *prestige* would inevitably suffer. But the actor belongs to the one profession not affected by such considerations, and that can afford to be quite honest in the matter; the one profession whose practice enforces the scantiest regard for the intellect of the average man and the most profound and perpetual consciousness of that intangible but ebullient and inexpugnable something that lies behind it: and hence the one profession that believes unashamedly in the occult.

## CORRESPONDENCE

[*The name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, is required as evidence of bona fides, and must in every case accompany correspondence sent for insertion in the pages of the OCCULT REVIEW.—ED.*]

### MENTAL PROMPTINGS.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—I read with interest a letter in the April number of the OCCULT REVIEW with reference to, and giving examples of "Mental Promptings." The following personal experiences may also be of interest in proving that the commands of this sub-conscious "Intelligence Department" are of value and should not be lightly disregarded, although so often they seem of a very trivial and even tiresome character.

A few days ago I lost part of a valuable ear-ring, it had become entangled in my veil (I was dressing to go out), and as all efforts to extricate it seemed useless for the moment, and I was in a hurry, I went down a passage to my writing room to finish a letter. I glanced at myself in a mirror on the wall and saw the diamond pendant still fixed in the net of my veil. To my dismay, the next time I looked up it had fallen out! I called my daughter, and we both searched everywhere on the floor, table, and in my clothes, but all to no purpose. A week after, having occasion to go to a drawer in my writing-table to get out some papers, I closed the drawer and was just leaving the room when I was told to "Go back, look in the drawer, and you will find the lost jewel." I obeyed the voice, though in a somewhat supercilious mood, for we had given up all hope and thought every place had been turned out. However, to my surprise and delight I caught sight of the ear-ring half hidden by another bit of paper! The strange thing is, that I had already asked a jeweller to give me his estimate for making another ear-ring, and his note quoting price had come the day before, but I had mislaid and not opened it, or I should have given the order, and that would have cost me £7!

The other instance is connected with a quotation, a "Reference Wanted," by a correspondent in *The Westminster Gazette*. Now, I was perfectly familiar with the words, but could not remember the context, nor had I the slightest idea in which book to look, only that it was in a poem. I searched in several, but without success, and so in annoyance decided not to lose any more time over it. The same



afternoon sitting at my writing-table, I received a clear message or command to fetch my volume of "Browning." Thinking myself rather foolish to obey, I took the book from the shelf and stood idly with it in my hands, for I could think of no poem in that volume with a likely context, then I felt impelled to open it, and at the very page at which I opened it, there were the words for which I had searched! These two experiences happened within a fortnight, and are the most remarkable I have had, although I am quite accustomed to "promptings." In the one case I was saved money, in the other valuable time, and in future I shall obey with meekness and alacrity any commands I may receive, and be well content to bear the laughter of sceptics!

Yours faithfully,

C. FARMAR.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLOTINUS.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—Your interesting account of the philosophy of Plotinus in the April number, in which you courteously acknowledge some obligation to my little book on the subject, sets me thinking of the vast change which has come about in the attitude of the public mind towards what may be called the transcendental theory since that book was written some twenty odd years ago. At that time, or it may have been a few years later, *The Academy* started a bureau for the reading of MSS. and to help authors to get them disposed of to suitable publishers. To this I sent "The Wisdom of Plotinius," but, although favourably reported upon by their reader, the powerful influence of *The Academy's* recommendation failed to induce any firm to issue even so small a work upon a subject so remote from and *opposed to* current ideas. It was not until 1909 that under your friendly auspices the little book saw the light. In the meantime and since, what a change has come about! The name of Plotinus is to-day almost popular; the ideas he stands for are permeating society with irresistible power. It is true enough, as you say, that the claim of Plotinus or any other thinker to have "solved" the riddle of existence can, with enlightened people, only provoke a smile. It may be that the very questions which Plotinus undertook to answer—or some of them, at least—will more and more clearly be seen in the light of increasing knowledge to be meaningless, and incapable not only of being answered but even of being seriously asked. Perhaps the mocking smile of the Sphinx is due to its appreciation of our obstinacy in regarding as a *conundrum* what is really nothing of the sort.

However this may be, there is no doubt in my mind that by the exercise of that divine faculty which some call "intuition" and others "inspiration" Plotinus got into touch with higher planes of being and so was enabled to report fundamental truths which will never become outworn or obsolete. "When the barriers of sects have once

fallen," says Récéjac, "there is nothing left but that *Philosophia perennis* which in its various degrees is the true, sole and divine Revelation." Philosophers are many; Philosophy is one and indivisible; the field and range of truth being no less ample than Infinity, it is obvious that no one thinker, however exalted his genius, however comprehensive his "system," can finally grasp or define that self-revealing process of a self-augmenting Reality which has neither beginning nor end.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES J. WHITBY, M.D.

9 THE PARAGON, BATH.

### TELEPATHIC MUSIC.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—As a constant reader of your valued journal, I have been deeply interested in the correspondence published in recent issues concerning the various means of telepathic communications. I venture to send you an account of an interesting experience related to me recently by my brother, Frank, who is a Q.-M.-S. in a Battalion of the Bedfords Regiment. We have both been on active service for nearly two years.

My brother is an excellent violinist, and for over a year has had his violin with him in France, and, when away from the trenches, has frequently indulged his passion for music.

Unfortunately, during the offensive of last year this was impossible; and, from August to November, he scarcely touched the instrument.

I quote the following from his letter:—

"About the middle of November I received a letter from my sister in England, telling me that during the singing of a hymn in Church on the previous Sunday night, she distinctly heard me playing my violin. This interested me not a little, for on that particular Sunday I had arrived at a fairly comfortable billet, and, during the evening, had unpacked my violin and played it; my thoughts meanwhile being naturally of the place (the Church) where in pre-war days I had spent so many happy hours with my instrument. I wrote at once to my sister, telling her that, at the time she heard the violin, I was really playing for the first time for about three months.

"My sister did not know at that time that I was in billets. She could not possibly have known even that I had left the trenches.

"FRANK."

I might add that my sister has told us of several similar experiences which occurred before the War.

I am sir,

Yours, etc.,

(Pte.) W. T. CROXFORD.

## ASTRAL TRAVELLING.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—I have done this many times, generally in the day-time, but never *concentrate*. I allow silence to enwrap me, and then "sense" the house, room, person, etc. that I am asked to see by some one else. Often a mist seems to close round all but the individual I am looking for. Once in describing an unknown house and its drawing-room, I found myself going through a door by the fire-place, and seeing an old man writing in another room. My friend, who had asked me to describe an old house she had once lived in, was impressed at my going through the door (long ago walled up), and said I described her dead father at his table in his study. At another time, when I was sent to heal a friend whose lodgings in London I did not know, I could only see an unused bed in a room full of mist. As I did this at 2 a.m. I supposed I was wrong. My friend in a few days told me she was out of bed, cold and ill, but that on entering her bed, she felt as if arms were put round her, and she went off to sleep, awaking quite well in the morning.

Yours faithfully,

PAX.

## FORTUNE-TELLING CARDS.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—In the February number Mr. A. W. Noyes-Lewis refers to a pack of fortune-telling cards, and I can give him a little information about them.

In 1897, or 1898, these cards were published in the *Puritan Magazine* (for some time past out of print), and being interested in them, I cut them out, pasting them on ordinary playing cards, thereby destroying the rules, which were printed on the backs of them. I memorized the rules, and can give the meaning of the cards.

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Peacock, pride.                  | 19. Laurel crown, honours.           |
| 2. Butterflies, kisses.             | 20. Grasshopper, happiness.          |
| 3. Slipper, engagement.             | 21. Basket, gift.                    |
| 4. Eye, jealousy.                   | 22. Open gate, opportunity.          |
| 5. Footman, news.                   | 23. Palette, pen and ink, talents.   |
| 6. Ship, your wish.                 | 24. Tea-cup, gossip.                 |
| 7. Dark man.                        | 25. Stirrup, short journey.          |
| 8. Dark lady.                       | 26. Devil, worst card in pack, evil. |
| 9. Fair man.                        | 27. Jack-in-box, surprise.           |
| 10. Fair lady.                      | 28. Bottle and glass, illness.       |
| 11. Sun, the best card in the deck. | 29. Dagger, danger.                  |
| 12. Mountains, long journey.        | 30. Heart, love affair.              |
| 13. Fish, disappointment.           | 31. Lantern, adventure.              |
| 14. Snake, treachery.               | 32. Handkerchief, tears.             |
| 15. Fireside, home.                 | 33. Volcano, great excitement.       |
| 16. Fan, flirtation.                | 34. Letter, letter.                  |
| 17. Child and pitcher, accident.    | 35. Blank card.                      |
| 18. Money, money.                   |                                      |

Twenty-five cards, in rows of five, were used—the first row relating to yourself ; second, to your home ; third, to your wish ; fourth, what you don't expect ; fifth, what is sure to come true. As in other fortune-telling cards packs, the combinations of these cards had special meanings, for instance, stirrup next to mountains was a trip across the water ; the devil next to bottle and glass foretold death, and so on.

The cards proved most entertaining, but at times so uncannily in foretelling deaths, that for years I did not touch them.

If a printed pack can be purchased, with the rules, and any of your readers can tell me where, I should be glad to have a new set, as my old set is worn out.

Sincerely yours,

A. L. D.

525 FULLERTON AVENUE,  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U.S.A.

### AN UNEXPLAINED APPARITION.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—I should be very glad if you or any of your readers could give me any idea of the meaning of an experience that happened to my husband about eighteen months ago, and which has puzzled me very much.

He was sleeping alone, as I and our two children were away at the sea, and he woke early one morning before it was properly light to find some one just coming into the room. Not being able to discover who it was, but thinking it was either my mother or my aunt, both of whom were staying in the house, he asked what was the matter. The person gave no reply but came nearer the bedside, and then he saw it was a tall young woman, and also that there was a cat sitting on the bed, at his foot. He asked who it was and what she wanted, but still no reply. Being thoroughly aroused and determined to find out what it was all about, he tried to knock the cat off the bed and also to grab hold of the woman, when to his amazement the cat vanished, and the woman, smilingly eluding his grasp, also vanished through the wall. Until then, of course, he had no idea of anything supernatural. He then struck a match and looked at his watch. It was about 4.45. Although he could not see the person distinctly, she struck him as being very like a favourite sister, who died ten years ago, but looking as she used to look when in her teens. She was over thirty when she died. She was not fond of cats, neither is he, but, curiously enough, I and my daughter are. It happened that I was very poorly at the time, but it was nothing serious, and I had not let them know about it at home. He has never seen anything since, neither has anything happened that could be thought to have any connection with the appearance. Do you suppose she wished to speak to him, but was prevented from so doing by his actions?

Some few years ago my mother had a similar experience in another

bedroom in this house. She also saw some one come into the room when it was half light, looking exactly like one of the maids bringing her usual cup of tea. She advanced towards the foot of the bed and seemed to put something down on a chair and turned to go out of the room, when my mother spoke to her, thinking, of course, it was the maid, but she made no reply and quickly vanished, either through or by the door. My mother felt uneasy, and getting up and not finding the tea or anything, slipped on a dressing-gown and went straight to ask the maids about it. Neither of them had been near. The person seen had on a blue washing dress and looked like a maid or a sick nurse, having on a cap and white apron. I was away from home that time also, having taken my children to Rhyl, but was not ill, neither were the children. We have never been able to find out what the appearance could mean, neither has my mother seen anything else before or since. I may say that both she and my husband are very matter-of-fact, with no leanings towards anything occult, and very sceptical about such things. They are, however, both quite convinced that they saw these things and were perfectly wide awake at the time.

It seems to me rather strange that they should be able to appear to them, while I, who am intensely interested in these subjects, have not seen them.

I should be very grateful for any light on the subject. Hoping my letter is not too lengthy,

Yours faithfully,

INTERESTED INQUIRER.

#### GIPSIES AND ELDER WOOD.

*To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—*Re* the Gipsies' dislike to burning elder wood. I believe the following to be one explanation—

It is said that the Cross of our Lord was of elder wood. It is also said by Shakespeare in "Love's Labour Lost," that Judas was hanged on an elder tree, and thus it is supposed to be a *doubly* accursed tree. I believe that on these two superstitions is based the Gipsies' dislike of burning elder.

Yours truly,

CASTLE MORTON, WORCS.

MABEL TREVOR.

## PERIODICAL LITERATURE

MR. CAVENDISH MOXON'S paper on Jesus and Jewish Archæology in the new issue of *The Quest* is really a criticism of the Dean of St. Paul's, who is described as remarkable for his "repeated attacks on the eschatological school in general and eschatological Modernists in particular." Mr. Moxon himself writes from the opposite standpoint and maintains (1) that all pictures of Jesus "as a mere moralist or reformer are radically defective," and (2) that the same judgment obtains for all—whether churches or individuals—who "do not see God in Jesus" and do not "seek first the transcendent Kingdom of God in our human life." It is the hope of this kingdom and the vision of the city of God which justifies the claim to bear the title of Christian, whether we are eschatologists or not. Professor Estlin Carpenter institutes a parallel and a contrast between Aspects of Theism in Hinduism and Judaism. The points are (1) that Judaism and Hinduism contributed "by their own growth and by the influences which issued from them," respectively in Christianity and Buddhism, "to the mightiest forces in the world's religion; (2) that both rest on tradition embodied in sacred books; (3) that the notion of a transcendental origin for the Mosaic Law and the Rig Veda assumed curiously parallel forms; and (4) that both religions were fundamentally institutional. Among points of contrast is that the Hindu, unlike the Jew, had "no witness for his religion from a national consciousness." Hindu theism "lacked those elements of race-consciousness and institutional vigour which kept Judaism alive under unexampled dangers and sufferings." The outlook of Israel was on a wider scale and ranged over greater diversities of human culture. It is an admirable article, to which no synopsis can do adequate justice. Mr. Mead is concerned with "a world in search of its reason"—that is to say, of "a deeper realization of its own nature" by synthetic grades of ascent. In the course of this quest, it is striving "between the contradictions of the idea of a moral God . . . and the fact of an amoral universe." It is maintained, however, by a faith that the most terrible contradictions are "reconcilable in the Divine Reason." The end of quest and strife is an ever-growing realization of that Reason. The quest is therefore bringing to birth a higher reason in humanity itself, together with the sense of a higher order of reality and something which approaches conscious and willing participation therein. Among other articles in the issue there is one which is quite memorable as a study in literary criticism. It is that on Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*, by Mr. E. E. Kellett. The witch of the great poet is imagination, is poetry, is indeed essential truth and that beauty which is the radiance

of truth. It is altogether a suggestive commentary and exposition, full of intimate allusions to sources near and afar.

The same curious quality of interest which attached to *The Revealer* on its first appearance still obtains, now that it is in its third volume. The Australasian new thought which it represents is evidently a variety of its own and markedly distinct in some of its developments from that of America, or indeed our own country. The covenant with Abram is held to signify the soul's vision of its own greatness and immortality, as heir of the ages. The heifer sacrificed by Abram in Gen. xv. 9, symbolizes the physical body, the she-goat is the vital body, the ram that of desire, while the turtle-dove and young pigeon represent soul and spirit. Mrs. Veni Cooper Mathieson, with whom are these strange findings, is not only editor of *The Revealer* and minister of a "universal church," but because of the present crisis in the world's history, she has established an Order of the Prince of Peace, the teachings of which are embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, while the specific objects are to gather "all sincere and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ" under one banner of truth and love. Mrs. Cooper Mathieson has the seal of sincerity in her own writings, and if some of her views and interpretations, perhaps also a few of her schemes, are a little touched with extravagance, she is always moderate in expression and usually clear in thought.

*The Theosophist* recurs to the question of Old Catholics and gives further particulars in answer to the question, What is the Old Catholic Church?—the writer subscribing as one of its members. It traces its episcopal lineage to the Church of the Netherlands, dating from the seventh century. The hierarchy of this Church was "overthrown" in the sixteenth century, being replaced by Vicars-Apostolic, one of whom was suspended in 1702 for extending hospitality to certain persecuted Jansenists. The chapter of Utrecht elected a successor, and the ordination of priests was continued by sympathetic French and Irish bishops. About 1719 the Bishop of Ascalon was suspended by Rome for administering Confirmation to six hundred persons, when passing through Holland on his way to Persia. Subsequently he consecrated four Archbishops of Utrecht, by whom the succession was continued. The Dutch Church has gone on ever since, with Orders said to be unquestioned, though falsely accused of Jansenism. It is known as the Old Roman Church, and it was this Church which about 1872 consecrated a Bishop on behalf of the Old Catholics, at the head of whom was Dr. Döllinger. The movement has spread into Switzerland, Austria, France, Poland, America and England. As regards this country, Dr. Mathew was consecrated on April 28, 1908, by the Archbishop of Utrecht, but as the last result of certain lamentable feuds, he made his submission to Rome. The movement is said, however, to continue in England under other episcopal auspices, but the position of its Orders is doubtless regarded differently by those in sympathy with the movement and by the Latin centre of authority.

The consideration of Hindu marriage from a standpoint of religious philosophy has been resumed in *The Vedic Magazine*. It is intended to show that the ceremonial procedure is religious rather than social, and to unfold the real significance of the ritual procedure and liturgy thereto belonging, which has several curious points. We shall hope to summarize results when the series concludes, and meanwhile would suggest that such articles should be continued from month to month, instead of with long intervals between them. . . . Mr. F. W. Burry writes in *The Kalpaka* on so-called cosmic consciousness, which he describes as "a recognition of one's universal identity." The statement stands at its value, being not a little confusing in expression, and is followed by a suggestive personal experience, in which the sense of personality was absorbed by a universal sense. It is decided that in cosmic consciousness "the eternal unity is recognized for practical purposes" --a sentence which does not convey the writer's meaning, nor indeed anything else.

There are a few of us at least who remember the last visit of Mrs. Cora Richmond to England, now many years ago. There are also many besides professed spiritualists who are acquainted with certain "Orations" through her mediumship which have passed, we believe, through numerous editions in America. In a recent issue of *Reason* she speaks of her acquaintance with the late W. J. Colville, which began during a stay of three years in Great Britain, he being in his fifteenth year. His first experience in trance was owing to his presence at one of her lectures, so that she was instrumental indirectly in opening his future career. She maintains that he never really abandoned spiritualism, though he was often classed among theosophists, Christian Scientists and the various new thought movements. Having regard to our own acquaintance with Colville's multifarious work, especially in the periodical press, we believe Mrs. Richmond to be right, though his numerous interests may have led to misconception on this point.

The Rome theosophical review entitled *Ultra* enters on its eleventh volume and has articles on the power of higher consciousness over the mind, on occult psychology in Egypt, and on miracles. An editorial note dwells on the European war as a cosmic phenomenon. . . .

*Theosophy*, which is a kind of official organ issued by an independent united Lodge of Theosophists at Los Angeles, is making a change in its programme. So far it has been concerned with reissuing selected articles from old magazines, such as *Lucifer*, *The Path*, *Theosophical Forum*, etc. With the last issue, however, it has begun a series of studies on *Isis Unveiled*, about which it gives an interesting bibliographical note. For the rest, its standpoint is that "the more we study *Isis Unveiled*, the more will our convictions be strengthened in Theosophy, in masters and in H.P.B., their messenger." The view is worth noting, because the repute of *The Secret Doctrine* has not a little obscured that of the earlier volumes. As to comparative claims, this is



one of those questions on which each must speak as he finds. Colonel Olcott was once rather pleased with the fact that he had neither read nor intended to read *The Secret Doctrine*.

*Azoth* in its third issue continues a little crude and even a little banal for a periodical devoted to philosophy and mysticism. Dr. Julia Seton discourses of the Tree of Light, which began in the Garden of Eden and appears to be that of knowledge under another denomination. She mentions further that "the so-called natural man has passed," but it is possible to derive comfort from the hour of "the unnatural man," which is now "on." He possesses "extended states of consciousness" and "stands upright in a new realization of God." The articles on astrology continue and are clearly put, though at present very slight in character. . . .

*Rays from the Rose-Cross* notices the annual Easter Sacrifice still offered by Samaritans on their sacred mountain, Mount Gerizim. It is held correctly to be of great historical interest as a last representative of the old Jewish sacrifices. As to the ceremony itself, a high priest in white robes stands barefooted on a large stone, chanting prayers, which are repeated by the congregation. Seven white lambs are then driven into a circle by seven barefooted young men, also vested in white, and the story in Exodus is recited. The lambs are slaughtered when the setting sun touches the sky-line, and there follows a gruesome sealing of the congregation with blood. The flesh is roasted and eaten to commemorate the Passover. One feature of the ceremony, the description of which is borrowed from another journal, raises a question whether the facts have been coloured. The victims are said to be skewered crosswise, and when held aloft—after roasting—form a realistic representation of seven crosses. In another article our contemporary seems to suggest either that Christian Rosencreuz may have been reincarnated in the Russian monk Rasputin or that he may have overshadowed that personality, in which case we are reminded that "a bad reputation may be borne by the most spiritual". . . . Mr. D. W. Dunlop writes on Mystic Masonry in *The Co-Mason* and deplures the fact that very few Master Masons have "real understanding" of their own ritual and symbolism in respect of its meaning. He regards Masonry as a link between the Ancient Mysteries and the modern world. It is certainly a vestige and summary of old initiations, but it is scarcely operative as a link for want of that understanding to which the writer refers. . . . *The New Age* suggests many things which Masonry might do in America, bidding it beware for example of resting content with the adornments of visible temples, while forgetting that they are meant to be sanctuaries of an immortal spirit abiding within them; and counselling it to see that they are established as general centres of light in every community and township. We fear that such advice among ourselves, though it would command respectful attention, would not emerge readily from the sphere of academic interest and assent.

## REVIEWS

**THE LORD OF ALL GOOD LIFE.** A Study of the Greatness of Jesus and the weakness of His Church. By Donald Hankey, author of "A Student in Arms." London: Longmans, Green & Co., Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 2s. 6d. net.

READERS of *The Spectator* will remember the beautiful human documents by "A Student in Arms," and will be glad to see this volume from the pen of their late author, Donald Hankey. The present book was written before he went to the Front. As a simple and loving study of the character of Jesus,—The Lord of all Good Life, now and for ever,—it fully carries out its high purpose, namely, to present the essentials of the life and teaching of our Lord, divested, so far as is possible, of accumulated tradition. The second part of the book is entitled *The Church: Its Ideal, Its Failure, and Its Future*: with special reference to the Church of England. "Being the orthodoxy of a heretic and the catholicism of a Protestant." Such is the author's own definition of his attitude, and it applies well enough, for his standpoint is a curious mixture of ineradicable orthodoxy and "higher criticism." But through it all shines the sunny loving temperament, the enthusiasm of humanity, that endeared a "Student in Arms" to all who came in contact with him. . . . In his attempt to deal dispassionately with the so-called "miracles" of the Gospels, the author is least successful. For instance, the story of the Transfiguration, he suggests, may easily have been founded on "the sight of Jesus praying in the midst of the glorious hues of dawn during the momentary lifting of an early morning mist." Is it not much more likely to have been due to the opening of the spiritual sight of its three witnesses, Peter, James, and John? Nevertheless, the pages of this book vibrate with the intense wish of its author to set forth the beauty of the most wonderful life ever lived upon earth, as a help and an example to the thousands of daily toilers for whom the Christ has been made an unapproachable and far-off "Personage" by the very Church which professed to be founded on His Words.

EDITH K. HARPER.

**THE YEAR BOOK OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ASTROLOGIANS.**  
New York: The Hermetic Publishing Co., 711 West 180th Street. Pp. 166. Price \$2.50.

THE American Academy of Astrologians is a recently formed body of students of Astro-Mysticism, whose chief purpose is "to standardize Astrology and its allied branches," and to win recognition for them. Membership is limited to thirty, and each Academician is "to contribute annually a representative paper . . . to be embodied in a Year Book." The present volume for 1917, issued before the full thirty members had been elected is, we are told, only an earnest of what will follow in future years. It is, in any case, an interesting and uncommon collection of papers on varied subjects, and there is difficulty in deciding which among them most deserve mention in the space of a short review.

In an article on "Cosmic Astrology," Willis F. Whithead enunciates a theory of *impinging* or *predominating* horoscopes, which he has found to explain why events indicated in individual horoscopes sometimes fail

to occur, and vice versa. He remarks that a soldier who dies at the Front may have a horoscope promising a long life (a possibility which one is inclined to question, but cannot disprove entirely), but that the horoscopes of his country, of the army, and of the general in command, all *predominate* over his own, and that in some one of these the event is bound to be shown. Marie Pontin has some new ideas on "Directions and Transits," based on the heliocentric positions of the planets, which she declares to be "sensitive points" just like the M.C. and the Ascendant. She claims to have proved this by the study of hundreds of charts, among them Lord Kitchener's, of whose sad end, she remarks darkly, there remains "another word to be said by future historians."

An article on "The Karmic Span," by Edith Painton, is suggestive, but if each degree represents a year one fails to see how the lady whose map is given can have "progressed" through nearly six signs since her birth in 1846.

The following paper by Dr. George Carey, called "The Bridge of Life," should not be missed by anyone who is interested in the medical side of Astrology. It contains ideas for the treatment of patients born under different signs which might be extremely useful. "The Genius of Shakespeare, as shown by his Horoscope" deals with a widely different subject in a vivacious and forceful manner. All "anti-Baconians" will rejoice in it! Lastly, the first and longest article—"The Alche-Mythic Basis of Astrology"—is deserving of close study, though somewhat obscure in style and language. We hope that the Year Book has come to stay, and will enjoy many years of prosperity. E. M. M.

LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM: as known to William Stainton Moses (M.A., Oxon.), his Biographer and "Friend," and to others in Heavenly Places. London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd. Price 1s. net.

THIS panegyric on Lord Kitchener does not make itself very clear, but apparently it claims to be inspired or written by Stainton Moses (who seems to have become more orthodox) through some unnamed automatist. To the present reviewer, however, neither matter nor style is suggestive of Mr. Moses, and any interest the book may have is dependent on the things said, some of which are sensible enough, though not very novel. J.A.H.

OUR FATHER'S LENT AND HIS EASTER LAND. By A. B. O. W. Author of "Light on the After Life," etc. Transmitted through a Personal Friend. May be obtained of all Booksellers. Price 1s. 6d. net.

As a musical phrase is differently accentuated according as it is transmitted from the soul of the composer through a stringed orchestra, a cathedral organ, a concertina, or a penny whistle, and must suffer to the extent to which the transmitting instrument is feeble or defective, it would be manifestly unfair to dispute that the messages contained in this little book emanate from the great mind of Basil Wilberforce, because we miss somewhat of the sense of ringing power which was so markedly characteristic of his written and spoken words while he was here. The amanuensis, a personal friend, is obviously in close sympathy with the Archdeacon's spiritual

standpoint and outlook, and many familiar phrases occur in the book, while there are other turns of speech which read oddly when supposed to come from that punctilious and scholarly master of his mother tongue. Naturally the Archdeacon will try to send his thoughts and greetings through those with whom he was in closest mental touch, but I know from many conversations with him in old days, how guarded and even sceptical he was in regard to the "evidential value" of this very method of communication. As to the many positive details, such as houses of stone and brick, etc., with which Swedenborg and others have already made us familiar, we may—if we please—accept them as symbolic, or as the vain effort to convey in finite words things "impossible for man to utter." But the subject is too wide for the scope of a short review, and perhaps, through the same intermediary, the Archdeacon may yet be able to find fuller and clearer expression of much that he may wish to say.

EDITH K. HARPER.

A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE CABALA contained in Coptic Gnostic Books and . . . the New Testament. By F. B. Bond, F.R.I.B.A., and T. S. Lea, D.D. 8vo, pp. 96. Oxford: Blackwell. Price 3s. 6d. net.

THE thesis of this remarkable, if not convincing, study, about which I propose to speak tentatively only, is (1) that the Apostolic Church of Christ possessed—in addition to the outer sense of Gospel narratives—an inward revelation, "a real gnosis," which was "reserved for those who had progressed"; and (2) that the discovered Gematria of the Greek scriptures unfolds traces of the hidden teaching. This teaching proves to be (1) in harmony with official Christian dogma and (2) connects it with the architectural or geometrical symbolism which abounds in Gnostic writings. It is held further that the instruction embodies a "knowledge of those principles by which the world was made," and that it was communicated secretly to the Church by Christ, regarded as the Builder of the Æons. It is not claimed that the work of unveiling the mystery is more than begun in the present tract, which appears an instalment of some elaborate work to come. I am reminded continually of the not less curious and much more extensive volume entitled *The Canon*, and of the posthumous papers of its anonymous author, which once passed through my hands; but it is as one independent excursus recalls another of a cognate kind. Speaking most roughly, the Kabalistic Gematria is the explanation of one word or letter by another of the same numerical value. The present experiment is an application of the method to the Greek, in which—like Hebrew—letters stand for numerals, and the authors of this preliminary investigation are hoping to show not only that Gnostic books, like *Pistis Sophia*, but also the Greek Testament, embody of set purpose an esoteric teaching, "by means of the doctrinal significance of numbers." If this could be done, it would be obviously idle to object that such methods are arbitrary, for makers of secret doctrine are entitled to communicate it under what veils they please. Whether we shall find any vital spirit in the doctrine is another question, and so also what kind of results might attend the application of Gematria in other directions of the sacred text. One should be willing, however, to suspend judgment, for the tract before me is modest, tentative, and done with much care. A. E. WAITE.