



THE

OCCULT REVIEW

EDITED
BY
RALPH SHIRLEY



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THE
OCCULT REVIEW

EDITED BY
RALPH SHIRLEY

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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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VOL. XXVII.

JANUARY 1918

No. 1

NOTES OF THE MONTH

IT is a somewhat curious circumstance that the publication of a volume dealing with the Epworth Phenomena,* as the psychical disturbances at Epworth Parsonage, the home of the Reverend Samuel Wesley, father of the well-known brothers Wesley, are usually called, should coincide with the reappearance of the poltergeist or stone-throwing ghost as widely narrated in the daily and weekly press at the village of Cheriton, near Folkestone. There is much in common between the accounts of such disturbances,

POLTER- especially in the manner in which they suddenly break
GEIST PHENO- out, and equally suddenly cease, for no apparent
MENA. reason, and also the mischievous and apparently
pointless nature of the antics indulged in. In the

present instance the activities of the so-called poltergeist were apparently aroused by the starting of work on an air-raid dug-out at Enbrock Manor, the residence of Mr. H. P. Jacques. Mr. Frederick Rolfe, a builder at Cheriton, was employed in con-

* *The Epworth Phenomena*, to which are appended certain psychic experiences recorded by John Wesley in the pages of his *Journal*. Collected by Dudley Wright. London: W. Rider & Son, Ltd. 2s. 6d. net.

nection with the work required. According to the *Weekly Dispatch*, in reply to inquiries, he gave the following account of his experiences:—

"About six weeks ago I started work on the dug-out for Mr. Jacques, and during that time I have gone through experiences which you would hardly credit. All my life I have been dead against such things as spiritualism—dismissed them as impossible and absurd. What I have seen, however, through this remarkable period makes me realize that there is a hidden force which I cannot account for."

Mr. Rolfe said on one occasion a large stone from quite another part of the dug-out hit him on the crown of the head (the scar is still visible); on another occasion he received a severe blow on the hand (the wounds inflicted are also visible).

"The candles were repeatedly extinguished by air and a jet of sand accompanied by a sharp whiz, such as might be expected from a current of air blown through a peashooter.

"On several occasions pieces of rock, varying from 8lb. to 20lb., were hurled by some unseen foe from one position to another."

DANCING BRICKS.

A boy named Penfold, who assisted, declared that he saw the stones lift themselves an inch and then drop again; then about three inches and drop once more. Soon after, they would fly off by themselves to another position. There were bricks on the floor. These, too, lifted of themselves and shifted positions.

"Subsequently," Mr. Rolfe continued, "things became worse. Rocks and stones flew about, and so much so that an iron stove and iron pipe were smashed to pieces. Then, to crown all, a short hammer, such as bricklayers use, weighing about 4lb., threw itself towards me. The boy Penfold then shouted 'Look out, perhaps the sledge-hammer will come also.' Hardly had the lad uttered the words than the hammer, weighing with handle about 14lb., flung itself at me from a considerable distance, as did also soon after a pickaxe.

"There were three chairs in the place, and one of these moved about in an alarming style. There were only myself and the boy in the place.

"There was a heap of stones in one corner of the place and, incredible as it may appear, these shifted themselves from one point to another."

No explanation is so far forthcoming of the cause of this disturbance, and it has been found impossible to trace it to any normal agency. Though, as already stated, cases of the kind are singularly numerous, it is very rare to find one which has been investigated and established by a scientist of repute. In the present case Sir William Barrett and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle went down to investigate, but arrived too late to witness the phenomena, and unfortunately one cannot make appointments with a poltergeist. It is for this reason that a case investigated by Professor Lombroso, the celebrated Italian criminologist, in

November 1900, is of particular interest—though the phenomena witnessed were not so varied and remarkable as in many other cases.* A Turin newspaper had reported some apparently inexplicable occurrences which were taking place in a wine and spirit store at number 6, Via Bava, Turin, and the Professor seized the opportunity of personally investigating them, and was fortunate in being able to satisfy himself by ocular demonstration of their actuality. These occurrences started in the following remarkable manner:—On the morning of November 16, when only the wife of the shopkeeper and the assistant were in the house, they saw first of all, according to their subsequent statement, a vessel containing liqueur, which was on the kitchen table, turn over of its own accord. Other vessels then proceeded to do the same. The furniture, the saucepans, and all kinds of articles commenced to dance about. Some knocked together, others broke, while others again disappeared entirely. The woman fainted with fright, and the neighbours hurried in, and telegraphed to the husband who was absent from Turin and who returned post haste. The phenomena continued on the following days with only brief intermission.

After this, similar occurrences began to take place in the cellar which Mr. Fumero used for storing bottles. It was observed that when any one entered the cellar the bottles broke apparently by the action of the same unknown agency. A priest was called in, who blessed the place, but failed to stop the work of destruction. Following the priest came the police, who proved to be equally unable to cope with the unseen foe. The police, however, have ways and means of dealing with such matters that leave the methods of more ordinary mortals hopelessly in the background.

Having failed to catch the invisible entity, and place him under lock and key, they issued a mandate that the disturbances which they were powerless to quell, must cease forthwith. The proprietor understood the intimation, and when Professor Lombroso called shortly afterwards, observed that they had come to an end, suggesting, indeed, that the mere intention expressed by the Professor of visiting the place had sufficed to give their quietus to all such unseemly disturbances of the peace. Lombroso, however, was successful in getting round the worthy wineseller and arriving at the true facts of the case, and finally obtained

* I am indebted for this account and for several others here cited, to the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*.

permission to go down into the cellar and witness with his own eyes anything that might occur.

"The cellar," he observed in the narrative of his experiences, "was at first in complete darkness, and I heard the noise of broken glasses and bottles rolling at my feet. The bottles were arranged in six compartments one above another. In the middle was a rough table on which I had six lighted candles placed, supposing that the spirit phenomena would cease in the bright light. But on the contrary I saw three empty bottles standing on the ground roll as though pushed by a finger, and break near the table. To obviate any possible trick, I carefully examined all the full bottles which were on the racks, and assured myself that there was no cord or string which could explain their movements. After a few minutes, first two, then four, then two other bottles on the second and third racks detached themselves and fell to the ground—not suddenly, but as though carried by some one. After their descent six of them broke on the floor already soaked with wine, while only two remained whole. Then at the moment of leaving the cellar, just as I was going out, I heard another bottle break."

Eventually the phenomena ceased when the boy who was employed at the shop was sent away. It is noteworthy, however, that the boy was not present when the phenomena took place in the cellar. In the shop, displacements of objects had been observed when he was there, but these took place before the eyes of all present, who would have detected the boy if he had had recourse to trickery. It has often been contended that the presence of a medium of some kind, either

NECESSITY
FOR A
MEDIUM.

a young boy or girl, is a necessary condition of such phenomena. And, indeed, in the more startling records it seems practically invariable. In the case of the haunted farm at Neuville, France, where strange troubles were experienced in the summer of 1906, Monsieur and Madame Cointet, in whose house and stables the trouble occurred, had a little grandson living with them—a child of ten—whose presence seemed to be an essential factor in connection with the phenomena. The gossips of the place declared that a spell had been cast upon him, and he himself constantly alleged that he saw an angry black dog that wanted to attack him. On one occasion when the child was in the stable in company with the manager of a café in

THE
HAUNTED
FARM AT
NEUVILLE.

Chatillon, the little boy suddenly cried out, "There is the dog. He is biting me, the horrid beast!" At the same moment the boy's trousers were torn from top to bottom by fierce but invisible fangs. "I have got him," continued little Cointet, and his hands appeared to grasp the throat of the phantom dog.

One of the troubles at this farm was that it was found impossible to tether up the cattle. However firmly the knots might be tied, they fell apart immediately afterwards. On the 25th, 26th, and 27th of June, all the animals were loosed in the night in this mysterious manner. Monsieur Cointet tried in vain to fasten them up again. On the 28th he informed his neighbour, Guichardon, who burst into a fit of laughter, and declared, "I promise you that if I interfere, your oxen will not set themselves loose again." The neighbour then fetched his own well-tested fastening and tied up one ox, not sparing the knots. This done he fastened the beast next to it. But the astonishment of the farmer was great when the fastening he had just attached to the ox fell on the ground unknotted. On this he made a further effort, retying the knots with double care, but all to no purpose. It was found impossible to keep the utensils in the kitchen quiet, and it is actually stated that on the 4th of July the poker, which was hooked on to the bar of the stove, struck the clock, the dial of which was staved in. At this point the assistant master of the neighbouring school arrived upon the scene, attracted by curiosity. Presumably the clock had stopped as the result of the assault from the poker. Anyhow, the schoolmaster got upon a chair to wind it up, when a broom moved from its place and a wooden bucket standing under the table made a leap of two or three yards in length. The schoolmaster observed that the objects thus mysteriously removed never rebounded. They were projected without it being possible to see them start, and they fell like pieces of lead, no matter what might be their weight and volume.

This is certainly one of the most incredible of any of these narratives. But the curious thing about such phenomena is that they appear to be repeated periodically at different localities, and that from the point of view of the normal laws of nature it is impossible to credit any one of them. The old proverb that seeing is believing is specially applicable to such cases, and the normal man can hardly be expected to give more than a partial

CAUSES OF
THE PHEN-
OMENA.

intellectual assent unless his belief has been confirmed by the evidence of his senses in some other similar instance. The question has been much debated by those who take such phenomena seriously, as to whether they are due to the action of some hitherto unrecognized natural psychic force, or alternatively to non-human entities, earth spirits, gnomes, or beings falling under this category; or, again, whether they are caused by the action

of deceased human beings of a low grade, or mischievous children who have passed into the other world and have not yet shaken off their love of childish tricks. It is well known that about the time that deaths occur, relatives or friends are frequently disturbed by unaccountable knockings, or crashings, in the wood-work of houses, or sounds of falling objects where no displacement of such objects can be traced.

Mr. J. Arthur Hill, in his Introduction to the volume just published on the Epworth Phenomena, to which I have already alluded, seems to connect such knockings with the poltergeist phenomena, and to suggest that they may have a similar origin. "I am acquainted [he says] with two ladies who were once kept awake nearly all night by violent and inexplicable knockings, heard also by another lady whom they fetched. One of them was so upset that she developed brain fever. It was afterwards found that the brother of the two in whose room the noises occurred, had died some miles away as the result of an accident, twenty minutes before the disturbance began." When my old

KNOCKINGS
AS WARN-
INGS OF
DEATH.

nurse died, I had a similar experience. A quite unaccountable crash on a glass door suddenly occurred, as I was reading the paper after breakfast about 9.20 in the morning, within a yard of where I was sitting. The door was ajar, and there was nothing normal that could have caused the sound, which I at once put down as a sign of death, without having any idea to whom it referred. One difference, however, between such occurrences and the poltergeist phenomena generally, seems to lie in the fact that whereas a medium, generally either a young woman or a boy, is necessary in the case of the latter, the crashings and knockings occur without any such presence being required. In my own case I happened to be alone in the flat at the time. I have, however, been present on occasions where phenomena analogous to those of the poltergeist kind occurred, on at least three different occasions, and in each of these cases there was the necessary medium.

Not only are there many instances of knockings such as those cited by Mr. Hill, coincident with the deaths of particular people, but in the case of one family, that of the Woodds, knocking of a similar character is regularly associated with deaths in this particular family. Mr. Myers collected together a very large number of instances of the occurrence of this knocking. In one case it was heard at the death of Mr. George Woodd, of Richmond, Surrey. Mrs. Woodd heard the knocking on this

occasion and Mr. Woodd observed, on being told of it, "Oh, it is the Woodd's warning. I shall die before morning," which he accordingly did.

In the celebrated case narrated by Dr. Glanville in his *Sad-ducismus Triumphatus*, Mr. John Mompesson, of Tedworth, whose family were sufferers from this annoyance, attributed the occurrences, apparently not without some show of reason, to a living person, Drury, the drummer, whose hostility he had incurred. The quarrel between Mr. Mompesson and Drury began, as it

THE PHEN-
OMENA AT
TEDWORTH.

appears, in March 1662, and the noises and disturbances commenced in April of the same year. Drury, it was said, had threatened Mr. Mompesson, and among the phenomena occurring was the beating of a drum, one of Drury's grievances being that his drum had been taken away by Mompesson. In John Mompesson's evidence taken on April 15, 1663, against William Drury, after detailing the annoyance that his family had suffered from this continual beating of a phantom drum, he declared on oath, "If they called to it, as several persons had, saying 'Devil, knocker, or drummer, come, tell us if the man from whom the drum was taken be the cause of this. Give three knocks and no more'; immediately three loud knocks were given." The same experiment was tried again, the number of knocks being varied to five, and presently, declared Mr. Mompesson, five very loud knocks were given, and no more heard at that time. Such phenomena fall under the category denominated Witchcraft in the Middle Ages. But there

A LIVING
POLTER-
GEIST.

is obviously something in them very closely akin to those poltergeist phenomena which we are at present examining. In the Tedworth instance, evidence is given of "knocking, great noises, scratching, troubling the beds," while sometimes the noise was so violent that it might be heard a mile away. Similar experiences accompany most poltergeist phenomena, as all students of the subject will be aware. It may not unreasonably be urged, that the manner of producing such phenomena, whether by dead or living, is similar in character, and that the means used by a living person is the projection of his astral body to the locality in question, and that this is, in fact, the basis of all phenomena which fall under the heading of Witchcraft. If this is the case, we are obviously not called upon to go so far afield as to ascribe such occurrences to earth spirits, even if these are not necessarily ruled out.

In connection with the pranks played by poltergeists, and the conclusions deduced from their actions, as to their non-

human, or alternatively their entirely irresponsible character, it is well to bear in mind the fact that many of these phenomena may be simply in the nature of efforts on the part of deceased individuals to draw attention to themselves, and thus to be enabled to get into communication with living people. A very important case bearing out this theory is that narrated by the late Mr. Myers, originally in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, December, 1895—a case that has been frequently alluded to subsequently on account of the extraordinary importance of the evidence obtained on this occasion with regard to the survival of the personal consciousness on the other side,

THE MOST
REMARK-
ABLE
GHOST
STORY ON
RECORD.

and the possibility of the two planes communicating with each other. It has been found necessary to conceal the names and to keep dark certain of the facts in relation to this, probably the most remarkable ghost-story on record. The person concerned is given the name of Mrs. Claughton in Mr. Myers' narrative. She stays in the haunted house, interviews the ghost, who makes her a certain communication, and asks her to do certain things. One of these is to go to a place of which she had never heard, and to a house of which she knew nothing. A man is described to her whom she will find there, and whom she discovers and identifies. Finally at the ghost's request she makes a nocturnal visit to the church where she receives certain important information from deceased individuals who there meet her, and on which she acts, the clerk of the parish waiting outside the church during the interview. Now it is clear that what Mrs. Claughton did on behalf of the ghosts whom she interviewed, was of an extremely important nature, both from their point of view and from the point of view of individuals still surviving. But in the case in question the ghost whom Mrs. Claughton interviewed in the haunted house had made itself objectionable to previous tenants by throwing cold water over them on more than one occasion, just as one might say, like any common or garden poltergeist. The following is the letter from Mr. Buckley, who had taken the house before Mrs. Claughton went there, quite ignorant of its reputation:—

DEAR MRS. CLAUGHTON,—

There was a ghost before you came to stay in the house. We took the house in ignorance of its reputation, and were only told of it when we ourselves wanted to account for certain noises—walking up and down stairs at night, etc., etc.

The water throwing business was as follows:—

My sister L. went up into the garrets or attics about 9 o'clock one evening, with a candle in her hand, to get something from an old chest. Water was thrown obliquely across the room, nearly extinguishing the candle, wetting her hand, and leaving an oblique splash on the wall. There was a pool of water on the floor as well.

My sister was alarmed at this, as she knew no one was in the room or on that story with her. I was called to investigate, and found everybody in the house ready to establish clearly that they were none of them above the drawing-room at that moment, except my brother who came first to my sister when she called out.

My own experience is as follows :—

I went upstairs one evening about 9 o'clock, and on the bedroom landing water was thrown at me, wetting my hand and falling on the floor, which was covered by oil-cloth, or linoleum.

I ran into each room and found nobody—upstairs into the attic—and found nobody—and then went down and accounted for everybody in the sitting-rooms and basement. There were no wet marks on ceilings in either case.

Yours sincerely,

July, 1895.

W. BUCKLEY.

We see, then, in the instance cited, and probably in a very large number of others, that the apparently purely mischievous and irresponsible action of the ghost has a very definite purpose.

Another instance is recorded of an Italian family in the pages of *Luce e Ombra* in 1905, which though not strictly speaking a case of poltergeist hauntings, throws a curious light on such occurrences. Count Charles Galateria, it appears, was a member of a well-known Piedmontese family, and at the beginning of 1852 his father, on retiring from the Sardinian Army, after thirty years' service, settled at Annecy in Savoy, and purchased a small villa at Veyrier-du-Lac, in which, some years afterwards, spontaneous phenomena began to manifest themselves. The sound

THE
STRANGE
STORY OF
COUNT
GALATERIA.

of steps was heard in the bedrooms during the night; the furniture moved in the rooms, and noises as of the rolling of logs were heard on the staircases. When Savoy was ceded to France in 1861, Count Galateria was sent by the Italian Government to fill a post at Spezzia. He decided to sell his villa, where he found it impossible, on account of the disturbances, to retain the services of the domestics. The family had been at Spezzia for a year when the little daughter of the Count fell seriously ill. "On the evening of February 22, 1862," observes the writer in *Luce e Ombra*, "my father, my mother, and myself, were at supper in a chamber adjoining that in which the little invalid was lying. Suddenly she called, and we went

to her. We found the child sitting on the bed. She immediately called out 'Who is that over there?' pointing to a corner of the room. We turned in the direction indicated, but saw nothing unusual. The child, however, had sprung to her feet, and my father rushed towards her, being only just in time to catch hold of her *in the air* more than half a yard above the bed. The child bent her head. She was dead." The family after this left Spez-
zia, and settled at Turin, where they made the acquaintance of certain distinguished spiritists, with whom they began to hold séances. One evening in the autumn of 1864 the father and son were seated in their drawing-room when they suddenly heard

PHYSICAL ACTION BY THE DEAD. a rustling near them. Turning their eyes towards the table they saw a newspaper which had been laid there, fold itself first in the middle and then into four. Father and son looked at each other open-mouthed with astonishment. Their surprise was increased when they saw the paper again open itself slowly and resume its original position. They looked at the clock. It was twenty minutes past ten. At eleven the Countess came into the room and, noticing the consternation on their faces, asked the reason. When she heard it, she broke into sobs and took from her pocket a sheet of paper on which were some lines in writing supposed to come from her little daughter, and which had been written through the mediumship of the Marquise Ida Vimercato. At a certain moment the medium had written on the slip of paper, "I interrupt my communication in order to go and give a surprise to papa and Charles." The medium had noted down the time on the side of the paper. It was twenty minutes past ten.

Here is an instance in which a deceased child performs a physical feat for the sole purpose of giving evidence of her presence to her father and brother. This seems to establish the fact that the movement of physical objects offers no insurmountable difficulties to those who have passed over. If this is the case there is clearly no reason why we should not attribute all poltergeist phenomena to such intervention. The fact that many of these appear to be purely aimless and annoying, is hardly an argument against this view, especially if we consider the number of people we know about who spend the greater part of their lives in aimless and annoying activities. It may also be observed that we are not called upon to assume that the invisible actors in these performances have reached years of discretion at the time that they passed over. How many schoolboys there are who would be only too delighted to have the opportunity of perform-

ing such pranks, and thoroughly enjoy the alarm that they caused!

The evidence as regards the Epworth Phenomena consists of letters dated from January to April, 1717, between young Samuel Wesley, who was then at school at Westminster, and his mother, father, and two of his sisters at home. We have also an account written for his son Samuel by Wesley *père*, and a brief diary of old Mr. Wesley's. In addition to this there are a

THE
EPWORTH
RECORDS.

set of records written at a later date—August to September, 1726—at Epworth, for John Wesley, the writers being Mrs. Wesley and her daughters, Emily, Susannah, Nancy, Emily, Keziah, the Rev. Mr. Hoole, and the manservant. There is also a later narrative written by John Wesley for the *Arminian Magazine*. The records have of course been picked to pieces by persons such as the late Mr. Frank Podmore, and others bent on discovering inconsistencies, and also attempting to attribute all the varied phenomena to tricks on the part of Hetty Wesley, one of the younger daughters, who either did not write her account of the phenomena or whose record has been lost. It will be noted that Emily states that "Hetty is writing," but there is no evidence that she actually did so, and this fact appears to Mr. Podmore to be suspicious. A further point he urges as regards this, is that Hetty thought that the agency, whatever it may have been, "had a spight at her," and was noisiest in her neighbourhood. Hetty had also a singular habit of trembling in her sleep when noises were going on around her, though as a matter of fact this habit was shared by the two youngest children. So feeble is the basis of Mr. Podmore's theory that we can hardly believe that he actually intended it seriously. With regard to the discrepancies in the various narratives, what will, I think, strike the reader of these records is their remarkable agreement considering the fact that they were written for the most part by young girls who naturally had no scientific training, while Mr. Wesley himself made no claim to the qualifications of an erudite critic. If the various narratives on which the historical basis of Christianity rests were equally in unison, it would certainly greatly strengthen the evidence bearing on the earthly life of the Prophet of Nazareth.

The Epworth Phenomena began quite unexpectedly at the latter end of the year 1716 in a house which apparently had no reputation of being haunted, by the maidservant declaring that she "heard at the dining-room door several dismal groans as of a person at the point of death." These groans were naturally enough attributed by the family in the first instance to pure

imagination, but a few nights afterwards they themselves began to hear strange knockings, three or four at a time, in different parts of the house, Mr. Wesley himself being the only member of the family who did not hear them. Owing to this fact the family became very nervous for fear these strange phenomena portended the death of their father, and for some days they refrained in consequence from giving him any information with regard to them. Soon, however, the knockings were succeeded by other noises of a much more varied character. " Loud rumb-
lings followed above stairs and below ; a clatter among a number of bottles as if they had all at once been dashed to pieces ; foot-

NATURE OF
THE PHEN-
OMENA AT
EPWORTH.

steps as of a man going up and down stairs at all hours of the night ; sounds like that of dancing in an empty room, the door of which was locked ; gobbling like a turkey cock ; and, most frequently of all a knocking about the beds at night and in different parts of the house." When things got as bad as this, it was decided to apprise Mr. Wesley. He was at first entirely sceptical, and, in fact, suggested that his daughters sat up late and made a noise, and hinted that their lovers might have something to do with the mysterious occurrences. The next night, however, a little after two Mr. Wesley himself was awakened by nine loud and distinct knocks, which seemed to emanate from the next room, with a pause at every third stroke. He got up to see if he could discover the cause, but was quite unsuccessful, and then called in a stout mastiff, hoping that the dog would be equal to ridding them of the nuisance. The dog, however, who at the first disturbance had commenced to bark violently, was afterwards thoroughly frightened, and came whining to his master and mistress, as if to seek protection. When the fear that they indicated death in the family had subsided, the daughters began to treat these visitations as a matter rather for amusement than for alarm. Emily gave the unseen visitor the name of " Old Jeffrey," by which name he became thereafter regularly alluded to. Mrs. Wesley had a horn blown about the house in case it might be rats, having heard that one of her neighbours had frightened away these vermin from his dwelling by this means. The result, however, was disastrous, as after this Old Jeffrey made himself as obnoxious by day as he had hitherto done by night.

No member of the family, with the exception of Mr. Wesley, ever experienced any tangible evidence of Old Jeffrey's presence. Mr. Wesley, however, was thrice pushed by the ghost with con-

siderable force, it remaining invisible all the time. Once or twice members of the household thought they caught sight of something, but the evidence on this head does not appear to be of much value. Mrs. Wesley fancied she noticed something run from under the bed, "somewhat in the shape of a badger," and the manservant declared that he saw "something like a white rabbit which came

BADGER OR RABBIT? from behind the oven with its ears flat upon the neck, and its little scut standing straight up." As other curious evidence of a physical presence, the

door was once violently pushed against Emily, and also against her father. The latches of the doors were frequently lifted up without any visible cause, while the windows invariably clattered before Jeffrey entered a room. Another curious symptom of Jeffrey's presence has been paralleled in the case of various haunted houses. It was noticed that the wind commonly rose after any of these demonstrations, and increased with it, whistling loudly round the house. On one occasion Mr. Wesley's trencher danced upon the table, to his great astonishment, without human contact; and on another, the handle of the mill for grinding corn was turned round with great swiftness. On a further occasion when Mr. and Mrs. Wesley, disturbed in their slumbers, went down to investigate what was happening, a large pot of money appeared to be poured out at Mrs. Wesley's waist at the foot of the staircase, and to run jingling down her nightgown to her feet.

The phenomena seem to have continued more or less during a period of four or five months, but were much more violent for the first month, gradually becoming less and less troublesome after this. "It continued," humorously observes Emily Wesley, "a month in its full majesty, night and day." The fact that it invariably interrupted the prayers for King George at family prayer time, led to its being credited with Jacobite proclivities. One could hardly conceive a rabbit with political leanings, but possibly the small animal—rabbit, or badger, or whatever it might have been—was merely an attendant sprite. Some idea seems to have

CODE FIRST EMPLOYED BY FOX SISTERS. got about that the haunting entity was a brother of Mrs. Wesley's who had not been heard of for some time, and who, in fact, disappeared never to return. But this seems to have been a mere guess without anything to support it. No specific communications

were obtained, as in the case of the Fox sisters, by translating the knockings in terms of an alphabetical code, and, failing this, Old Jeffrey had no means of making his identity known. It seems indeed curious that it should have been left to the Fox sisters to

evolve this apparently very simple method of communication. Doubtless with the introduction of telegraphy, the idea of the employment of codes and the feasibility of their general adaptation, would more readily present itself than in days like those of the Reverend Samuel Wesley.

I am not aware that any fruitful suggestion has ever been advanced in connection with these phenomena as to the very frequent records we have of sounds imitative of physical disturbances with nothing physical to correspond to them. Thus in the Epworth case we have the jingling of falling coins, and the crashing of bottles. In many other instances we have sounds of furniture thrown about in rooms which, when entered, proved to have been totally undisturbed. In the case of the coins, nothing is either seen or felt. In the case of the crashing of bottles in Epworth Parsonage, no actual damage is done; but the reverse is the case in the wine merchant's cellar where Professor Lombroso watched the spontaneous breaking of the bottles. In most of the cases named the interesting point is the auditory evidence of non-visible phenomena, as if a clair-audient perception was caught of incidents being enacted on the astral plane.

Akin to the phenomena under consideration are certain experiences which have happened to ascetics of various creeds, no less than to saints in the Christian Church. The most noteworthy and also the most reliable records of any such experience are those narrated of the celebrated Curé d'Ars, of whose prediction concerning the Franco-German and the present War, note has been made in a previous issue. For no less than thirty-five years

of his life Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney (Curé d'Ars) suffered from what he considered to be the persecutions of an evil demon. During the last years of his life these were less troublesome, and ceased entirely six months before his death. Many of them, however, corresponded very closely with the

phenomena which we associate with the activities of the poltergeist. "Soon after the Curé d'Ars had opened his house of refuge for the poor orphans of the district" (says Georgina Molyneux, author of a Memoir of this saintly ascetic, published in 1869 by Richard Bentley), "the strangest influences began to disturb his rest at night and to trouble the quiet of his presbytery." His own account of these persecutions is as follows:—

It was about nine o'clock at night, I was just going to bed, when the demon came to torment me for the first time. Three heavy blows were

levelled at the door of my courtyard : you would have thought some one was trying to break it open by force. I opened the window, and asked "Who is there?" but I saw nothing, and commending myself to God, I quietly retired to rest. I had not, however, gone to sleep, before I was again startled by three still louder knocks, not now at the outer door, but at that on the staircase, which led to my chamber. I rose up, and cried out a second time, "Who is there?" No one replied. At the first commencement of these noises at night, I imagined that they were caused by robbers, and fearing lest the beautiful ornaments of the Viscount d'Ars might be in danger of being carried off, I thought it well to take precautions. Accordingly, I had two courageous men to sleep in the house, who were ready to assist me in case of need. They came several nights successively. They heard the noise, but discovering nothing, they were convinced that it proceeded from other causes than the malice of men. I myself soon came to the same conclusion ; for one night in the midst of winter, three violent knocks were heard. I rose quickly from my bed, and went down into the courtyard, expecting to see the intruders making their escape, and intending to call for help ; but, to my astonishment, I saw nothing, I heard nothing, and, what is more, I discovered no traces of footmarks upon the snow. I resigned myself to God's will, prayed Him to be my guard and protector, and to surround me with his angels if my enemy should again return to torment me.

This was the beginning of a series of persecutions by the unseen world, which soon ceased to be confined to those crashings and knockings with which we are familiar in many parallel instances. Various parishioners came to Vianney's aid and were installed as sentinels to keep guard over the house. One of the first was André Verchère, the wheelwright of the village, who acted guard, a gun by his side, in a room in the presbytery. At midnight he heard a frightful crash close beside him. It seemed to him as if all the furniture in the room flew to pieces under a storm of invisible blows. Nothing, however, was to be seen. "Sometimes," says his biographer, "the malignant spirit knocked like some one demanding admittance, and the next moment, without the door being opened, he was in the room moving about the chairs, deranging the furniture, rummaging everywhere, calling the Curé with a mocking voice. 'Vianney! Vianney!' and adding to his name the most outrageous qualifications and menaces, exclaiming 'Eater of truffles! We shall have you, we shall have you!'" At other times he would imitate a charge of cavalry, or an army on the march. At others he drove phantom nails into the floor with heavy strokes as of a hammer, or appeared to be cutting or sawing wood, or again made a noise like that of a man hooping a cask with bands of iron. At times again, the Curé heard in the hall below him a

THREATS
AND IN-
SULTS OF
AN UNSEEN
FOE.

noise like that of a horse bounding up to the ceiling, and again falling down heavily on its fore-feet. No wonder the poor man complained that troops of demons had held their parliament in his courtyard! The trouble with Vianney was accentuated by the fact that like many other morbid and very religious men, he was constantly tormented by the most despairing thoughts with regard to his destiny in a future life. He imagined he saw under his feet the lake of fire to which he was destined to be sent, and heard a voice telling him that his place was already reserved for him. Finally the demon took to throwing him out of bed. It will be noted in this connection that a very usual symptom in such hauntings is the lifting of the bed beneath its occupant. This occurred in Nancy Wesley's case at Epworth Parsonage, and in the celebrated case of the haunting of Willington Mill, 1835-1847. Mrs. Proctor, the tenant, described the experience to her son Edmund "as if a man were underneath pushing up the bed with his back."

Vianney's clerical companions joked him on the subject of these visitations, and gave him advice which, had he adopted it, might very possibly have led to their termination. "Come! come! my dear Curé [said they], do as others do. Nourish yourself better. That is the way to finish with all their jugglery." On one occasion the demon is credited with having set on fire Father Vianney's bed, and numerous other articles of furniture in his room. "The bed, the curtains, and all that surrounded them, including some old paintings on glass which Vianney greatly valued and of which he had said only a few days previously

FIRES
CAUSED BY
SPIRIT
AGENCY.

that they were the only things in this world that he prized, and that he had refused to sell them because he wished to leave them to the missionaries, all had been consumed. The fire had stopped before the shrine of St. Philomène, and describing from that point an exact geometrical line, it had destroyed all that was on the one side and spared all that was on the other side of the holy relic." The evidence here might indeed be called in question, as it does not appear that Father Vianney or any one else was actually on the spot on the occasion, and when phenomena of this kind occur there is a tendency to attribute to the poltergeist all those misdeeds that in more normal families are laid to the charge of the cat. This is, however, if the causes of the conflagration can be accepted, by no means an isolated instance of the production of fire by abnormal means. In a record of spontaneous phenomena in Calabria reported by the *Tribuna* of March 5 and

March 21, 1905, as occurring in the previous December, an old woman of eighty, Madarne Bruno, was the victim of molestation. It is worthy of note that she lived with her niece Maria Fiore, aged sixteen, who might presumably be looked upon as the medium in the case. This old lady was persecuted not only by fire, but by water. The paper referred to narrates how on one occasion a

PHENO-
MENA IN
CALABRIA.

great quantity of water began to fall from the walls on to her bed, and even on her person, following her about all over the house. When this ceased, her dress began to burn without her feeling any sensation of burning. Her bed and her clothes, though packed away in a trunk, and a quantity of hay in the loft, also caught fire. My readers will doubtless recollect in this connection the story of the fire elemental narrated in Algernon Blackwood's *Dr. John Silence*. Mr. Blackwood clearly thought that the frequency of such records justified him in illustrating them by one of his occult narratives. A record also appeared in the pages of this magazine under the title of Aunt Barbara's Ghost Story in which a haunted rectory was burned down under mysterious circumstances, and a story was told in this connection, not given in the OCCULT REVIEW, of the vision of a fury with a blazing torch, holding it up to the building which was destined to destruction. The suggestion of course in Mr. Blackwood's narrative is that such phenomena are due to the action of fire elementals, and doubtless this interpretation would have commended itself to the late Dr. Franz Hartmann. These phenomena evidently accompanied the Curé d'Ars without the presence of the usual medium in the shape of a boy or young woman. Apparently his abstinence, fasting, and celibate life, had developed in him sufficient mediumistic power to enable such aid to be dispensed with. The exception, however, does not seem to my mind to disprove the general, if not invariable rule, but only to suggest that in exceptional circumstances the medium need not be a boy or young woman. The fact of the Curé d'Ars' natural mediumship is confirmed by the phenomena gradually ceasing with old age.

We see, then, in connection with these so-called poltergeist phenomena, that though it has been assumed in certain quarters that they are, generally speaking, caused by the action of elementals, evidence in support of such a position is conspicuous by its absence, and on the other hand, that in a number of cases there is clear evidence of discarnate human agency. We see that apparently some psychic force is in operation, the cause of which is for the most part the presence of a boy or young

woman of mediumistic temperament ; but that the force appears to be employed by conscious entities on the other side, and that

ARE POL-
TERGEISTS
HUMAN ?

the phenomena produced in no case carry the suggestion of being the result of some blind psychic power set in motion without any intelligent control. Though it may be admitted that in a number of cases the action of the entities in question is suggestive merely of caprice or mischief, or, as in the case of the Curé d'Ars, of malice, it is not improbable that in a considerable proportion of the cases the object is a serious one, and that that object is to get into communication with those still on earth, either for the purpose of conveying some message, to give evidence of survival, or for some other object, possibly in certain instances to protest against disturbance of their haunts or remains by the living. It stands to reason that among such classes of phenomena we are in the main brought in touch either with a low and undeveloped type of entity, or with earthbound spirits. It is probable that to such a class of being action on the physical plane presents fewer difficulties than to the more spiritual type. It also appears from the Tedworth record that such phenomena can perfectly well be paralleled in cases where the operator still inhabits the physical plane, and that the explanation of the phenomena of Witchcraft is to be found in this possibility.

BLUEBEARD AND THE MAID OF ORLEANS :

A STUDY IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY SORCERY

BY J. W. BRODIE-INNES, Author of *The Devil's Mistress*, etc.

A STRANGE conjunction of ideas truly. One rubs one's eyes and wonders what possible connection there could be between the bogie of our childhood, pictured as a huge savage-featured man with a monstrous turban, a cerulian-hued beard, and a gory scimitar, and the pure and saintly Maid of Orleans, figured in her silver armour with the white banner and white charger. Yet the historic connection is undoubted.

When Perrault wrote the story of Bluebeard, in his *Mother Goose Tales*, the original was the Baron Gilles de Rais, or Retz, Maréchal de France, one of the wealthiest of the Grand Seigneurs of the fifteenth century, whose chief estates were in Brittany, and who in early life was a devoted follower and adherent of Joan of Arc. He is described as having a beard of such exceeding blackness that it was actually blue-black, and there is evidence that before the time of Perrault he had been popularly known by the soubriquet of Barbe-Bleu. In Breton legend and folk lore the castles of the Maréchal de Rais, of which the ruins may still be explored, have always been identified with the story of Bluebeard. But the curious dual personality which associated him with Joan of Arc has puzzled historians and folk-lorists alike.

Abbé Charpentière, in *Une Page de l'Histoire du XV Siècle*, says that the life of the Maréchal may be divided into two epochs, not only distinct but absolutely at variance one with the other. This theory, however, scarcely accords with the known facts, and moreover itself needs explanation. Assuming (as seems fairly certain) that Gilles de Rais was the original of Perrault's story, we have as historical fact that Gilles and Joan of Arc were contemporaries, that they were both Bretons, that no comrade of hers was more respectful and loyal than he was, and up to his

death she was the object of his devoted worship, and that they were both burned for alleged sorcery. The reports of both trials are extant, and are in extraordinarily full detail. Here, then, we may look for some clue in the practice of sorcery and magic in the fifteenth century, and the way in which it was generally regarded, and herein we may perhaps find a clue to some obscure happenings to-day. For human nature does not vary greatly from age to age.

One point, however, must always be kept in view—the fifteenth century did not recognize the distinction, which we are apt to draw pretty sharply, between black and white magic. The test then was whether any presumed occult or supernatural powers were or were not under the ægis of the Church. If so they were manifestations of divine grace, if not they were from the Devil, no matter how pure and holy they might be. All Europe in fact was strongly tainted with Manichæism. There were two great Gods, one good, the other evil, continually fighting, and only the Church could discriminate. Meanwhile the belief in sorcery and magic was practically universal, and its practice pretty general.

Let us see then what manner of man was this Gilles de Rais when he first emerges into the light of history in 1425 at the age of about twenty. He was of noble family, and one of the wealthiest in France, good-looking, talented and fascinating. His portrait at Versailles is purely imaginary, but that in Vol. 3 of the *Monuments de la Monarchie Francaise*, taken from a sumptuously illustrated MS. presented to Charles VII by the Berry King at Arms, and known as the most famous portrait, is probably genuine. He was a poet and an artist of no small capacity, ardent and generous. Withal, we find him recklessly extravagant, and devoted to sumptuous entertainments and theatrical display, a designer of prodigal masques, and a great ritualist—loving ornate and costly ceremonial, whether of Church rituals, or popular masquerades, and utterly careless of the cost. He was a gallant soldier, but craved to be always in the limelight. From the first he seems to have been a diligent student of occult learning. There is extant a treatise said to have been composed by him about the age of seventeen on the "Art of raising the Devil." Then as now the Celtic inhabitants of Brittany were firm believers in the supernatural, and their faith a strange mixture of Paganism with a devout Catholicism. Even to-day a Church may be seen dedicated to St. Venus, with an image of the old Roman goddess carefully preserved. Gilles

was Breton to the finger tips. Enthusiastic, perfervid, and superstitious, the type is common enough in Ireland and in the Highlands to-day. It needs little imagination to fancy how keenly interested must have been the young Breton noble in the stories that were beginning to be told in whispers of the gifted peasant girl of Domremy, in whose ears breathed angelic voices, bidding her go forth for the salvation of France. The story would appeal to every side of his complex nature. The supernatural, in which like a true Celt he fervently believed, was clearly and indubitably manifested for all to see. The mystic and romantic elements glowed like a halo round the form of the Missioned Maid. Her wonderful passage across France, right through the enemies' lines, and triumphant arrival at Chinon, must have stirred the imagination of the keen young soldier. And if anything were wanting, her instant recognition of the Dauphin, whom she had never seen before, among a crowd of others, was proof positive of her occult powers. Here indeed was a leader worthy the ecstatic devotion of a knight errant—a saint, an amazon, and a champion of the cause to which himself was pledged. The lady of his dreams had materialized, and thenceforth became the ruling star of his life, and for the time the raising of the Devil and other questionable arts were in abeyance. Everything we know of Gilles proves that he was all his life a Manichæan, God and the Devil were to him opposing powers, and he strove to serve both, never quite certain which was the most powerful. But under Joan's influence the good was always predominant. While with her, he was the chivalrous Christian knight.

In Joan herself also the Pagan elements were strong. We read of her in childhood, with the other children of the village dancing round the Fairy-tree—*l'arbre fée de Bourlemont*—and invoking the fairies with the same absolute and unquestioning faith as that with which she knelt at Mass, and saw visions of saints and angels. And when her voices came, guiding and instructing her, they were more real and authoritative than the words of the priest, and we find that witchcraft was often whispered, though for obvious reasons not openly at that time. The Celtic nature does not vary, and those who understand the Irish or the Western Highlander to-day will find little difficulty in comprehending Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais.

The times for France were very critical. Without going at all into the tangled history of the period, which is too well known for repetition, it was a question of France for the French, or

France under the thumb of the Teutonic Anglo-Saxon. Brittany itself, which stood for the freedom of the Celtic race, was divided and distracted. We have seen similar Celtic failures in our own country, from similar causes. In this welter Joan and her noble devoted knight stand out like pure figures of chivalry. Gilles was fabulously wealthy, and he obtained from Charles VII a commission to be Captain in her escort, and thenceforth his chief delight seems to have been to pour out his wealth with reckless prodigality in her service, or in her honour. He lived as in a dream. It was a supernatural adventure they were engaged on, and, if we may judge his psychology from that of the Celt to-day, he was probably convinced that as the cause was divine so the means to carry it on would be miraculously provided. Alchemy, of which we know he was a student, could bring gold in any quantity desired, but what need for Alchemy? one word or prayer from his wondrous lady, and showers of gold would replace all that was spent. So triumphantly they went to Orleans, and Gilles maintained practically an army at his own expense, and was royally cheated by every one who came near him. Estate after estate was mortgaged to provide funds for his vast expenditure. Of this time a characteristic story is told, which is little known. Once Joan, being nearly worn out, dismounted and went to sleep in a wheat field in the plains of La Beauce; the enemy endeavoured to surprise the passage of the Loire, which was defended by the French troops. Unwilling to wake her, Gilles de Rais seized her banner and lance, and mounting her horse led the charge which repulsed the enemy. His vizor was down and her followers believed it was the Maid herself. When Joan awoke she searched in vain for her standard, lance and steed, and called equally in vain for La Hire, La Tremouille, and Xamtrailles. Gilles de Rais suddenly appeared with what she sought for. But he had been wounded in the forehead, and the blood had stained the white banner.

The details of this march on Orleans, and the historic siege are fully recounted in the Mystery play known as the "Mystery of Orleans," the historic value of which, though disputed by Quicherat, has since been fully recognized by the most eminent scholars. Whether the libretto was written by Gilles de Rais must remain uncertain, but there seems no doubt that it was composed under his direct inspiration, probably by one of his literary retainers. Much of it is pure doggerel, some has evidently been added by later hands, but here and there are perfect gems of lyrics, such as that which closes the scene of Joan's interview

with the Archangel Michael, and these may with probability be ascribed to Gilles. Such Mysteries were in the fashion of the time, originally religious, but afterwards setting forth some historic event. This professes to give fully all the events leading up to and including the raising of the siege of Orleans. A prominent part is assigned to the Marechal de Rais, who played it himself and at his own cost produced the Mystery in the town of Orleans five years after the events portrayed on May 8, 1435, the anniversary of the raising of the siege in 1430. Whoever was the author of the libretto or whenever it was written, there seems little doubt that the details of the march must have been supplied from the daily journals and notes taken at the time, and the scenes depicting Joan's childhood, her visions, her voices, and interviews with saints and angels, must have been given by herself. The Maréchal's fondness for theatrical entertainments is well known. He had designed and produced several Mysteries before this of Orleans, and it seems most natural to suppose that the design and construction of this famous historic representation was the joint work of the Maid and her devoted knight, and that it represented faithfully their ideas of the adventure to which they were jointly pledged. The cost must have been enormous, for at all these entertainments it was Gilles himself who provided all the actors, numbering in this case 140 principals, besides innumerable supers, citizens, soldiers, trumpeters, etc., all of whose costumes were made afresh for the purpose, and nothing was imitation, it was real cloth of gold and silver, and the finest silk and velvet. But what matter the cost? It was a divine adventure, and all would be restored in the Millennium they were bringing about. It was no earthly quest. This intense faith breathes in all the Mystery, from the miraculous childhood of Joan, her memorable interview with Charles VII, and the saints and angels who attended her, the wondrous bringing to her of her true knight and faithful follower, to the rush upon Orleans, the relief of the city by the two young magicians, and the triumphant return after the victory of Patay. The occult forces were everywhere successful, and Eldorado was well in sight. What matter though gold were poured out like water? All were to be rich and prosperous immediately—God was victorious and the Devil finally vanquished.

But having some inkling of his strange nature, one asks whether even at this time Gilles had absolutely abandoned the practice of sorcery. From his confession some ten years later it seems that when in the company of the Maid, and under her

influence, his trust was entirely in her divine mission ; but when away from her he still retained an interest in Alchemy, and in the magical formulæ he had studied.

As we know the tide of fortune turned. But as they marched upon Paris there is no doubt that the Maid of the Armagnacs was regarded by the French as a divine angelic figure, a talisman ensuring victory to the Kingdom of the Lilies, but by the Saxon English as a veritable witch, whose black magic frustrated their best efforts, and all records show that Gilles de Rais looked on himself as the chosen and divinely appointed guardian of this most precious possession. The check before Paris must have shaken his faith badly. Could it then be possible that the divine magic was to fail them, after all the manifestations of success ? But the loyalty of the Celt never swerved. Though she was wounded, and as we read lay for hours in a ditch unheeded, her devoted knight never quitted her side. Even when she was taken prisoner at Compiègne, and transferred from dungeon to dungeon, and finally carried to Rouen about the end of 1430, it is known that during all the earlier proceedings against her she evinced the greatest confidence in her final liberation, and the triumph of her cause ; and during all this time we find Gilles with a considerable force at Louviers only sixteen miles distant and making several attempts, whose object could only have been her deliverance. True to his Celtic character, though the magic had failed the loyalty was undimmed. But ecclesiastical sentiment had changed. In the tide of success she was a divine figure ; but in failure, and in the hands of the enemy, the questionable nature of her visions, which had been set above the directions of the priests, were remembered, and so was the Paganism of her intercourse with the fairies at Domremy, and many other circumstances which pointed clearly to witchcraft. Moreover the Anglo-Saxon invaders clamoured loudly for her execution. They were impatient of the formalities of the trial. A witch was a witch, and should be burned out of hand, they said. It is, however, some satisfaction to know that it was not by the Church that she was actually condemned, but by the hypocritical and apostate traitor Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who we are glad to read was excommunicated by the Pope for this very deed, and his ashes scattered to the winds.

Even after she was condemned and burnt Gilles was never able entirely to believe that his lady and comrade was actually dead. He seems, from his confession and other documents, to have always cherished the idea that she had but disappeared

for a short season, and would return and lead her faithful followers to victory. It was a pathetic faith, and one entirely consonant with his character, leading him in later years to be deceived by the pseudo Maid, the dissolute Clare des Armoises.

Much of the story has to be picked out with difficulty from the contemporary records. Gilles de Rais died a death of infamy, universally detested for his unspeakable crimes, while his lady and comrade, the pure and pious Maid of Orleans, after being burned for sorcery, was solemnly rehabilitated at a future trial, and became continuously more and more the national heroine. No wonder men shrank from associating his name with hers. Some historians even went so far as to assert that he had no share in her exploits, and that the Maréchal who assisted her was one Rieux, a nonentity not undeservedly suspected of cowardice. But this theory, which has appeared even in comparatively modern historians, has been entirely disproved, notably by the careful work of Abbé Bossard, and there is now no doubt whatsoever that Gilles de Rais was a gallant and skilful soldier, a brave defender of France, and a true comrade and devoted follower of the heroic Maid; and that a large portion at all events of his vast fortune was given to the help of his country, and of his lady.

But now had come a time of crisis. The cause, for the time at any rate, had failed; the magic that was to restore all his prodigally wasted wealth had proved futile. The Maid was gone, whether dead or not, his estates were all either sold or heavily mortgaged. We find him trying, and often without success, to raise comparatively small loans for immediate needs, and the other side of the Manichæan nature asserts itself. Alchemy must restore fallen fortunes, it is always possible to make gold. True, his experiments in that direction had been hitherto unsuccessful, but they had not been very vigorously prosecuted, and the formulæ required the assistance of spiritual forces, the invocation of elementals. This must now be tried. Things had got serious; success was an imperative necessity. It is clear that to get anything like an adequate perspective we must take into account the sorcery and occult arts of the fifteenth century. Modern writers, as M. Anatole France, Mr. Vizetelly, the American Dr. Wilson, and others, endeavour to minimize this side, and treat Joan's visions and voices as entirely subjective, the echo of her own pure and ardent thoughts, and all the horrors and crimes of Gilles de Rais as natural depravity and brutality. But it is certain that not thus did they regard themselves, and the figures so built up are not living or vital. If, however, we remember

that they were Celts, with the fullest conviction that they were living amidst supernatural happenings, and taking all their surroundings very much as a Celt of to-day would take them, and moreover that the occult happenings which they believed in have their counterparts and find their credence in modern times also, then this marvellous old fifteenth century romance starts to vivid life, and Bluebeard and the Maid become living persons, whom we might almost have known. Unexpected clues occur sometimes in Scottish family history. It has happened to myself occasionally in searching through the muniments of some old Highland family to hear the casual remark "Yes, that ancestor fought with Joan of Arc." There was a Scottish Guard in the time of Charles VII, many of whose records are still available, and the names of old Highland families are frequent, and so it chances that letters and diaries sometimes contain brief but priceless clues: a mine for the working of future historians.

In all the details we know of the life of Gilles de Rais, we find, as we should expect from his race and nature, violent reactions. We find him with the most ecstatic devotion, singing himself in his own choir at a sumptuous High Mass, and immediately afterwards in scenes of prodigal debauchery. We find him again, after attempts at sorcery and black magic, humbly praying for forgiveness from an offended God. The two attitudes are both characteristic, and lead to the strong probability that the recourse to sorcery, after the failure of the quest and the capture of the Maid, was no sudden change of character, as Abbé Charpentière would have us believe, but the development of the nature that was there from the beginning, and that even while he was following Joan there were reactions to the cultus of the powers of evil.

In 1432 there came over a district of France, including Southern Brittany, parts of Maine and Poitou, a vague and undefined feeling of apprehension, a terror of some brooding astral evil. Michelet, in his *Histoire de France*, describes it forcibly as that of an invisible supernatural beast of extermination, possessed of diabolic powers, which many deemed to be a physical manifestation of the Evil One, appearing here and there without warning, and leaving traces of fear and mourning, of insanity and death. What was certain was the constant disappearance of children of tender age, without trace, and as though by enchantment. The clue appears in the story and confession of Gilles, and in the fifteenth century processes of sorcery. We have the details of Gilles's effort to restore his fortunes by

alchemy. The remains of his laboratories and furnaces may even yet be traced. But this was at the outset scientific, a genuine attempt to effect the transmutation of metals, which many scientists to-day regard as feasible. But the occultists of the fifteenth century held that for success it was essential to obtain the help of elemental spirits, and of demons. Despite the thunders of the Church Italy at that time swarmed with sorcerers, who professed themselves able to invoke and compel these powers of darkness. It was popularly said that even some of the Popes themselves practised sorcery in secret. So we find Gilles sending emissaries into Italy to procure magicians, who should instruct him in these forbidden arts. Many of their names are preserved, but he himself said in his confession that the whole number was so vast that he could not remember them all. Certain it is that most of them robbed and deceived him to the top of their bent, as we may well imagine. We have plenty of parallel cases to-day. His confession records nothing but continual failure, and continually growing desperation, also continually more extravagant demands from his sorcerers and assistants generally. The blackest side of all sorcery has always been the practice of necromancy, a word little understood and constantly used in a wrong sense as meaning any kind of magic. (It was recently used by a learned divine to apply to Spiritualism, and the glimpses of the world beyond the grave.) Necromancy properly means the working of magic by means of dead bodies or portions thereof. The theory is briefly set forth in a quaint little black-letter volume of the fourteenth century, shown to me by a private collector. The body of man or beast was apparently regarded as a magical implement, wielded by the spirit, and was compared to the rods of Moses and Aaron, Joseph's divining cup, the High Priest's ephod and breastplate, and the like. Every organ had its special part in the great magical implement, and any one taken out and informed by the spirit of the magician enabled him to obtain information, to do works of magic proper to that part, and to control certain spirits. This type of magic was greatly in favour with the augurs of ancient Rome, who used parts of the bodies of sacrificial victims in divination. Tiberius at Capreæ, amid his unmentionable debaucheries, is said to have used the bodies of slaves, and to have tortured and killed living victims for magical ceremonies. All the necromantic formulæ agree that though much may be done with animal bodies, far more certain results can be obtained from human bodies, especially those of children. And this

belief has persisted for unknown centuries, and is not dead yet. We meet it in the witchcraft trials of the Middle Ages, and prominently in the well-known formula of "The Hand of Glory." Some years ago I was speaking with a Russian nobleman on the alleged Ritual Murders said to be committed by Jews at Easter. While not himself professing to believe the stories, he showed me a Hebrew MS. with an interleaved Latin translation, giving a formula for the making of a Teraphim, whereby with a consecrated knife the head of a child must be cut off and placed instantly on a gold plate engraved with Cabalistic signs, and the names of seventy-two great angels of the Name must be invoked, whereupon the head would speak, and being properly interrogated would disclose any secret asked of it. I am told that this document was from internal evidence a forgery, and made up to justify a pogrom. But it proved the wide existence of a belief. Almost all the instructions that I have come across on necromancy contain a most strongly expressed caution, that if one shall by these means be able to invoke spirits which he is unable to control, it is probable that they will enter into him and dwell there, producing especially the madness of Sævitia, and the lust of rapine and cruelty, the peculiar form of mania which is now known as Sadism. Certainly the ghastly and horrible records of necromancy seem to bear out this caution. When all London was startled with horror at the crimes of Jack the Ripper, the late Mr. Bernard Quaritch showed me a MS. he was then wishing to buy of black magical formulæ. It was not the Grimoire, though containing much of the same matter, and, *inter alia*, the very formula on which Jack the Ripper seemed to have been working, the very mutilations, were minutely described, and the desecration of Christian emblems. It was not remarked at the time that if the sites of the murders be marked on a map of London, they form, viewed from the west, an inverted cross, and the latest and most atrocious, the Mitre Square murder, was probably exactly on the site of the High Altar of Holy Trinity Church, Whitechapel. This may have been an accidental coincidence, if so it was remarkably exact. A man trying to work the formula in that old MS. could not have done it with more painstaking accuracy. And if the evil spirits invoked did verily obsess the murderer it would account for many things. And this case does not stand alone. Scotland Yard has the details of many attempted works of necromancy, judiciously kept very private, and veiled even so far as they are known under the convenient covering of homicidal mania. Baring Gould, in the

Broom Squire, and the late Monseigneur Benson, in his story of the *Blood Eagle*, record necromantic practices in the West of England.

Such then was the last alternative that his Italian sorcerers suggested to Gilles de Rais, and such was the meaning of that strange cloud of apprehension that overhung the land. Prelati the Italian supplied the formulæ, and worked many of the invocations; at first it would seem with sacrifice of animals, then a child was demanded and procured, still no tangible result followed. Prelati avers that he saw and conferred with the evil spirit, Barron by name, whose seal is well-known to students, and reports more demands for more and more sacrifices, fuller necromantic invocations. All the money that Gilles could by any means lay hands on went to his innumerable emissaries, employed in kidnapping for him. The tradition of obsession by the evil spirits whom he invoked and failed to control, seems to have been borne out in actual fact, and the vague haunting terror that had spread over the land of a brooding astral evil, ascribed to a physical manifestation of the Prince of Darkness, may well have had more truth in it than materialistic historians would be willing to admit.

Was his nature then entirely changed since the death of the Maid? By no means. We find still the same Manichæan duality. After the worst debaucheries of crime we see him earnestly, almost frantically, imploring forgiveness of his sins and professing a sure confidence in his ultimate salvation. It was in 1435, five years after the martyrdom of the Maid, that he caused to be presented at Orleans the Mystery of the siege, and himself took his own part, representing the time of his chivalrous devotion to her cause, and at the very same time he devoted a great part of his remaining possessions to the "Foundation of the Holy Innocents" in order, as the deed of gift recites, that the souls of children might intercede for him at the Throne of Grace, for then surely he would be forgiven and saved. Looking at his character as depicted in the Mystery one might wonder why he stood in such great need of forgiveness. The dungeons and oubliettes of Machecoul, of Champtoce, and Tiffauges, and all the ghastly discoveries there of the bodies of scores, nay possibly hundreds, of innocent victims give the answer. We see the same violent reactions, only now the evil obsession was ever more and more the normal nature, and the service of God the reaction, bred often of fear of the consequences, and dread of the powers of hell. Yet even in the worst excesses the

memory of the Maid held him, and the confident hope that somehow and sometime she would return. One little story, seldom told, indicates this. A woman whose child had been kidnapped came to the castle of Champtoce in despair, seeking for the little one; the guardian of the gate was about to drive her away as his orders were, when he recognized his niece. So he advised her to go on the terrace where de Rais was promenading with his greyhound, to caress the dog, and say suddenly to de Rais without preamble, "I have seen Jeanne." She did so, and he was startled, and asked how she looked and what she said. The woman replied, "She was shining with light, but looked sad and wept for my child. She told me to come here to seek for him, he had been seized in the Bois des Ingraudes." Gilles at once sent for the child, fortunately still alive, and restored him to the mother.

No need here to go into the story of his apprehension and trial and conviction. These can be read in many books, and his confession, recounting his crimes in fullest detail, remains one of the most remarkable documents in all the long history of occultism and magic. We read that after his conviction, on the way to the scaffold, he prayed continually to God, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, and professed the most sure hope of salvation. He was executed at Nantes, on the other side of the Loire opposite to his castle, and his body was afterwards rescued from the flames by his family, and buried in the *Eglise des Carmes* at Nantes. An expiatory monument was erected by his daughter to his memory. It stood on the side of the *Hotel de Dieu*, but no portion now remains; a rough lithograph in Verger's *Archives Curieuses de Nantes* shows what it was like, and a fragment is preserved in the archæological museum. At one time miraculous powers were ascribed to the statuette of the Virgin that surmounted it, which was known as "La Bonne Vierge de Cree-Lait," the milk-giver, and many were the pilgrimages of nursing mothers to the shrine marking the place of execution of Bluebeard.

Thus then these two young Bretons, who had so gallantly set forth from Chinon in 1429, believing themselves under occult guidance, a belief almost justified by a practically miraculous success, on an expedition that we may well deem saved the Kingdom of the Lilies for her own sons, both suffered a shameful death on the scaffold for sorcery. It was a strange *camaraderie*, the wealthiest and most powerful noble in France following with devoted loyalty the humble peasant girl of Domremy, a strange

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end in which France, at the instigation of her English enemies, sacrificed the two comrades who had done more than any others for her liberation. Strangest of all, perhaps, that while the high placed criminal de Rais suffered the extreme penalty, the instigators and abettors of his crimes went scot-free. Prelati, who taught him necromancy, and who confessed to having raised and conversed and bargained with the Devil, La Meffraye, the villainous old woman who prowled through the country kidnapping children for the horrible rites, and many others, gave their testimony and disappeared, nor is there any record of any proceedings against them.

But though Bluebeard and the Maid suffered a similar penalty, posterity has given no hesitating judgment. From age to age the love and veneration for Joan of Arc has grown, and she has become the national Saint and heroine of France, while the name of de Rais has been consigned to the lowest depths of execration. Bluebeard (the name given him it was said in his lifetime by a lady who greatly admired the soft silky blue-black beard of the handsome young noble) became in Brittany a name of fear, a haunting demon, who though dead might at any time reappear. And, as is often the case, many gruesome stories which had long been current in the countryside were fathered on him.

Gilles himself had one wife, and a daughter who survived him. But the folk tales of the dark inhuman monster who put to death his wives in varying numbers of three, seven, and in one case twelve, have been told in all countries. J. F. Campbell, in the *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, has preserved one with curious points in common with the Bluebeard stories. The idea appears in Grimm's *Märchen*, and in the *Arabian Nights*. The fatal curiosity, the blood-stained key, the dramatic watch of Sister Anne from the topmost tower, and the rescue just in time. Abbé Bossard quotes a story current in La Vendée, giving the Sister Anne episode almost exactly as told by Perrault. There were also the stories of an earlier ruffian of Brittany known as Comorre the Cursed, many of which have become mixed with the Bluebeard tales in the course of years. Undoubtedly by the time of Perrault a Bluebeard legend had grown up in Brittany, but how far the story as he tells it was current there before his time, and how far he elaborated his folk-tale from other sources, must at present remain a mystery, the materials for the solution of which have still to be unearthed. The popular figure of Bluebeard as an Eastern in a monstrous turban suggests a connection with Oriental legend. No such representation would be accepted in

Brittany. The Bluebeard story is told there to-day as it is told in our nurseries, and the sites are pointed out. The window from which Sister Anne watched for the three brothers, the chamber where the corpses of the headless wives were found are shown as confidently as the laboratory of de Rais' alchemical experiments, the dungeons where the children were confined, and the pit where the bodies were discovered. Truth and fiction are inextricably blended, and who shall now disentangle them? Certain it is that the reality, which is proved to the hilt, is more horrible and ghastly than any invention of Perrault or any other.

And with this we may set the last recorded words of Gilles de Rais after his condemnation, "Fathers and Mothers, and all that hear me. Keep yourselves, I entreat you, from all lax rearing of your children. For my part, if I have committed so many and great crimes, the reason is that in my youth I was always allowed to do as I listed, and to follow the bent of my desires."

As Mr. Vizetelly well says, these are words for every age, and may well be applied to our own. They may perhaps help us, with other strange matter, to comprehend the marvelously complex character of Gilles de Rais, Maréchal de France, Barbebleu.

IN A CONVENT CHAPEL

By NORA ALEXANDER

"UT omnibus relictis, se relinquat."

Such a counsel of perfection! With a sigh my eyes moved from the words of that long-dead monk who had wielded a power Kings might envy, to where, beyond the still lines of black-veiled nuns and white coiffed novices, the Altar lights gleamed dimly in the darkness of the ancient chapel. Behind them the grey stone wall rose to meet the high-flung roof, but now a strange thing happened, for where that oddly poised, trefoiled window above the Sanctuary usually showed as a deepened shadow, there lay a clear soft light, so that one looked through into the room beyond.

It should have been cause for bewildered amazement, but maybe the very poignancy of the scene being enacted, drove wonder and surprise far afield. For there, in a fourteenth century room, a great Churchman lay in the throes, not only of death, but of a deathless need. One knew it all in a flash, before ever one saw his face, just as one knew that the three bullet-headed men standing so silent and impassive at the foot of the great carved and canopied bed, were his enemies.

Presently the thin, restless hands clutched at the heavily embroidered coverlet and the dying man half raised himself so that the old worn face came into full view. And the lines of pride and authority graven deep beneath those newer ones of agony and entreaty, made so intimately pitiful a revelation that one's eyes instinctively turned away, as from something one should not, in human decency, look upon, since souls laid bare are for the eyes of God alone.

But the three men were troubled by no such scruples. They stood and watched, and the horror lay in the fact that beneath their cold, utterly unmoved exterior, one sensed, with sickening certainty, a secret, interior satisfaction. Even when their victim stretched out his hands, and his voice, praying, pleading, for some mercy he might not die without, seemed almost to reach across the centuries to my own unwilling ears, they yet made no shadow of a gesture even, in reply.

"Brutes!" I whispered, in a rage of resentment against such callousness, as the dying man fell back amongst his pillows. It

was clear that unconsciousness had gripped him in its merciful oblivion, clear too, from that aimless picking at the coverlet, that the end was very near. Only, it would not let him rest—that unknown load upon his soul. Once more the glazing eyes opened, once more the shaking hands went out, and still those devils stood and watched.

Then when the tension was growing well-nigh unbearable, another figure came upon the scene, emerging slowly from behind the head of the bed, a part of the room which necessarily remained out of view. The face of the new-comer was never visible, but in some subtle, indescribable way, every line of his body expressed a sympathy beyond all words, so that one's heart leaped up in momentary relief and hope.

But it was only momentary. It seemed quite evident that he did not speak, only stood as silent and motionless as those three at the foot of the bed, and yet—between his silence and theirs lay the gap between heaven and hell, between love and hate.

Presently, when the dying man leaned over on his side and stretched out an imploring hand, his head just moved in a negation as slight as it was sad and final, and then, as though the sight of the other's agony was past bearing, he turned away from the bed, and crossing to the second window that faced its foot, stood looking out on the waving green of the trees beneath.

I cannot say how long it lasted, only that twice the sufferer drifted into unconsciousness, and once he called aloud. At that, it was as though one had dealt a mortal blow to the silent watcher by the window, though the wincing was barely visible to the physical eye. Was he indeed watching for some one or something, I wondered? Did he look for a rider to breast the great hill of the white highway just visible beyond the massive stone walls that guarded the green enclosure? If so, he looked in vain, for no sound of horses' hoofs, no beating on the great, iron-studded door of the gatehouse, broke the tragic stillness—nothing but now and again the faint and ever fainter moaning of the dying man.

Suddenly I knew it was the end, and that he must die with that prayer, the prayer that *must* be answered, unanswered. Thereat another prayer choked in my own throat and a mist came before my eyes as I turned away from a vision that was no longer to be suffered. Yet . . . who knew? Something *might* happen, even at the very last moment, and one must not miss the knowledge of it. Whatever the hurt, one must watch to the end.

Only—there was nothing to watch! The trefoiled window lay, as ever, a deepened shadow in the shadowed wall.

But below it, rested God Himself. For this was the moment of the Consecration of the Host.

* * * * *

Afterwards, strolling across the greensward beneath the trees, I said to my little daughter, to whom I had been telling the story of that strange "vision" during High Mass:

"That must be the window where the priest looked out. You would just see the highway across the trees, wouldn't you? I wonder what the room used to be!"

And the matter went out of my mind. For I was a stranger in the place and knew nothing of its history beyond having casually heard that the Convent had once been an archiepiscopal palace.

Some months later it was recalled by my daughter coming home full of some lectures that had been given on the history of the building.

"And wasn't it funny?" she concluded. "That little window above the Altar where you saw the 'vision' was in the Archbishop's bedroom, and he had it put there so that he could listen to what was going on in the Banqueting Hall and Council Chamber down below. It's the Chapel now, of course."

I laughed, remarked that it was odd, and again forgot the incident until about a year after, when, glancing through some transcripts of original documents, I came across an account of the death of Simon Meopham, Archbishop of Canterbury, which took place at the Palace in 1333, he being then under ban of excommunication, and of how the Bishop of Rochester, coming to see him some days before, found him "pensive and dejected."

Now, it is as certain as anything can be, that these records had never come into my hands previously, or the explanation would be easy, as an hallucination due to sub-conscious activity. As the case stands, however, there seems, as in so many cases of clairvoyance, or whatever one chooses to call it, "neither rhyme nor reason." The Archbishop had died nearly 600 years before, and presumably had expiated his sins, more especially as it would appear from the records that his excommunication was, to a great extent, if not wholly, an injustice, due to the machinations of his enemies.* Therefore why should a casual twentieth century visitor witness his fourteenth century sufferings? Catholics might rightly argue that prayer for the dead is always of avail, and that Time is no factor in Eternity.

* According to the records, the ban of excommunication was removed almost immediately after his death.

But apart from that, it may be that the very casualness and irrelevance of this type of vision constitutes its main evidential value. For it suggests that a record of all events does exist in some form or other, and that in certain states of consciousness, or of nerve-sensitiveness, one glimpses a fragment of the film of Time, as it were.

Perhaps it should be added that although from earliest childhood the writer has had occasional "queer" experiences, no attempt has ever been made to develop any faculty, or induce any state of consciousness which may be necessary to such visions. They have always been quite spontaneous and unexpected, and have in the great majority of cases struck across some wholly irrelevant train of thought. To use a very modern simile, it is much as though one sat blindfolded before a cinema film, not knowing it was there, and then some one abruptly removed the bandage, and as abruptly, put it back.

THE RISHI'S MORNING PRAYER

BY FREDERIC THURSTAN

INVOCATION.

HAIL, O Sun Shine, Glow and Glee,
Hail, Cool Moon-sheen, fond, forlorn,
Heaven intense of Purity,
Deep of Mysteries unborn,
Hail, All-in-All, this glorious morn !

TANTRA.

O Zest of Life's Reality
Food of Gods, we feed on Thee,
O Quicken our Divinity.

O Light and Truth that set us free
With Joy of Actuality,
Illumine our Divinity.

When Thy heart is in our breast
And our Love to Thee confessed,
Work our work and give us Rest.

THE IRISH AT THE GATES OF DEATH

By MICHAEL MACDONAGH

IN Ireland the living are dominated by the dead to an extent unknown probably in other countries. It is a willing servitude, based upon two powerful sentiments—the constancy of Irish family affection, and their Catholic solicitude for the eternal welfare of those they love whose mortal existence has been brought to an end. Death, as the extinction of life, as a farewell for ever to the warm precincts of the cheerful day, is not regarded as a matter of very great importance. No race faces death, whether on the battlefield or anywhere else, with more unconcern than the Irish, or, when lying on the bed of sickness, accepts with more resignation the doctor's pronouncement that there is no hope. They can pass into the eternal silence with a joke on their lips. I have heard a story of a dying Irishman who, when asked by the priest, in the course of the administration of the last religious rites, whether he was prepared to renounce the devil and all his works, exclaimed, "Oh, don't ask me to do that, your reverence. I am going to a strange country and I don't want to make myself enemies."

If there is any concern in the mind of the dying, it arises from some uncertainty as to what may happen in that strange country, the other world. This feeling finds expression in the quaintest and most wayward fancies. Canon Sheehan, the author of *Luke Delmage*, and other novels of Irish life, who was a parish priest in county Cork, relates that an old farmer after receiving the last sacrament of extreme unction said to the priest: "I want you to say a word to rise me heart for me long journey, your reverence. Will the Man above have anything agin me in His books?" This dread simile was prompted by sad experiences of the land agent's office, arrears of rent and the fear of being thrown out of house and home. "I'm sure," replied the priest, "Almighty God has pardoned you. You have made a good confession, and your life has been a holy and a pure one." "And did your reverence give me a clear resate?" asked the old farmer. Here was the land agent's office again. "I've given you absolution, my poor man," said the priest. The dying man was satisfied. "Thanks,

your reverence," were his last words. Another story I have been told shows the droll forms which the same thought assumes in the minds of relations. A farmer who was dying had occasional fits of coma, or profound torpor. The doctor advised the wife, when one of those attacks came on, just to moisten the lips of the patient with a little brandy. "Doctor, dear," cried the poor wife, with reproach in her voice, "is it to go into the presence of his Maker with the smell of spirits in his breath you'd be havin' him?" It is to the family that the visitation of death brings terrors and obligations. At first it has a crushing and stupefying effect by reason of the void it makes in the domestic circle, and, afterwards, it entails a lasting devotion to the memory of the loved one who has passed away. So long as a member of the family lives, the dead, in a sense, never dies in Ireland. They survive in the prayers that are said for them, morning and night, in the Mass on each anniversary of their death, in the weeping and wailing over their graves, years upon years after they have been laid to rest. You rarely if ever hear among the peasantry the expression "dead and gone." Death is simply a passage from one life to another. What you do hear is, "She's in Heaven," "God sent for her," or "He's with God," telling of the life of the dead hereafter, of their eternal companionship with angels and saints.

The custom of "waking" the dead, with the drinking, smoking, and conversation of the large company of neighbours who assemble in the house of mourning, appears incongruous and repulsive to those who are unacquainted with its remote origin or the kindly and humane motives which underlie it. The wake is a very old institution. It existed among the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans. Shakespeare and Scott give instances of medieval revels in honour of the dead. The custom survives in a different form, but with somewhat identical motives, among the Irish, almost alone of the ancient peoples.

"Waking" means, for one thing, "watching." The English way of leaving the corpse shut up in a room, all alone, would be most repellent to the Irish nature. It would be regarded as a desertion of the dead. The Irish keep close company with their dead until the very last moment of the burial. The body is clothed in a shroud, made in imitation of the habits worn by certain Orders of Friars, and in the hands, crossed reverently on the breast, is placed a crucifix. The walls near the bed are hung with clean white sheets on which are pinned bunches of flowers, laurel leaves and holy pictures. Lighted candles, seven in

number, are placed on a table. They are symbolical of hopes and aspirations relating to the dead. That he or she has been cleansed of the seven deadly sins—pride, covetousness, lust, gluttony, anger, envy, and sloth; that he or she possessed the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, and the seven principal virtues—faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and that the relatives joined their sorrow with the seven dolours of Our Blessed Lady—the prophecy of Simeon that a sword of sorrow should pierce her soul; the flight into Egypt; the loss of Jesus in the Temple; meeting Jesus with His Cross; the standing beneath His Cross; the receiving the Body of Jesus; and the burial of Jesus. The room is frequently sprinkled with holy water to banish any evil spirits that may be hovering round. All this is in part a survival of the public lying-in-state of the bodies of great personages, a ceremonial that, once rather common in Ireland, is now reserved for ecclesiastical dignitaries and national heroes.

The Irish people are at all times addicted to companionship, to association with their fellows, and the desire for it is strongest perhaps when death has visited them nearly. We know that we are mortal and ephemeral; that nothing is more certain than that death will come. Every day almost we are reminded that death is the common fate of all in reading our newspapers and meeting with funerals in the streets. Yet there is always an element of the terrible and incomprehensible in the sight of one that is near and dear to us, one, as we know from long experience, capable of the most loving thoughts and deeds in our regard, lying there inert, deaf to familiar voices, unconscious for ever of the joys and tenderness of domestic life. A chill runs down one's spine, as though the icy coldness of death emanated from the remains and penetrated subtly into one's frame, and we seek for consolation and support in the sociability of the living. And the neighbours, ever quick in showing sympathy, crowd in to ease the sting of death, to cheer up the spirits of the bereaved, to distract them for a while from the crushing thought of their irreparable loss.

First entering the room where the corpse lies the visitors kneel and say a prayer for the eternal salvation of the departed soul. Afterwards in the kitchen, snuff, pipes and tobacco, whisky and stout are served to the company. The dead person is in his house for the last time, and, as host for the last time, dispenses hospitality. What he would do, but can do no longer,

those who love him best do for him. Memories of his kindness and good nature are revived by the neighbours. "'Tis he that had the bright smile and cheery word whenever you met him, and no matter what you might want of him, sure you had only to say the word to get it with a heart and a half." Stories are told by the elders, and politics discussed; forfeits may be played by the young of both sexes, or, more likely, riddles given for solution. But the Irish are most reverent in the presence of sorrow and nothing unseemly is permitted in these efforts to give relief to the relatives from cares that weigh heavily on their spirits. Manifestations of grief are not entirely suppressed, but they are confined to the chamber of death. In some parts of Ireland it is believed that the soul of the dead person is detained on earth by tears and lamentations, and that not until the sorrow of the relations is appeased can it turn contentedly to face the eternal judgment. To a young widow who was sobbing by the death-bed of her husband, I heard the remonstrance addressed—"Don't be crying that way, *asthore*; or you'll keep him from his rest."

Here and there throughout the country where waking has been abused by excessive indulgence in drink, the authorities of the Catholic Church have tried to abolish it altogether. It is therefore not so common as it used to be, especially in the towns and the larger villages. Religious services have been substituted for the ancient observances. The body is removed from the house to the parish church, where it remains for the night in its coffin resting on a bier near to the high Altar; and in the morning the Mass for the Dead is said before its removal for interment. There could hardly be a more notable example of the influence of the Church. The Irish are slow to adopt new ideas. They are among the most conservative people in the world in their adhesion to traditional habits and customs. Especially do they resent any innovation which touches their dead. It is their deep and reverential respect for the Church, rather than their instinct as to what is right and proper, that induces them to part from their dead for a night. They bow their heads in submission, but so heavy lies the immemorial past upon them that in their hearts they doubt whether in doing so they are quite loyal to their dead.

In the case of the keen (Gaelic *caoine*) or funeral lamentation—one of the eeriest death chants to be heard from the crushed heart of sorrowing humanity—the Irish also adhere to a custom held sacred by their remotest ancestors. It has come down to us from the Pagan era. Walker, in his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, says the object originally was to propitiate the gods by

proclaiming the genealogy, rank, possessions and virtues of the dead person. Spirits whose requiem was not thus sung were liable to be condemned eternally to a state of unrest. Geraldus Cambrensis, the Welsh writer who visited Ireland in the twelfth century, describes this funeral song or wail as it was practised in Christian times. Its purpose then was to sound the praises of the dead without regard to any supernatural or religious motive. The keeners, in the course of their chanting, put a number of questions, as if with a view to discovering why it was the person lamented had died. If a man, whether his wife was faithful to him, his sons dutiful, or good hunters or warriors? If a woman, whether her daughters were fair or chaste? If a young man, whether he had been crossed in love, or if the blue-eyed maidens had treated him with scorn? The keen of the twentieth century differs very little in form or spirit from the keen of the twelfth century. The cries of lamentation usually take the form of questions which are asked in a half-singing, half-reciting and sobbing voice. "Mo cushla machree (pulse of my heart), why did you die from me? Wasn't it you that was the best of husbands and fathers, giving joy to all that knew you, and wouldn't those that love you go through fire and water to save a hair of your head from being hurt?" The piercing wail of a mother for a favourite son is most heartrending to hear. "Ah, Michael, mo vïlle astore (my ten thousand treasures), sure your like was not to be found on all the broad acres of Ireland, and your death has cast a shadow on the country that no sun will ever disperse." In towns the keen is cried in the room where the corpse is being waked before the start of the funeral. In rural districts, where the journey to the graveyard is often long, the keen breaks out at intervals, and then the whole countryside rings with the weirdest lamentation.

To have "a grand buryin' with all the neighbours at it" is the last thing the Irish peasant desires of this world. A farmer who married a penniless girl was asked why he made so poor a match. "My wife," he answered, "has thirty brothers, uncles and cousins, and if I was to die to-morrow her faction could give me as long a funeral as the King of England." It is an object of solicitude long before the end is felt approaching. During a visit to the remote parts of Donegal I was told so great was the difficulty of getting a coffin made that many people gave the only carpenter in the district sheaves of oats or a sack of potatoes annually by way of a retaining fee for this service when they died. I remember a curious case that came for decision before a

bench of magistrates in my native city of Limerick. An undertaker was asked by an old maid to make her coffin, and his proposal "to complete the job" for £4 was thought by her to be reasonable enough. When the coffin was finished the undertaker brought it to the woman's house and received £2 as part payment; but being unable to obtain the balance he was reluctantly obliged to summon her. The defence set up by the woman was that the undertaker was not only to supply the coffin, but bury her respectable for the £4, and as he had not yet fulfilled the latter part of the agreement she submitted that he was not entitled to be paid the remaining £2. The case, which caused much laughter in court, was dismissed. Then the old maid turned to the undertaker and said, "As soon as you perform your part of the contract, I'll not be behindhand in completing mine." Wandering beggars, lone creatures who have no one belonging to them, who tramp the countryside for a living, carrying all their worldly goods on their back, are known to stint themselves of food in order to add an odd penny or sixpence, now and then, to the sum of money, kept in a secret hiding-place in their clothing, and intended to pay the expenses of the burial. An old fellow of this class who, feeling ill, sought refuge in a workhouse and died there, had a piece of paper, with his little hoard—the slow accumulations of many a hard year—on which he had written: "This is to bury me. Bury me decent, or I'll haunt you." Thus all through life he was providing against what he would have thought the last misfortune and final disgrace—a pauper's coffin and a grave in the "yellow hole," as the workhouse pit is called. Some years ago it was the custom of the poorer classes, when they were unable to afford a coffin, to make the corpse beg for it. The body was laid on a board outside the door on a Sunday with a plate to receive the coppers of the people on their way to Mass. Sometimes imposture was practised. On one occasion a woman placed a sixpence on the plate and began to take up five pennies. "Arrah, ma'am," cried the supposed corpse, "be generous wance in yer life and don't mind the change."

Ireland is noted for its big funerals. The whole parish, and sometimes the countryside, turns out to pay the last tribute of respect. It is the rule also in rural districts for strangers who meet with a funeral to turn back and accompany it for some distance at least. "Who is it that's dead?" they will ask, and when they are told they will add, "Well, well, may the journey thrive with him," "God rest his soul," or "Wisha, God be with him, whoever he is." Burials are so well attended that they

have come to convey the idea of the largest possible numbers. A man out for a day's shooting asked a lad whether he had seen any rabbits on his way. "Yes, sir, whole funerals of them," was the reply. Comedy often follows closely on the heels of tragedy in all circumstances of life and death in Ireland. At any rate family pride in a large funeral softens bereavement. Condolences take that form on the way to the grave. "If your father could only sit up in his coffin, and see the grand funeral he's havin', wouldn't he be mightily pleased?" "Well, oughtn't you to be consoled and made proud by so fine a funeral?"

Vanity and ostentation are very prevalent in Ireland, and most so, perhaps, among the poorer classes. It is a point of honour to have a fine funeral. But a funeral is fine by reason of the numbers of unhired cars and unhired mourners attending it. These manifestations of neighbourly sympathy and respect give to funerals in Ireland an unostentatious dignity. There is an entire absence, even in the cities, of that hired ornate ceremonial of the great hearse and horses with plumes, and mutes in tall hats and frock coats and wreaths of flowers, that make burials so extravagantly expensive to the poor in England.

Another reason why, apart from neighbourliness, funerals are so well attended is that they afford opportunities for revisiting family graves. When the coffin is committed to earth and the prayers are said, the mourners disperse through the graveyard, and soon from all quarters are heard the wildest bursts of grief. The rain may be falling pitilessly, and the graveyard engulfed in a dense humid atmosphere. But the wet and the mud are unnoticed, discomforts accepted as a matter of course. Moved by the overpowering impulse of their revived affection and sorrow for those that are no more, the mourners fling themselves prostrate on the ground, passionately kissing the mounds and flagstones, pressing closer and closer to get as near as possible to their long-buried but still darling dead, babbling almost incoherently expressions of the fondest love. Then they sit back on their haunches, and raise the keen, swaying their body to and fro, clapping their hands in time with the rhythm of their lamentations, and weeping the bitterest tears of affliction.

It is a scene in which Irish history, life and character are epitomized: the dust of saints, the ruined abbey, the broken cross; the crowded dead; hemlock, and deadly nightshade; weeping and wailing; the love that always endures; and, casting a tender light over it all, the hope of a glorious resurrection

A SEER'S PHILOSOPHY

BY EVA MARTIN

Through seven spheres I fled,
Opal and rose and white,
Emerald, violet, red,
Through azure was I led,
And the coronal on my head
With seven moons was bright.

Fiona Macleod.

LIVING, as the great majority of human beings must live, enmeshed in a web of small personal concerns, there is nothing more refreshing to man than to find himself suddenly carried beyond the everyday circle into wide spaces where his soul can stretch its wings and take deep breaths of a new and invigorating atmosphere. Sometimes we are apt to forget that it is as necessary to exercise the mind as the body, if both are to be kept healthy, and that the soul needs "fresh air" in plenty, just as its physical vehicle does. Fortunately there are many windows of escape through which man can fly when his mind becomes cramped by the insistent pressure of personal, communal, and even national, affairs. Some seek spiritual refreshment through the windows of music, poetry and other forms of art; some choose the way of religion; some that of philosophy; others, again, find their release in studying the mysteries of science and the endless wonders of Nature. It is generally admitted that of all subjects upon which man can exercise his intellectual faculties, there is none more mind-stretching, more soul-expanding, than that of Astronomy. Even those who have but the slightest smattering of knowledge find themselves staggered by the attempt to contemplate those vast and ordered marvels of light and space which Astronomy reveals, so far beyond the grasp of mortal imagination that the mind reels and is dazzled at their immensity. Who has ever turned from studying, through a telescope, the magnificent globes that form our solar system, without a sense of profound humility, and a reverence, that lies beyond words and fills the spirit to its utmost heights and deepest depths, for the greatness of the Divine Idea?

These marvels of creation on the physical plane are awe-inspiring enough, and, as said before, even the feeblest attempt

to comprehend them expands the mind as nothing else can. Lift the subject to a higher plane, interpret the whole in terms of spirit as well as of matter—and what a field have we then for the exercise of the faculties of the soul, term them intuition, imagination, vision, or what we will!

To students of Esoteric Astrology, the conception of the sun, moon and planets as vehicles of great spiritual forces is a familiar one.

God set the sun in heaven, and round it there
Wrought the huge orbs that sail the sea of air :
In these He locked Himself, in each a part,
His power, His knowledge, His all-loving heart,
And lo, at length He saw set forth in space
The flawless mirrored likeness of His face.

To Theosophists the theory of vast circles, or spheres, of finer, more ethereal, matter than that of earth, surrounding and interpenetrating our physical globe, is also familiar. But to connect ideas such as these with Spiritualism, in the now generally accepted sense of that word, would occur to few. Spiritualism has come to mean, for most people, little more than table-rapping, the receiving of messages of more or less doubtful authenticity, and the holding of séances at which more or less "materialistic" phenomena are produced. But there is one, at any rate, of its earliest exponents and upholders to whom it meant a great deal more than this. To Andrew Jackson Davis, otherwise known as "the Poughkeepsie seer," Spiritualism, far from being confined to the happenings of the séance-room, was an idealistic philosophy embracing the whole Cosmos, of which our sun with its satellites formed, in his view, but an insignificant section. This philosophy illuminated every department of human life and thought, revealing to man the splendour of his destiny and the greatness of the scheme in which he is meant to play a happy and harmonious part.

The child who developed into a seer of such remarkable powers was born nearly a hundred years ago in the State of New York, of uneducated parents, and in a rough and poverty-stricken environment. His psychic gifts first revealed themselves at the age of seventeen, when the village tailor, being anxious to test his powers of producing magnetic phenomena, experimented upon him. The success achieved was startling, and from then onwards Davis rapidly developed extraordinary clairvoyant faculties, passing from the hands of one "operator" to another, until finally he was able to induce the magnetic state in himself without

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the need of outside influence. While in this state he wrote many lengthy books, one of which, *The Principles of Nature*, has gone through forty-four American editions, and is still in constant demand. In spite of the fact that his published writings fill twenty-seven volumes, their popularity is enormous in America, and also in this country, among adherents of the Spiritualist movement. That they are not better known outside this movement is doubtless due to their great length and verbosity, and to the writer's habit of introducing large quantities of inessential material. These objections have now, however, been reduced to a minimum, if not altogether banished, by the appearance of a volume entitled *The Harmonial Philosophy*,* which gives, within moderate limits, a digest of the whole of Davis's published works. The "Doctor of Hermetic Science" who is responsible for this achievement deserves warm congratulations on the way in which he has surmounted difficulties which must have been truly enormous. In his capable hands confusion and long-windedness disappear, repetition is avoided, and the essence of a strikingly beautiful philosophy is presented in an admirably lucid style.

Davis's descriptions of the Summer Land where dwell earth's departed spirits, and of the other planets and their inhabitants, have much in common with the visions of Swedenborg. Though they are perhaps open to criticism on the grounds of being too materialistic, they nevertheless contain much genuine beauty, and there are frequent passages that cannot fail to thrill the imagination and carry conviction that the writer has to no inconsiderable extent succeeded in revealing to mankind some aspects of that Divine Wisdom, Power, and Love "che muove il sole è l'altre stelle." There is surely an allegorical truth in his description of Elgaris, the "plant of sorrow," which grows in the Summer Land for the helping of those who feel sad and downcast after their hard experiences on earth. They are led to it, to inhale its fragrance, "and they learn that this flower is for the healing of God's heart-stricken children." By carrying its petals they are relieved of their earth-born sorrows.

It is surprising to find, in this *Harmonial Philosophy*, allusions to so many of the subjects that are occupying men's minds to-day. Davis's views on the feminist question, marriage and divorce, economic and international reform, the population problem, the unity of religions, the power of mind over matter, and so on,

* *The Harmonial Philosophy*. A compendium and digest of the works of Andrew Jackson Davis. Edited by a Doctor of Hermetic Science. London: William Rider & Son, Ltd. Pp. 424. Price 10s. 6d. net.

are identical with those of many of the most advanced thinkers of the present day. Concerning the mission of woman, he writes :—

“ She needs to be instructed that her mission extends to the threshold of national government. . . . She should know that she is not some lower ingredient in the constitution of humanity. . . . that she is man's eternal companion ; that upon her depend the harmony of the individual, the family and society ; that the destiny of the race is in her hands.”

Again, a reference to war and sudden death is of particular interest just now :—

It should be understood that violent deaths signify only the confusion of a moment, and there is hence no reason to fear, e.g., destruction at the cannon's mouth. We should fear rather the moral disadvantages accruing from a struggle in which the inspiration of universal freedom is not at once the mainspring and the end in view.

The philosophy of Andrew Jackson Davis indeed touches life at every point. There is scarcely a phase of human existence which is not brought under review, often in very illuminating fashion, and it will be a surprise to many to find that ideas such as these were being published seventy years ago by this uneducated “ Poughkeepsie seer.” To him the chief aim and object of man's existence was the attainment of true Harmony—an ideal which, once realized, would indeed bring about the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. It may seem hopelessly out of reach, hopelessly unattainable, yet in spite of the innumerable causes of discord in the average human life, as in the life of communities at large, it is well for us now and then to lift our eyes to the stars—most especially in such discordant days as these—and look forward to a time when it will be possible “ to apply the laws of planets to individuals—in a word, to establish in human society the same harmonious relations that are found to obtain in the cosmos.” The *Harmonial Philosophy*, upholding so high an ideal, may well claim to see “ the Divine Love crowned by the Divine Wisdom ”—might still have claimed it, even if it taught no other lesson than this, perhaps its greatest,—that “ there is in the deepest of each a fraternal or like essence, by virtue of which all strangers will one day become friends, all enemies eventual lovers, all slaves the peers of masters, all wanderers inmates of one homeworld, ‘ beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb.’ ”

This book will indeed be a revelation to all who have become accustomed to the narrower interpretation of the word Spiritualism. No one can rise from its perusal without a sense of having been carried to regions of spaciousness and peace where the soul can spread its wings, and, for a time at least, be free.

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.]

Re FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

SIR,—I am of course gratified that you should comment at such length upon my two books *Science and the Infinite* and its sequel *From the Watch Tower*, but though you have been good enough to eulogize the former, you have misquoted and misrepresented what I said in the latter, and in fairness I would ask you to let me point out in your next issue some of the statements in which I think you are mistaken.

On page 308 you say Dr. Wallace unreservedly condemned the title "Science and the Infinite," because Science and the Infinite could have nothing in common. Surely this was a curious "unreserved condemnation" when the book was actually written to show that Science and the Infinite could have nothing in common! but you go further, and after stating you have read *From the Watch Tower* you say: "All I am attempting to do is to point out that Dr. Wallace's position that the Absolute cannot be proved scientifically was perfectly valid, and that in so far as Mr. Klein has attempted to do so, he has unquestionably failed." I have never attempted to prove, nor is there a single word in the sequel suggesting that the Absolute can be proved scientifically; on the contrary, the whole book is specially written to prove that scientific reasoning, or what is called Intellectualism, is useless for this purpose, that it is only when we have realized the limitation of our intellect that we can begin to use introspection, or what St. Paul called spiritual discernment, for understanding higher matters.

Page 310.—In quoting from my chapter on Memory you omit entirely that I pointed out that in place of the "lost" memory of time events: "We shall have something infinitely better than memory, the whole of the past will be open to our view, we shall know our dear ones and be known by them, in a way far beyond that which could be called up by memory."

May I point out that in this and your other criticism you have ignored the *postulates* I laid down in the "Foreword" and upon which all my arguments are based, namely that our real spiritual self is akin to, is in fact a part of the Great Spirit and is therefore not limited by conditions of time and space. You may quarrel with the postulates if you like, though I think you would be in a small minority, but based on them it is inconceivable to me that we can

come to any other conclusion than that "memory" of time events, as we know it, disappears with the death of the physical brain.

Page 311.—You made the extraordinary statement that "Mr. Klein's capricious Deity intervenes at every death-bed to perform the amazing miracle of turning the finite human being into an infinite spiritual being." I have never suggested that the Deity has to intervene, neither can I see any miracle in the act of death, any more than in the act of waking from sleep. When the physical body or earthly clothing, with its limitations of time and space, is cast off, the real spiritual self awakes as from sleep to its consciousness in the spiritual life, there is no miracle or need of intervention by the Deity, it is a natural process.

In stating that the action of gravitation is instantaneous, I am stating what to any student of physics is a known and provable fact, its action appears also to be universal. I confined myself to a *statement of fact* and fail to understand your objection.

Page 313.—You say "it seems to me that throughout the book Mr. Klein makes the fatal mistake of confusing physical and spiritual life." I have not only not confused these two, but have specially pointed out through the whole book that they have no more connection than the shadow has with the table, of which it shows only the outline. I took special trouble in the first chapter to show that the difference between them is so great as actually to constitute a difference in kind and not one of degree.

You complain that I have not alluded to recent investigations on psychical research, and you suggest "that one might almost suppose, if such ignorance were possible, that Mr. Klein has never heard of it." I have studied it for twenty years and have heard a great deal of it lately, but it has not carried such conviction to my mind that I should care to use it as evidence of the conditions existing in the spiritual world. You are quite wrong in your remarks concerning those correspondents who propounded the problems which I have examined; they certainly do not think that they are to be pitied, because I have received from them nothing but thanks and expression of satisfaction, but then they have followed my instructions and have ascended the Watch Tower, whereas the writer of your Review seems to me to be still among the mists and illusions of everyday life.

Some of the remarks in the Review are hardly courteous, but I prefer to take no notice of them. I am content to leave to the reading public to decide where the cap fits under the old Persian Sage's "Advice" which I placed at the beginning of *From the Watch Tower*.

HATHERLEA, REIGATE.

SYDNEY T. KLEIN.

[With reference to Mr. Klein's criticism of my Notes of the Month, I confess it seems to me that if he would re-read these Notes with care and understanding, he would find an answer to all his present objections. I am not, of course, called upon to defend Dr. A. R. Wallace's observations.

I expressed at the time, in the most emphatic language, my great appreciation of Mr. Klein's previous work, and certainly I should be the last to belittle it. Mr. Klein says that I have not followed his instructions in ascending the Watch Tower, but I question if any of the readers to whom he alludes has read and re-read his previous work with greater attention than I have. When, however, Mr. Klein says that the whole book is specially written to prove that scientific reasoning is useless for understanding the Absolute, I can only refer him back to the Notes of the Month in my last issue, in which I drew attention to the fact that he had in this book collected and employed a very large number of scientific facts for the sole purpose of proving that time was illusory. In other words, he marshalled his scientific evidence for a purpose for which he now tells us that such evidence is useless. If he will re-read his own previous work, he will find his present statement disproved out of his own mouth.

Mr. Klein complains that in quoting from his chapter on Memory, I omitted to quote some other passage which he contends would have modified his point of view as represented by me. I cannot of course undertake in a short article to quote every specific line bearing upon the point at issue, but Mr. Klein is entirely in error in suggesting that I did not make his position clear. On the contrary the quotation I made summarized this position with perfect accuracy. As he seems to have forgotten what that quotation is, I will quote it again. It runs as follows: "All records stored up by us in the past will indeed have been destroyed by the death of the brain, but with the passing of all limitations we shall become omniscient." If I had stopped this quotation at the word "brain," he might have had reason to complain, but as a matter of fact I have quoted his own words to show that we shall in fact, according to his point of view, have "something infinitely better than Memory," i.e., Omniscience. I need hardly say I do not take this view myself. I am only quoting from my Notes to make plain the fact that I have rightly represented Mr. Klein's position, and not, as he erroneously states, misrepresented it. Mr. Klein again complains that I have ignored his postulate in his Foreword "that our great spiritual self is akin to, is, in fact, a part of the Great Spirit, and is therefore not limited by conditions of time and space." As a matter of fact I have done nothing of the kind. I have made his position in this connection absolutely clear—quite as clear, in fact, as he has made it in his own book. Nor am I personally at all inclined to dissent from it as far as these words are concerned. What I do and did dissent from in my Notes was his argument that at the transition of death we should immediately become absorbed in the Great Spirit and lose our individuality while obtaining Omniscience. In fact, I alluded to this amazing transformation as a "miracle," and here again Mr. Klein complains of my use of the word "miracle." Surely the word was never more appropriately employed! Mr. Klein describes this as a "natural" process, and states that for its consummation there is no need of intervention by the Deity. If he calls such a process "natural" it seems to me that words from his point of view entirely lose their meaning.

Again, I criticised the highly unscientific view which Mr. Klein took of the law of gravitation. As I showed, he attempted to prove in his book that gravitation partook of the nature of the Infinite (p. 106). I

judge from his present letter that he is, on reconsideration, disposed to modify this statement, or at any rate to gloss it over. He still, however, adheres to his point that gravitation is instantaneous, and therefore that, following his argument based upon this fact, it has not in it anything of the element of time. Now we know little enough of what gravitation really is, but whatever is uncertain about it, one thing at least is certain: It is a steady and continuous process permanently in action everywhere throughout the universe. We are justified in assuming that this action has been continuously in operation since the universe came into being, and certainly if it were intermitted only for a single instant the whole cosmos would be reduced to chaos. So far, then, from there being nothing of the time nature in the action of gravitation, there is nothing in all nature in which the time element is a more essential ingredient. Perhaps Mr. Klein means that the attraction between two bodies is simultaneous. But such a fact would have no bearing upon his argument. So much for Mr. Klein's view that gravitation partakes of the nature of Infinity.

Mr. Klein complains of another observation of mine when I say that he makes the mistake of confusing physical and spiritual life. As a matter of fact I feel that the point I wished to make might have been put more clearly. What I desired to emphasize is the fact that our life here partakes of both natures; is, indeed, both spiritual as well as physical; that consciousness does not cease when, as has happened to myself and to many other people known to me, they find this consciousness temporarily, even in this life, dissociated from the body. Life here, therefore, partakes of the spiritual and does not necessarily require the present physical form through which to express itself. Dr. Klein regards this consciousness as essentially bound up in the physical body, and consequently destined to dissipation at death, and sees in its action only the demonstration of physical powers, not spiritual powers as well. This error, it seems to me, lies at the base of all his subsequent mistakes, which include as their most glaring blunder the confounding of the Absolute with the Spiritual.

By his last statement I confess that Mr. Klein has completely taken away my breath. I do not feel equal to offering any criticism. If a twenty years' study of the enormous mass of evidence which has been accumulated and given to the world on the subject of psychical investigation has produced so little effect upon his mind that in dealing with the very subject of which it treats, he feels that he can afford to ignore it altogether, I am afraid that any observations of my own will have but a poor chance of appealing to his intelligence.

Mr. Klein says that I have misquoted his book, but he gives no instance of such misquotations. He says I have misrepresented it. In the sole instance he cites I have been able to show that I have represented his meaning with perfect accuracy.

One word more. Mr. Klein quotes me disapprovingly as alluding to his God as a God of caprice. And yet he admits in his book that the poor children in the slums through no fault of their own are to suffer annihilation, while he and his friends, presumably, are to enjoy omniscience! I can only quote in this connection his own words (p. 33) "It is strange how greatly some people misunderstand the attitude of the All Loving towards His children."—ED.]

SOUND AND COLOUR.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—May I be allowed to endorse the remarks of your correspondent, "Alys Watson," as to the inaccuracy of the intervals as represented on the pianoforte. True intonation is produced by the vibrations of a stretched string: these are artificially reproduced within the compass of the Octave and called by the accepted names A, B, etc., or Do, Re, etc. As a matter of fact, they are only approximately correct, with the exception of the Octave; the mathematical fraction of difference between the real and the tempered being distributed over the twelve intervals. This is known amongst musicians as what is called "The Day Theory." In reality it is as old as the Greek theorists. It is too long to be discussed in a letter.

The mischief which is done by the all-pervading influence of the pianoforte is in my opinion very great. Especially is this the case with singers. Instead of measuring their intervals from a given note—which nature would enable them easily to do—the note is touched on the pianoforte and imitated. The result is, they sing in an impure atmosphere of sound.

It is true that pianists are able to develop very great technical ability and to modulate into strange keys (D^b is *not* the same as C[#]), but this privilege is, I think, of doubtful advantage. I am not sure that it has no effect upon composers.

Violins, horns (natural), trombones and voices all take natural or true intervals. Good singers will tell you by which they prefer to be accompanied: pianoforte or strings.

I apologize for the length of this letter. It was impossible to avoid the technical side.

Very truly yours,
ALF. KING (Mus.D. Oxon).

P.S.—I know English and Indian singers who can produce *twenty-four* sounds within the Octave. Every vibration must have a sound and therefore a colour. The difficulty is to associate these with the varying sounds and colours amidst which we live. Where is the perfect sound? the perfect colour?

24 STANFORD ROAD,
BRIGHTON.

INVISIBLE CHILD PLAYMATES.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the article on "The Mystery of Childhood," which appeared in the December issue of the OCCULT REVIEW, it may interest your readers to know that my little girl Blanche, from the time she was three years old till after her sixth birthday, appeared to have several superphysical friends.

Two of these were spirit children, one called Zabie was a good little girl, while the other, Winnie, was a very naughty one.

The most interesting of all these beings was an elf Rāmādātī (pronounced ee). This being she could describe minutely even down to his dress, and he dwelt amid the crevices in the rockeries in the garden. He was not restricted to one place, for she first discovered him in Surrey, and when we moved to a house near Sheffield he followed her there. When we went to Burma she occasionally saw him, but declared that he did not like our new garden, as it was too noisy, being situated in the heart of Rangoon.

Since then she has never seen him, and often expresses keen regret at her loss.

Rāmādātī had three little fairy friends, their names being Greenie and Plessie. We have forgotten the name of the third.

She would go out and play with him for hours, and talk to him and about him. I never saw these beings myself, but I have little doubt that Rāmādātī, who received his name long before we went to the East, was a real superphysical entity, and he appeared to like solitary places and shun populous districts. Both the first two houses had large gardens and were not overlooked, but since then we have been surrounded by houses. This may account for his disappearance rather than any loss of psychic power on the child's part.

She has always possessed sporadic clairvoyance at times, and on several occasions both she and I have witnessed the same superphysical phenomena (see examples quoted in "Gone West," Publisher, Wm. Rider). Quite recently she has given signal proof that she still possesses these powers.

Yours faithfully,

20 RISEBRIDGE ROAD,

J. S. M. WARD.

GIDEA PARK.

ASTROLOGY AND CHILD NATURE.

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—What a writer in the December issue has called "The Mystery of Childhood" as being especially noticeable nowadays (most elderly people can however recall sundry similar instances) seems to me to be due, in the main, to the fact that present-day children have been born while the planet Neptune was in the sign Cancer. Neptune is unquestionably a *pretending* influence, while Cancer is the watery—loosely knit, yet tenacious, easily impressed, emotional—sign at the nadir or lowest-down point of the year's horoscope that begins with the entry of the Sun into Aries at the spring solstice; and being a cardinal sign it comes into public notice. Neptune went into Cancer early in the present century, shortly after the death of the Queen, and left it only a few months ago; and Cancer in mundane astrology stands for the masses, "females," young children, and those generally whose springs of action are emotional and due to impulse

rather than reason. The Neptune-in-Cancer influence is very marked in both "the labour unrest," of which we have heard so much of late years (that it is their *young* men, ignoring reason and authority, who cause most of the trouble, is the experience of every trade union), and in lower-class children, i.e., those that are allowed to run the streets (even in country places) and follow their own devices, with very little parental supervision and discipline, from their babyhood onwards. The way these children will often lie *instantly* to cover a fault or to gain prestige struck me very strongly when I was much in contact with their kind, for some three years, a little while back. To-day those who employ young girls under eighteen for housework are only too familiar with their Neptune-in-Cancer *inversions*,—their apparently ineradicable instinct to do even the simplest things the wrong way up or hind side before; the incessant placing of front-door mats the wrong way of the fibre for persons to wipe their feet on when coming in is a case in point, though young girls are not the only offenders.

The prolonged opposition of Neptune in Cancer at the nadir to Uranus in Capricorn—the principle of authority—at the zenith during the earlier years of this century makes it more than ordinarily necessary to train children born under these difficult influences both to *respect* authority, and—especially—to be *truthful* in word and deed. Indeed it is not too much to say that as pretending and subterfuge, unreliability, inversions and make-believe (for the benefit of the "pretender") are the unfortunate *natural* heritage of so many children already born since 1902, truthfulness, sincerity, and proper respect for authority and elders should be inculcated and established within their consciences and acquired habits in all possible ways, even for the sake of their own future, let alone the world's.

Yours truly,
AN OBSERVER.

[Other correspondence is unavoidably held over till next month.
—ED.]

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

THE Builder is approaching the end of its third volume, and though special announcements have not yet been made respecting provisions for the year 1918, we have reason to believe that they are in hand and will be of importance as well as interest. There is a scheme under consideration to obtain competent opinion from living sources on the significance which lies behind the ceremonial procedure and ritual of Craft Masonry. How important this is will be understood only by those who realize that Freemasonry is a reflection, at however far a distance, of older and greater Mysteries. There is a reason for all its forms, and though its liturgies are of recent date and leave much to be desired as regards manner of expression, they are concerned with a new birth—or symbolical regeneration—the life of a new order, a figurative death and resurrection. As in respect of procedure there is no settled canon of interpretation, opinions vary with individuals and until the whole sequence has been, so to speak decoded, to unfold its subsurface intention, and authority has pronounced thereon, it is well to encourage a healthy clash of opinion. The construction which may best satisfy each person can be made personally of value to each, in proportion as he applies it to his own life and character. Meanwhile the last issue of *The Builder* has several papers of moment. There is one on the connection between Freemasonry and the old Craft Guilds, especially the Masons' Company of London. The records of this Corporation date from 1620 and show traces of a secret brotherhood "within the bosom of the Company." Another article discusses the evolution of the Operative into the Speculative Craft and maintains that Freemasonry is a brotherhood rather than a secret society. . . . There is much in *The New Age* on the question of religion and what is the religion of Freemasonry, on public schools in connection with religious instruction, on alleged indifference and on the question of Masonry's place in the religious world. One of the opinions expressed is that the Church coupled with the Craft would find a wider sphere. Speaking generally, however, the views are scrappy and inchoate. We have, moreover, to remember that our contemporary is somewhat active in prolonging the old feud between Masonry and the Latin Church. Both sides seem equally intractable, but Masonic policy differs as its official organs vary. *The Builder*, representing the National Masonic Research Society, has no doubt its views on the subject, but its rule is one of silence. We certainly prefer this to the policy of extravagant vituperation adopted by writers like Mr. J. D. Buck, once and perhaps still a luminary of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. A plea of justification can of course be entered, but we think that Masonry everywhere would be well advised to get on with its own admirable work. This is the

custom in England and is the best answer to the accusations of Rome. . . . *The Freemason* of London, during several recent weeks, has contained many articles, memories and appreciations of Sir Edward Letchworth, the late Grand Secretary of the Craft. Otherwise its chief duties are the records of proceedings in Lodges and Chapters, and the official business of the ruling bodies in Masonry. It finds space, however, for occasional historical articles. There was one recently by Mr. A. F. Calvert on "Lodge Meetings in Olden Times." *The Freemason's Chronicle* fills a similar position in respect of general activities and is edited with considerable care. . . . The articles on Freemasonry and Catholicism continue in *Rays from the Rose Cross*, but they are quite extrinsic to their subject. In the last issue a consideration of Spiritual Alchemy appears under this heading and is certainly concerned neither with Catholicism nor Freemasonry.

A prominent position is given in the current issue of *The Vahan* to the new and now evidently absorbing interest regarding the Old Catholic Church, which appears to have been taken to itself and to be possibly in the course of transformation under the aegis of the Theosophical Society. We have been informed that the new movement has no official status but is evidently regarded as important. J. L. Wedgwood, who—as we have explained previously—is one of the Bishops selected by the Old Catholic Church and was consecrated, we think, by Bishop Mathew before the latter returned into the Roman communion, specifies a statement of principles issued by the British division of the said Church and thence proceeds to explain some Old Catholic aims and methods from a theosophical standpoint. He speaks of the "great reality" that a baptized child is "brought into living touch with the Head of the Church Himself." The Rite of Baptism is of course a sacrament for every sacramental Church in Christendom; but Old Catholics are in conformity with the Roman jurisdiction in acknowledging seven sacraments, and administering them—it is claimed—"in their plenitude and integrity." The implicit of this is that Old Catholic Orders cannot be denied even by Rome itself, and it is considered in external circles that this is actually the case. Indeed Bishop Wedgwood enumerates several points which indicate that what is now Old Catholicism was not so far apart from the Latin Church—all its real or supposed Jansenism notwithstanding—until the Vatican Decree of 1870. There intervene of course at one stage and another of the article those elements which are more especially theosophical. They exemplify the "intellectual freedom" claimed by Bishop Wedgwood and also that other understanding of Christian doctrine on the importance of which he would insist. We are unable to agree when he affirms that "theosophists have rediscovered the Christ," or Him Who has been known to all the Christian mystics of all ages of Christendom. It seems to us on the contrary that theosophy is in the course of finding the Christ after its own manner, however much it may claim to have known Him under other names. Bishop Wedgwood's article is followed

immediately by that of Mr. W. Loftus Hare, who contributes a "Note on the Eucharist." He does useful work in his tabulation of early authorities, including extracts from uncanonical texts of great importance. His article, however, has no theosophical aspect. With all necessary reserve, as speaking from outside the movement in any of its aspects, it seems to us that the Society may be standing on the threshold of a new epoch, or at least that a very interesting stage has been reached which we shall do well to follow with care. There are rival associations which evidently think that the Society at large is about to be transformed by just that kind of leaven which was antecedently least to have been expected. All this stands at its value and is improbable enough in the natural order of things; but the hostility of the moment is not without its message. We have received, for example, a reprint from *The Theosophical Path*, edited by Katherine Tingley, who claims to be "the Leader and Official Head" of the "original Theosophical Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky." With the merits of this claim we have no concern, beyond the fact that we have been acquainted with the presidents and chief persons in the movement from its beginning in England and are therefore aware that it is denied. Putting this aside, *The Theosophical Path* is much exercised at the present time, both on the subject of Old Catholicism and Co-Masonry, and Mrs. Besant's alleged recommendation of both, apparently to the Society at large. As regards Co-Masonry, the advocacy is termed "ridiculous," but the writer sufficiently exhibits his incompetency to deal with the question, being evidently not a Freemason. In respect of Old Catholicism, the new interest is characterized as maintaining and promoting "a sect." Behind all the hostility which actuates animadversions of this kind, as also others in Mrs. Lang's *Divine Life*—representing a second Independent Theosophy—we recognize a sense of the importance attaching to recent developments. Meanwhile the Adyar headship has stated distinctly that it urges no one to join the Old Catholic Church.

Lieutenant G. H. Whyte has concluded his interesting series of articles in *The Theosophist* on the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta, and must be congratulated on his comprehensive summary of important available materials. The work has been done without bias and apart from fantastic hypotheses which are met with too often in memoirs of old chivalries. He says nothing respecting the Order as now centred in the sovereign pontificate at Rome, and nothing on the Masonic Knights of Malta which arose in an obscure manner but is a flourishing body in Great Britain, attached to the Order of the Temple—under the aegis of Great Priory. It is to be hoped that the question of its origin will be carried further than has been the case hitherto, supposing that materials are available. Mr. F. L. Woodward also concludes his very curious analysis of the so-called bi-literal cipher in the Shakespeare plays and other great works of the Elizabethan period and later. If the evidence for the cipher could be

accepted, Francis Bacon wrote nearly all the immortal works of that period, the *Novum Organon* and the *Essays* coming out of the same mint as *Hamlet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Faerie Queen*. Without challenging the sincerity of Mrs. Gallup or of any one concerned, there is no need to say that we have read the analysis and have utterly failed to be convinced. It is proverbial that figures in the hands of an expert can be made to signify anything, and we are coming to believe that if ciphers are sufficiently complicated they can be extracted from any document. The language of the ciphers extracted by Mrs. Gallup would be, if genuine, a blot on the 'scutcheon of the world of letters, and were the evidence ten times stronger we should reject it on the higher warrants of literature. The *magnus poeta* who wrote *Hamlet* is not the *magnus poeta* who wrote *The Faerie Queen*. Whosoever identifies them does outrage to the literary sense.

The last issue of *The International Psychic Gazette* has several points of interest, chief among which is an interview with Sir William Crookes, accompanied by a good portrait and one also of Lady Crookes, who has recently passed away. Communications have been received in her name which in the opinion of Sir William are satisfactory in respect of identity. We learn with astonishment that his celebrated *Researches into Spiritualism*, an epoch-making book on the phenomena, was reprinted from periodical literature and issued in book-form without his knowledge or consent.

The Psychological Research Review, now in its third volume, reaches us from New York City. It is not the official publication of any research society and is on other lines than the various proceedings with which we are familiar under analogous titles. It is popular in character and includes theosophy, astrology and other occult subjects in its sphere of concern. It gives space to ordinary automatic communications. . . .

We have also received *L'Affranchi*, under the editorship of Gaston Revel. It is concerned with evolution and spiritism, sociology and philosophy, the "known and unknown sciences."

La Revue Spirite has a noticeable article on Reincarnation and the Catholic Church from the pen of Léon Denis. It affirms that primitive Christianity was permeated with the doctrine concerning "successive lives," that it was taught by Origen and Clement, that its prevalence was recognized by St. Jerome, and that when the Council of Chalcedony and the fifth Council of Constantinople condemned Origen it was not upon this point. These are historical questions which have been brought forward on previous occasions; but Léon Denis cites also modern prelates of the Roman Church who have admitted that Reincarnation is not opposed to Christianity and that it has not been condemned. The hypothesis that other planets of the universe besides this star of ours are inhabited by intelligent beings seems to be in the same position.

REVIEWS

THE TREE OF HEAVEN. By May Sinclair. London: Cassell & Co., Ltd. Pp. viii+358. Price 6s. net.

As long ago as 1898 I came to the conclusion that the author of *Mr. and Mrs. Nevill Tyson* was in the front rank of those novelists whose effect is that of real and recognizable life. Her new story, where suffragettes and Bohemians, heroes in unselfishness and people more or less resembling lonely and unlovely vegetables, live in her reader's mind, confirms that early impression and would deepen it if it were not that one of her characters seems rather to comply with the present need of militant patriotism than to act according to his nature as we are compelled to perceive it. She has for her theme the lives of the members of a well-to-do English family, its contrasts, binding affection and separative thoughts. A certain noble audacity prompts Miss Sinclair to make her finest female character the offspring of adultery born under the shelter of the wronged husband's name, and with brilliant effectiveness the true father of this girl is disclosed by the coincidence of their possession of the power to see spirits. Truth to tell the novel is not illiberally provided with matter obnoxious to Mrs. Grundy, but Miss Sinclair's hand has the graceful subtlety of a rare artist, and it would be a pathetic adventure of chaste stupidity to accuse her of coarseness. Her title, symbolic of home and hospitality, fits her book which deserves to be remembered as an excellent representation of a human nest in the ineradicable tree of love.

W. H. CHESSON.

OUR GLORIOUS FUTURE. By Mabel Collins. Crown 8vo, pp. 115. Edinburgh: The Theosophical Bookshop. Price 2s. 6d. net.

As the Publishers in their Note remark, *Light on the Path* "has been interpreted and misinterpreted by many writers, but never by the author—who until now has been silent on the subject." It will therefore be with no little eagerness that students will approach Mabel Collins' most recent work. But while it must never be forgotten that the aphorisms of *Light on the Path* become really luminous only as the "disciple" seriously meditates upon them and endeavours to apply them in daily life, it is nevertheless true that the attentive reader cannot fail to gain many a hint from a perusal of the pages of this interpretation.

As a matter of fact the present volume proves to be to some extent a complement of one of the author's earlier works, *The Transparent Jewel*, inasmuch as the intimate connection between the Yoga of *Light on the Path* and another ancient Eastern system is very distinctly brought out by comparison between these Aphorisms and those of Patanjali—a parallel that on reflection is not so much to be wondered at as at first sight may appear.

Various psychic experiences of the author are distributed throughout the text by way of illustration or comment, enhancing its interest in no small degree; and even if the inspiration of the original which it seeks

to interpret is lacking in the present instance, a further work from the pen of so well-known a writer on occultism cannot fail to interest a wide circle of readers.

H. J. S.

THE FIERY CROSS : SOME VERSE FOR TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW. By John Oxenham. (Methuen and Co. 1s. net.)

MR. OXENHAM—whose first novel, *God's Prisoner*, appeared nearly a score of years ago, and attracted favourable attention for its ingenious and rather daring plot—has since proceeded steadily on the road to popularity and now, both as novelist and verse-maker, counts among "the best sellers." Lovers of his particular brand of "wine" will not, at this time of day, need any strikingly large "bush" to press it on their notice. The present tastefully printed booklet belongs to that highly popular series of which, if we remember rightly, *Bees in Amber* was the pioneer, and it will, without doubt, have an enthusiastic welcome from the same public which so eagerly bought its predecessors. As was to be expected, *The Fiery Cross* is full of military ardour; and the principal subject-matter of the poems is the War. For the spectacle of Armageddon seems only to lend additional fluency to Mr. Oxenham's always facile pen; and to increase the persistent optimism and strenuous sunniness that have always been the characteristics of his verse. Such titles as "A Little Te Deum for those who have Lost"; "Per Ardua ad Astra"; "A Little Prayer for the Man in the Air"; "Cock your Bonnets"; and "Heroes' Wives" (dedicated, by the way, this last, to "the dear little War-Widows all the world over") speak for themselves; and are typical of the whole collection.

The booklet is most charmingly got up; and the allegorical design of the end-page is vigorous and sympathetic. Altogether, a marvellous shillingsworth; and an admirable substitute for a New Year's card.

G. M. H.

MAID OF THE MOONFLOWER. By Cecil Adair. Second Edition. London: Stanley Paul & Co. Pp. 325. Price 6s.

IN saying that this novel is admirably suited to sentimental readers I do not mean to disguise disparagement but to indicate a particular merit. The sentimental obtain certain decorative effects from the sublime and terrible, but they do not alienate themselves from the common idea of good.

In *Maid of the Moonflower* we have what may be called our Inferno-terrestrial war for a distant background; the prestige of the V.C. glorifies the convalescent hero; a longing to do some sort of heroic "bit" chafes the sad-eyed Irishman who does valiant deeds in the southern seaport which is the scene of the novel. But all the author's "high thinking" does not prevent our feeling the charm of an unexpected accession to a baronetcy, the charm of money, the charm of having an audience for one's heroism. The occult interest stimulated by clever Cecil Adair is based on a legend of love, rivalry, murder, suicide and haunting, that seems to prefigure a modern tragedy which she prettily spares us. In taking leave of her novel I must express my surprise that certain errors in quotation and printing were suffered to appear in a second edition.

W. H. CHESSON.