

CLAUDE'S BOOK

EDITED BY
L. KELWAY-BAMBER

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM
SIR OLIVER LODGE

NEW YORK
1919

TO
THE MANY FRIENDS
AT WHOSE REQUEST IT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED
"CLAUDE'S BOOK"
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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II. CLAUDE'S LETTERS

A LETTER FROM SIR OLIVER LODGE

DEAR MRS. KELWAY-BAMBER.

I have read the type-script of your son's book, and though it may strike people as rather crude I am impressed by the honesty and simplicity and straightforwardness of its material.

I know that what has been written is a genuine un-edited though necessarily abbreviated record of what has come through a thoroughly honest medium, with whom you have had the exceptional privilege of weekly sittings for more than two years; and I have every reason to know, from certain evidential messages, that the communicating intelligence is really your son's. You do not here quote these evidences, partly for the sake of brevity but chiefly because so much has already been published of the domestic and trivial kind, and you desire, as Claude does, to call attention to what they have to say about the nature of posthumous existence.

You are, of course, well aware that no sort of infallibility is attributable to such utterances, but they are undoubtedly instructive; and philosophers of high standing have urged that statements of this kind ought to be made accessible. They represent at worst a psychological phenomenon; while at best they convey the impressions of an eager newcomer to the other side, who with a gift of vivid statement is anxious to convey to you as much as he has so far learnt about the conditions which at his particular stage of development are encountered there.

On all recondite problems there are probably as many opinions over there as there are here, and it is unlikely that in dealing with what corresponds to scientific or philosophic fact he has arrived at much of importance; but concerning elementary details of life and conduct his witness agrees in the main with that of others, and the wisest and best informed among critical students of the subject will be able to learn most from consistent statements of this kind. It has been responsibly urged that honest and undoctored records of actual subjective experience will ultimately enable philosophers to systematise posthumous existence in their general scheme of the universe, and undoubtedly yours is an interesting instalment of the necessary raw material; though at times it goes beyond actual experience and trespasses on the fanciful with too much of what is presumably hearsay and secondhand information - about reincarnation, for instance - all which for my part I discount. But in spite of this I sympathise with your desire to publish the messages received from your active and energetic son as a whole, without selection or suppression, and to submit them to the harsh criticism of a rather puzzled world.

Yours faithfully,

OLIVER LODGE

REPLY TO SIR OLIVER'S LETTER

26th July 1918

MY DEAR SIR OLIVER.

Thank you for your letter. I am very grateful to you for the interest and trouble you have taken in the prefatory matter, and will print your criticism on Claude's Book in the forefront of the volume, if you have no objection. I make no claim for the book, except that it is his, for it is the "honest and undoctored" record of what he has told me.

Claude professes to have no special privilege of any kind, and says hundreds of people who have "passed over" could tell their relatives all he has told me, but lack the opportunity.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

L. KELWAY-BAMBER

INTRODUCTION

There was no intention originally of publishing these "talks," and it must be understood that the terms used in this little book are the "nearest equivalent" to the conditions, or states, or feelings Claude wishes to explain or describe to his mother, and cannot always be perfectly technically accurate, because for certain things in the spirit-world we have no exact expression, as they are beyond our normal experience.

Many things have been omitted: all references, for instance, to his family, his friends, current events, and so forth.

Up to the time he was killed, Claude's mother was entirely sceptical as to the possibility of communication between the living and the so-called "dead," and it was only through her deep grief at his premature loss that she decided to investigate, in the faint hope that there might at least be some definite comfort in it. She spent three months in reading and studying the subject, then joined the "London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd." (now at 6 Queen Square, Southampton Row), and attended their lectures and meetings, which proved most instructive and useful, eventually going to several mediums for private sittings. She was very fortunate in getting many evidential tests, a few of which are recorded in the preliminary portion of this book.

These communications, which were written down on each occasion, have all been received through "Feda" in a series of regular sittings during the past two years. She is the "spirit-control" of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, to whom Claude's mother is indebted for many very happy hours.

Claude was one of the merriest, happiest boys, full of irrepressible spirits and extraordinary vitality; he had a very keen sense of humor, and a well-balanced mind.

He always expressed himself very well, and explained things very clearly. He could go from grave to gay with extraordinary rapidity, and often introduced a "quip," or an amusing sentence, or a joke, in the middle of a solemn conversation, and this is still characteristic of him; these have been generally omitted, as people who did not know him might misunderstand and think he was not in earnest, but they are very evidential as so typical of the boy.

It may be understood that when he says "I think," or "It may be," he is recording his own impressions and ideas; when he states anything definitely as a fact it is something he has been taught or told by experienced guides and teachers.

Claude joined the Army immediately war began in August 1914, without waiting for a commission, which he obtained in October. He subsequently transferred to the Flying Corps and was trained as a pilot. He was killed in mid-air, fighting two German aeroplanes, near Courtrai, Flanders, in November, 1915, three months after he went to the Front; his machine came down in the enemy lines. A few of his letters are printed for purposes of comparison with the "talks."

A FEW TESTS

On 29th February 1916 I attended a public séance at the rooms of the "Alliance." Mrs. Brittain was the clairvoyante. There were a number of people present. I sat in the middle of the room; no one knew me there. I had never seen her before as she had just come from the North. Going home by "Tube" I found myself standing next to Mrs. Brittain in the lift. Though I did not know her I spoke to her, making some remark about the meeting we had just left. She replied, and then said, "Excuse me, but are you a medium?" I said I was not, and asked what made her think it was possible. Her reply was, "Because you have a spirit boy with you; he is so clear and so strong it is difficult to realize you can't see him!" I asked for a description, and she said, "He is tall, slight, and fair; blue eyes, smooth hair, well brushed off his forehead, which is well developed; he is very young and boyish-looking; clear, smooth skin; a very happy, merry disposition." This is correct, and was the first description I received of him, though I often felt he was with me. On Tuesday, 14th March, that is, a fortnight later, I went to Mrs. Osborne Leonard for my first private sitting. I had arranged to visit her by calling and fixing a time, but gave her no name, nor address, nor particulars of any kind; she is a trance medium, and it was evident that her little spirit-control "Feda" was in touch with the boy. Curiously enough my boy did not show himself in his uniform. "Feda" described him; then said, "He has a grey suit on, and he tells me to tell you he is wearing it to prove to you he was with you yesterday when you were searching everywhere for that suit." This was a fact; I had looked all over the house for it the day before, intending to give it to a boy I knew. "He shows me a medal and says they have given him here what he did not get on earth." (He had been recommended for a decoration, but was killed a few days later.) "Feda" then said, "I don't know why he had a medal if he wasn't a soldier. He did not pass over in illness. I get a rushing feeling as if I were falling; my head is numb, and my throat is wrong." These were evidently the boy's death-conditions, and as the subject was very painful for us both I asked no questions about it. "Feda" then proceeded to tell me Claude had been with me to a place "where there were mountains and a river which made a noise rushing over stones." He said he had been for a walk with me when I climbed a stile into a wood. This was correct; I had just returned from Scotland. He asked if I had received some photos of him and his friends "ragging" outside his tent. I had not received them then, but they came later, and included one in which a friend was taken with his head hanging down and his feet in the air, supported by companions.

On Monday, 10th April, I attended another public séance at the "Alliance" rooms. The medium on this occasion was a Mr. Von Bourg. He was an absolute stranger to me. I had never seen him before. The meeting was crowded. After giving a few other descriptions, he spoke to me and described some spirit-friends he said he could see with me; and proceeded, "There is a young airman, very happy-looking, only been passed over a few months. He is tall and slight, fair smooth skin, fair hair, brushed well back, blue eyes, clear skin - do you know him?" I said, "Yes, he is my son." He

then described a boy called "George," whom I knew, giving his name. He also talked of some one called "John," and said he was a very beautiful spirit, looked about twenty, and said he was a near relative of mine. I could not place him, and thought it was a mistake, and determined to ask Claude about it at my next private sitting, which happened to be next day with Mrs. Osborne Leonard. He was full of interest and excitement, and exclaimed, "Why, he's your brother, Mum!" I was very much surprised and said, "Why, my brother died when he was four years old!" and Claude said (through "Feda"), "But people grow up here; they don't remain babies!" Even then I could not appreciate the idea, and said, "But he would have been forty now, and the medium said he looks twenty!" "So he does," was the reply; "and he never will look old, for here one grows up but has no material body to age." This I think a wonderful test, for I was only five years old when that little brother died, and had not thought of him for years, and then only as a child. At a sitting with Mrs. Osborne Leonard on 30th May "Feda" began the sitting by saying, "Claude is here; he is laughing very much; he looks so funny, 'Feda' did not know him at first. He has very dirty things on, all covered with grease, and oil, and black. 'Feda' does not like Claude in those clothes! He says you will know them." I did; they were the "overalls" he wore at the workshops where he was learning Mechanical Engineering.

He was noted there for the amount of dirt he managed to get off the machinery on to himself! It was quite a family joke. The other men always said they pitied the woman who washed his clothes.

At a sitting on 11th November Claude said, among other things about his spirit-body, "It's just the same as the other, down to the wart on my finger." This was good, as on his last leave we tried to persuade him to see the doctor about an unsightly wart that had grown on one hand.

I could go on almost indefinitely with various tests, and will conclude with one of another kind. At a sitting in May in 1917 with "Feda," Claude brought the spirit of a friend who, he said, had only passed over a very few days before. A week later this man was reported "missing" in the official list in the papers; no further news was received of him. All dates and particulars were noted at the time for future verification.

L. KELWAY-BAMBER

I. - CLAUDE'S BOOK

HIS DEATH AND NEW LIFE

I was rather depressed as I went out to my machine that last November morning, I don't know why. I certainly had no presentiment of evil; but, once started, my spirits rose as usual, and I felt quite cheery and singularly free from nervousness.

Many men here have since told me this rather curious fact, that on the occasion of their last fight, whether in the air or in the trenches, nervousness left them. I don't know whether the spirit instinctively knows its fate and braces itself to meet it, or if one's spirit-friends are able to make their presence and comfort felt at that supreme crisis, but probably it was the only occasion on which I was absolutely free of all fear.

When we were attacked by two enemy aeroplanes my feeling was one of acute irritation, for we were on our way back after finishing some work over the enemy lines. I felt harassed, too, as I climbed, and turned, and dived here and there to attack. My observer said something, and I remember putting the nose of the machine down to get below one of our opponents, when I felt a terrible blow on my head, a sensation of dizziness and falling, and then nothing more.

It may have been a fortnight or more later (we have no account of "time" here, so I cannot be sure) that I became conscious again. I felt dizzy and stupid but was not in pain, and on collecting my thoughts and looking round, found myself in bed in an unknown room.

Before thought took definite form I felt I had been passing through space. My body seemed to have become light. I wondered if I was in hospital, and if anyone had written to tell you I was wounded. Nurses moved about the room; if I attempted to talk or ask questions a doctor came to my side and, putting his hand on my head, soothed me to silence again.

Several more days must have passed. I rested, dozing and peaceful; it never seemed to get dark.

On one occasion when the kindly doctor came to my bedside I asked him where I was, and if my people knew of my whereabouts. He did not soothe me to sleep, as usual, but sat down beside me.

"I want to have a talk with you and explain things," he said. "You are not on the earth now; you are no longer on the Physical plane."

I didn't understand, and asked, "Surely I am in a private hospital?"

"No," he replied; "you have passed out of the physical body and are in the state you used to know as having died."

I could not believe him. "Great Scot! You don't mean I'm dead!"

"We will use that term simply as it's the only one you understand just now," he said. "You are alive and are starting the fuller and more beautiful life;" but the feeling I

had was one of sudden loss and loneliness and almost desperation.

“Is my mother here, or have my father or brother come? If they are not here I don’t want to stay!”

“You will have to stay,” was the reply; “and if you will only be patient you will find life interesting and beautiful.”

“It won’t be interesting, it won’t even be bearable if they are not here,” I exclaimed indignantly.

“Can I go to my mother? I must see her and know she can’t see me before I can believe what you say is true. I feel as if it were all a dream.”

Then a gentleman came to speak to me who I was told was my grandfather, but as I had never seen him before it did not convince me, and I felt as if I was living altogether in a dream.

Others came who claimed to be relatives and friends, including several ladies who kissed me but as I knew none of them I remained inconsolable: and my friend the doctor promised, as soon as it was suitable, I should be sent to see you, that the truth might be proved to me.

A few days later I was told I was to be taken home to see you.

I can’t remember the exact details of that evening, as I was shaken with conflicting emotions which chased through me - joy, and fear, and hope, and grief, and impatience, and almost despair of the unknown future into which I had plunged without you.

I passed with the two friends who guided me through the Astral plane to the earth. As we came nearer, the atmosphere became thicker and misty, and the houses and everything seemed indistinct, the view disappeared, and I found myself standing in your room at the foot of your bed.

A terrible feeling of despair filled my heart, for I knew what I had been told was true: I was indeed dead.”

You were sitting up in bed in an agony of grief, the tears streaming down your face, repeating my name over and over again, and calling me, and saw me not.

I had expected a cry of joy, but it never came. I bent forward and called as loudly as I could, “Mummy, I’m here; can’t you see or hear me?”

You made no reply. I went to your side and put my arms round you, and though you were not conscious of my presence I seemed to be able to soothe you, for you became calmer and lay down.

I felt as if I were fainting, and had no will to resist when my guides took me away back to the hospital.

I felt, however, that your love was mine still; I could feel its power, I understood it

and realized it better than ever before. It was a spiritual caress, and I felt it through every fibre of my body, and was full of thankfulness. I knew, too, that in all my life your love had never failed me, and that, even now, you would find a way, if it were possible, to bridge the gulf between us - you would never let me "drop out."

When I realized this, I knew the worst was over, and the bitterness of death had passed.... Worn by my emotions, I slept and woke later in quite a different mood.

I found a young man seated at my bedside who said, "Well, old chap, we've pulled through." He has since become a friend of mine; his name is "Joe" (you did not know him personally, but you know of him and know whom I mean).

A sense of adventure now filled my mind; I felt full of health and well-being, and was longing to explore this new country.

I jumped out of bed and dressed, and, escorted by Joe, my grandfather, and quite a number of other relatives and friends, went to a home that was ready for me.

This consisted of a bedroom and a jolly little sitting-room, a "den," with a piano, a sofa, and an arm-chair in it, in a house where there was similar accommodation for other men. It stands in a delightful garden.

I made up my mind to be happy and settle down in my new surroundings as soon as I could. I asked one of my guides if it was a "thought-world" we were in, though the ground felt quite substantial to my feet; and he said, "It is more real and permanent than the one you have left." I bent down and poked my finger in the soil and found it left a hole, and the soil stuck under my nail....

We went for a walk through beautiful woods and fields; the turf was springy, the air soft and clear, and soft sunshine over everything.

We then returned to the house and explored the grounds. There is a beautiful fountain with sparkling water in it. I made a cup of my hand and drank a little, but did not need it, and asked my companion what would happen if I drank too much. "You will not drink too much, that would be foolish; and if you were foolish you would not be here, as each man earns his environment by his conduct. By the working of the natural law you gravitate to the place for which you are suited; what is within you draws you automatically."

I bathed in a glorious lake the water of which was slightly scented. It ran off my body as I stepped out, almost as if it were running off marble or alabaster....

I became accustomed to my new life and found innumerable friends, both new and old; all were ready and anxious to help me in every way.

I asked to be taken to see you again, Mummy, but was told it was inadvisable for a little while, as your mind was undergoing great changes, and you were learning many psychic truths. I was told that I was much blessed in my mother, for your grief had roused all the spiritual in you, and my passing would not divide but unite us more closely than ever before. And indeed it has proved so, for you know that, after

the war, had I come through it, I should probably have taken an appointment abroad and not been able to come home for years; whereas as it is I come home and see you every day and you feel my presence, and know you have only to concentrate your thoughts on me, and your desire for my presence, and the thought, "somehow and somewhere," will reach me and I will come.

DEATH'S SURPRISES

I did not think of death often, Mum, even when I faced it every day, for it all seemed so indefinite.

I quite hoped if I did "go out," in consideration of the fact that I had tried to do my bit, I should find myself in Heaven; but the prospect, honestly, as usually presented, did not appeal to me. You know I didn't care very much for music, and the idea of sitting on a throne clad in a white robe playing a harp sounded terribly boring, so I trusted to luck and left it at that.

I know now the whole mistake lies in looking upon death as the end of "activity" (with a renewal at some indefinite date), whereas as a matter of fact it is an incident only, though a very important one, in a continuous life. Your feelings, your memory, your love, your interests and ambitions remain; all you have left behind (and even that one cannot at first realize) is the physical body, which proves to be merely the covering of the spiritual to enable it to function in a material world.

Man truly is a spirit and has a body, not vice versa,

I have told you that I, in common with hundreds of other men here, go down to the battlefields to help to bring away the souls of those who are passing out of their bodies.

We are suited for the work, having ourselves endured the horrors of war. Spirits unused to it cannot bear the terrible sights and sounds.

We bring them away so that they may return to consciousness far from their mutilated physical bodies, and oh, Mum, I feel quite tired sometimes of explaining to men that they are "dead!"

They wake up feeling so much the same; some go about for days, and even months, believing they are dreaming.

"Death works no miracle," and you wake up here the same personality exactly that left the earth-plane. Your individuality is intact, and your "spirit-body" a replica of the one you have left, down to small details - even deformities remain, though I am told they lessen and disappear in time.

This is what makes it so difficult to realize one has crossed the "great divide." If, when I woke to life here, I had found myself floating about the clouds clad in muslin and with a pair of wings, I should have realized the fact sooner. Incidentally, too,

friends on earth would believe the stories of those who have “passed on” more readily in a setting of the kind I have described. What they find difficult to understand apparently is the very little change between life in the physical body and in the spiritual.

People with narrow, set, and orthodox beliefs are puzzled by the reality, the “ordinaryliness” (if I may coin a word), of the spirit-world. If it were described to them as “flashes of light,” “mauve and sapphire clouds,” “golden rivers,” etc., it would more readily approximate with their preconceived ideas. They require “mystery” about this future life.

I often laugh when I hear them complain they can’t believe in “solid” things like houses and gardens in the spirit-world.

These same folk have always believed readily enough in “solid” thrones, harps, crowns, etc., the perquisites of “the saved,” which things obviously must be supported on other equally substantial substances - the thrones and harps on and in material floors and hands, and the crowns on very solid heads, I imagine!

The first time I was sent down to help our enemies I objected, but was told to remember they were fighting for what they believed to be right and in defense of their country too. I saw rather an interesting meeting between an Englishman and a German who had killed each other. They met face to face and looked at each other steadily. The Englishman held out his hand. His erstwhile enemy, taking it, said, “What d— fools we have been! “... As a matter of fact, I am not doing so much battlefield work as many of the others, and only go when there has been severe fighting and there is a great deal to do. Sometimes we are all needed. I am being trained to be a teacher. Yes, darling, I know you are surprised; but, you remember I used to be good at explaining things; besides, you know too I was always rather “bossy!”

These are not a bit like the lessons I hated in the old days. I am studying science, which I always liked, - really and actually the science of life, the cause of things, - and something of the marvellous universe and of the natural laws which govern everything. There is nothing miraculous about them - in fact, there is no such thing as a “miracle.” What seems so is merely a novel use of some existing natural law. Nor can anything be “supernatural;” it may be “super-normal.” Man can create nothing; all new discoveries are merely further knowledge of how to use latent force or power.

For instance, the vibrations harnessed by Marconi’s ingenuity in “wireless” telegraphy have always existed; he learned how to utilize them. So, too, have the properties of radium, though it took years of scientific research to discover them.

I realize enough, even in this short time, to know that the more one learns the more truly humble one becomes, because it is only then possible to know of the vast untouched fields of knowledge yet to be explored, and it is only very ignorant people in these days who say anything is “impossible” because it happens to be beyond their

particular understanding.

As to the theory that spiritual truths would have been “revealed” to us if we had been intended to know them, that is an argument that might be equally well applied to material matters. Neither railways, telegraphs, telephones, microscopes, X-rays, nor any other modern invention has been “revealed” to mankind without hard work; and if these “temporal things” have required so much effort, why should any one imagine that the spiritual things, which, being eternal, are so infinitely more valuable, should be given to man without any trouble on his part?

After all, spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. It is only striving for truth that makes the spirit grow; to lull it into a state of lethargy does not help it to develop.

I tell you what it is: unless the Church wakes up and moves with the times it will cease to exist in the future. The war has given it a great opportunity.

Men will no longer be content with platitudes and unreasoning belief. You must satisfy their minds as well as their hearts, which is possible now that science and religion are not antagonistic.

Men cannot now be frightened with tales of hell fire. They have learned that many roads lead to God. There is no “right of way” which is a perquisite of any particular form of religion. The only one that will influence men at all is one that is full of common sense, that makes everyday life worth living, and death no longer a dreaded visitor but even a friend, for indeed it may be that.

This knowledge would not make earth life of less but of greater value, for we should then realize and appreciate the fact that we are in the world to be trained, to develop character, and learn self-discipline. It would teach us to bear trials bravely and with understanding, that now seem uncalled for and senseless. We should know that this earth life is only the “school-time” and preparation of the fuller life that follows.

My duty and my business in future is to teach as I am, being taught, for every one works here as he is best fitted. In helping others in some way or other, many help those they love and have left on earth, if they can get through to people there as I can to you; but for those whose relatives, either through ignorance, fear, disbelief, or religious bigotry, do not desire to get into touch with them, there is work to be done by helping less developed spirits on the lower spheres.

Do you know, I often bring men home to see you who are not in touch with their own people, to prove to them that some at least on earth realize we are still “living.”

I can't understand the people who say that “spirit return is possible, but wrong,” because only “devils” or “evil spirits” can communicate. Surely God would not reserve this His great comfort and gift, the assurance of continued conscious existence, solely for the wicked?

I am living on the third Sphere or Plane; we call it “Summerland,” and some people

“Paradise.”

To turn to more mundane matters, darling, you want to know how I eat? Well, my body absorbs all the nourishment it requires from the atmosphere, like the leaves of trees do.

Even the air round the earth contains in different degrees and solutions most of the elements that form our physical bodies there.

I don't actually sleep but I do sometimes feel tired, and then I lie down and rest, and refresh myself by bathing in the lake.

Nothing can kill the soul, not even man himself; though sometimes, if before the final separation of body and soul the illness has been very severe, there has been brain disease, or the end has been violent and sudden, the shock to the soul is very great, and it may remain in a state of unconsciousness for many days or weeks, till it is recovered sufficiently to awake in its new conditions. You see, therefore, a suicide, far from escaping trouble, only goes from one form of misery to another; he cannot annihilate himself and pass to nothingness.

How do I get about? I walk very often, at other times if necessary I generate sufficient power, which I concentrate by effort of will within my body, to take me anywhere with the speed of thought. Our bodies are so light and so strong, it is easy to jump the highest wall with the slightest effort; the atmosphere has not the same resisting power to our bodies as it has to yours.

How I shall laugh, Mum, when you come here and I see you jumping ten-foot walls!

Not that we do jump them, as it is not necessary, and we are particularly taught never to waste force or energy.

When I first came over, I longed for you to be here, but I was told that your earth work was not accomplished, and I must be patient - there are so many wonderful things I want to show you and to tell you about.

One reason why we have found it so easy to get into touch with each other is because we are both psychic. Of course we neither of us realized it before, but I can quite clearly understand and see it now, and I see other things so differently too in the light of all the knowledge I have gained.

Music, and flowers, and things I should have thought it rather “sentimental” to admire before, I thoroughly appreciate now.

In the spirit-world there is a stronger affinity between the spirit and beautiful things than between any physical connection on the earth-plane, perhaps because it is a more perfect expression of God.

There are beautiful birds and exquisite flowers, and many pleasures. I go boating and golfing, but one must not take life in any form, so I no longer fish.

You want to know about our houses? Well, they are built by bricklayers and designed

by architects as they would be on earth.

In the spirit-world all work is equally honorable, and each man does that for which he is most fitted; if he is best at manual employment, he realizes his limitations and has no foolish desire to appear other than as he is; all work is done under beautiful conditions. All are happy and free.

On earth certain forms of labor are looked down upon, because those who perform them are ill paid and live under distressful conditions; here all good work is recognized as valuable.

It is curious on looking at the world to see how many people there have chosen the wrong vocation.

In the spiritual socialism that will be law in my Arcadia on earth some day, both the theoretical and practical men will realize their responsibilities to each other and will live to right wrong.

The master will not say, "How little?" but "How much can I afford to pay this man, to make his life agreeable, and not merely bearable?" And the man will do his best honorably to give honest and interested service in return as his right and share in the bargain.

I have told you before how certain things are made here, just as they are on earth, largely of "gases." You see, vapors and "gases" from lifeless matter are always rising from the earth. You can smell it in decaying things, such as flowers, wood, leaves, etc. These in disintegrating disperse quite a lot of matter into the air, which is deposited in the different spheres round the earth.

The coarser on the lowest sphere, the finer rising to the higher, a sort of chemical action, or a kind of gravitation (acting in a different way to that on earth) attracts each density of gas to its suitable environment—another example of the great law of the universe which we do not yet understand.

Out of this deposit, concentrated into solids by chemical action, all substances here are made, such as bricks for the houses, material for clothes, etc.

You want to know about clothes? Well, you can wear just what you like here; there are no fashions to follow or appearances to keep up. Though a very mixed array is the consequence it does not seem incongruous, for here you dress to express yourself and not to impress your neighbors.

I dress as I did with you, but some people wear white robes because they think when out of the mortal body it is the correct thing to do. If I chose to wear a tunic and sandals, or a "Beefeater's" getup, no one would laugh and jeer; they would realize it made me happy, and that is reason enough.

Mummy, dear, I quite understand how difficult all I tell you about my life here is for you to realize. I am quite sure in your place I should never believe it, but it's true all the same!

The more one studies science the more possible it seems to become. After all, the difficulty is in believing in things so real, so strong, so substantial, and yet to most people invisible. Yet, when you come to think of it, on earth there are many of the most "solid" things made of gases and elements, which in their pure state are invisible. A large proportion of our physical bodies, rocks (and some of the earth itself), for instance, are made of oxygen, which is impalpable as well as invisible.

Undeveloped people are those who live only through the senses and have not cultivated the intellect nor the spirit. To them what is impalpable seems "impossible."

Some day we'll write some fairy tales of science together about the wonderful further knowledge to be gained here - it's all so extraordinarily interesting.

We might write a novel together too, and call it "The Growth of a Soul," and trace its evolution through various incarnations. You and I have been through many together (in different connections, relationships, and sexes); that's why we are so particularly in affinity with one another.

I'm not going to tell you you were "Boadicea," "Cleopatra," "Helen of Troy," or any other famous or infamous female of past history, as I sometimes hear spirit-wags telling other women, for they make fun sometimes at the expense of those on earth if they are vain or gullible. (Note this.)

Will you be shocked, Mum, if I tell you what I have recently done? (It sounds rather like the "Chamber of Horrors" at Madame Tussaud's.) I went down to the Astral plane, searched for and made friends with a murderer! He was a man who some years ago paid the extreme penalty for killing his wife.

I did not seek him for curiosity - that would have been unjustifiable - but because I was trying to trace the cause which led to such a tragedy, and to find the "kink" in the man's character which made the deed to him seem excusable. I found X. - a very decent chap, fond of animals and children, a quiet, inoffensive little fellow. He tells me he was driven positively mad by his wife; contempt and loathing ended in hate of her.

She seems to have been an odious woman; he said she was coarse, unfaithful, drank to excess, and "nagged" without ceasing, till he absolutely became desperate. For about a year after he came over here he had a terrible time, because he was sullen and full of hate and rage; then he began to calm down and to see, however evil his plight had been, he had no right to take her life. As soon as the desire for improvement came, friends were ready to help him, and he is already much happier, and working among those who come over full of misery and bitterness as he himself did.

He never mentioned these unpleasant things about his wife at the trial, as he might have done in order to try and extenuate matters against himself. Poor devil, he was more sinned against than sinning, I think!

You do not delay my progress, as was suggested to you, by keeping in touch with me. People on earth will not realize that you cannot “summon” spirits any more than you can compel men on earth to come and see you if they do not wish to do so.

In the spirit-world people choose what is best for their own evolution.

If mortals desire the companionship of spirit-friends merely for purposes of material gain, it does not of course do either of them much good; but when love is the motive and mutual help the desire, it is good for both, for helping others is the way of progress.

There is a wedge now being driven in to open the door between the two worlds of matter and spirit, and I love to feel that I may be a tiny splinter of that wedge.

This is an excellent opportunity of letting a little light and hope through which will help mankind, for I have explained to you the creative power of thought. At present the earth is enveloped in what looks like a thick grey mist caused by the thoughts of cruelty, rage, grief, and pain that are continually outpouring.

THE CHRIST

I know why you are all thinking especially of me to-day, darling. It's an anniversary, my birthday into the spirit-world, I mean. I am not going to call it the day I was “killed.”

I do truly feel hundreds of years older sometimes. I seem to have learnt so much since I came over, and yet at other times I sit at your feet and rest my head against your knee, and it seems as if I were a little boy again, and all these things had never happened!

Yes, I have seen Christ once, Mummy, and, remembering how awe-inspiring the occasion was, cannot help wondering how any one could imagine at death they would go straight to His kingdom, when most of us have done so little to earn that beatitude!

I was told I should be allowed to see Him, but honestly at the time I did not realize or appreciate the fact. I thought it would probably mean going to a very high church with an elaborate ritual of pomp and ceremony. When the appointed time came, my guides provided me with a plain white robe to wear (you cannot attend the court of an earthly king without suitable garments), and we passed through connecting shafts to the Christ-sphere.

My general impression was that of brightness, almost dazzling; the air scintillated like diamonds - it almost crackled, it was so full of electricity; my feet had not a very firm grip of the ground.

There were bands and processions of people white-robed, all going in one direction. They moved with uplifted faces, singing beautiful music.

We joined the rear of one group, and were almost swept along on a tide of intense feeling.

We came to a building without any walls. It consisted of a roof, which seemed to be composed of interwoven rays of light of different colors, supported by pillars which looked as if they were made of mother-of-pearl.

There were crowds of people all round, and raised above all others stood one glowing, radiant figure. I knew at once it was Christ, and instinctively fell on my knees (though He is not like any picture I have ever seen). I was so conscious of Him that I felt as if He was bending over me. His eyes seemed to penetrate me, and produce a wonderful glow. I felt uplifted in a culminating thrill of ecstasy. He was speaking, but I could not hear the words.

As I knelt there, many events of my life passed in review through my mind. I could visualize them as pictures. My memory seemed stored with records, not alone of the life I had just left, but of others in the far-away past; and as the various scenes presented themselves I seemed to realize the different lessons I had learned through these experiences, and to know that all the events of my life had been leading up to this.

OF REINCARNATION

You want to know how it is I now believe in reincarnation, and say that other spirits you find do not? Well, darling, we are still very far from ultimate truth, and people here vary in their opinions and ideas just as they did on earth. We are still learning, Mum; we have only gone a little farther along the road of experience, and have by no means reached the end of the journey. Yes, there is a Heaven, but it is a long way off and has yet to be earned; even our very bodies, which are still fairly material, will have to become more refined before we are fitted for that.

I am told by friends here, that souls are sometimes reborn, reincarnated, in order to gain further experience, learn more life-lessons, or work out past sins and failings. Each earth life leaves its mark on character, and its lessons are for ever imprinted on the subconscious mind, which registers everything that has ever happened to the soul from the beginning. This, they say, explains much of the pain and trouble you see on earth. The sufferers are learning lessons, which are necessary for their souls' growth, for man was put into the world to develop the spiritual. They may have lived before, and neglected to learn then, or they may be new souls going through these experiences in one or other of the stages of their existence; it is all on the road of their evolution.

Families, friends, sections of nations in the revolving cycle of time reincarnate together very often, as they require the same experiences.

When you begin to think seriously about the subject and look and study the people

about you, you will be able to recognize that some people are old souls and others new.

Past experiences, though not consciously remembered, tone down crudities of character. Old souls have a sympathy, a strength, taught of pain and discipline, and are therefore considerate for others. When one knows many of the exceptionally gifted young men who have passed over in this war, one realizes they may have been old souls who gained their experience in the past and returned to earth for a glorious culmination in this supreme sacrifice.

I have often heard people ask why God permits wickedness. If it were impossible for man to sin, he would no longer be a free agent but an automaton. As man is on earth to learn his lesson and develop his soul, he must have his mettle proved. There would be no good without evil. Contrasts exist and are necessary; just as day and night, wet and fine, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, are only realized and appreciated through their opposites.

Old souls have learnt also to keep in touch with and draw from the "God-force" the actual Source of Life. Psychically developed people are especially in contact with it.

The soul has a separate consciousness. Many people's souls leave their bodies in sleep habitually, or under anaesthetics, and travel to various places; some, on awaking, are able to remember the scenes they have visited - and this memory can be cultivated. So you see the difference between sleep and death for some people is not very great after all, nor the passing painful nor difficult. It only means on one occasion they leave their bodies to return no more.

With reference to the discussion in the paper on reincarnation; it says some women think it almost a desecration to believe their babies have lived before and been perhaps even "harlots," "thieves," or other undesirable persons. This sounds as if they presupposed themselves to be new souls.

I am told, whatever those babies may have been in previous lives (if they *have* lived on earth before), their mothers have earned those particular babies.

I mean, souls don't return promiscuously to anybody, in any family. There is a sequence in their lives that necessitates their coming to one particular environment. It is part of the natural law, and works automatically.

Their mothers may have owed them something - a debt of love they failed to pay in a previous existence, or a trust they betrayed.

If the baby had been a "harlot" in the past, perhaps the mother in those days was the lover who first betrayed her, or even a vain, cruel, careless, or neglectful mother before, who failed in her duty to her child, and was the cause of her downfall.

Perhaps that child or another is sent to her that she may "make good;" it may be her opportunity. People should always do a kindness when they can, even if it is not appreciated or acknowledged, for it may be a chance of repaying a debt.

Souls do not come in the same relationship to each other every time, and not even as the same sex sometimes. A well-developed soul is one that has functioned in both sexes, and so has gained experience.

To look at it another way, it is also equally open to every woman to believe (or hope) if she likes that she and her baby did such good work when they were in the world before, that they have come back to continue it, for this happens too sometimes.

Here we are continually taught that the highest service is to help one another, and this is the best way for some people to do it.

I promised I would tell you all I had learnt of our previous lives together, yours and mine. It is not very much.

My guides showed me a number of pictures in a series of visions illustrating these lives.

There must have been many more than I know anything of, for in the first we were versed in many of the occult mysteries and rites of ancient Egypt. I saw that country thousands of years ago. There were wonderful buildings with huge pillars, and the dazzling sunshine and heat of the East.

We were brother and sister, I was told, and were attached to the court of the Pharaoh, a sort of "lady and gentleman in waiting." We also had a great deal to do with the temple, and the priests, and religious services. It was probably in this connection we were at the court.

I know we spent much time walking in the temple processions, and I saw you a tall woman, with a good figure and an upright carriage, in a purple robe and overdress trimmed with gold, and a sort of cloak of some skin falling at your back, your forehead bound low down with a broad fillet of gold with hieroglyphics on it. You wore bracelets of gold and other ornaments in the way of earrings and necklaces. (You looked jolly fine, Mum!)

I used to wear on these occasions a sort of tunic trimmed with gold, and sandals laced up to the knee with the same precious metal. I was quite pleased with my appearance, till I discovered that I also wore an enormous wig that stuck out a foot round my head in every direction. It amused me very much. I must have looked a perfect sight! But if that was the fashion at the time, I have no doubt I was very pleased with the effect then. I don't know what happened, or our subsequent history, on that occasion.

In the next scene we were walking along a dusty Eastern road in Palestine. The country on either side looked sun-baked, and rough, and bare, with a few thorny bushes growing here and there. This time you were a young matron about twenty-two, and were carrying your baby. You were wearing a blue robe embroidered round the edge, and a kind of veil over your head. (You had the face of a Madonna.) You were the wife of a notary, a man known for his goodness and benevolence.

I was about nineteen, a girl too, your bosom friend, and in the scene I describe was walking beside you with my arm round your waist. We were Christians, and it was in the early days of Christianity.

That time I was shown the end of the life story. Some terrible plague, or epidemic, broke out in Jerusalem, and you and I used to go among the sick poor carrying food and medicine. Later, I saw you in a comatose condition at the point of dissolution, while I knelt beside you, stricken too, and praying that death should not divide us. What happened to your husband and the baby I don't know.

The next scene was, I should imagine, somewhere in the Near East (possibly in the Balkans). This time we were both young men, brothers. We wore picturesque garments (rather like a musical comedy), and seemed to be leaders of a band of fighters, and we appeared to enjoy our rough, wild life thoroughly. What happened to us later I don't know. Yes! it does seem as if we had not "advanced" much that time. Perhaps we required to be more strenuous, and so were given the opportunity of cultivating what is commonly called "grit!" There are new souls, too, always coming into the world, and I am told much of the sin in it is due to ignorance and inexperience; so, too, is the narrow-mindedness.

When anyone is sure they know everything, or think they understand the limitations of nature, or are bigoted in religious matters, you can believe it is that they have very little soul-experience, for old souls learn the tremendous power of God, and realize how infinitesimal is man.

I have never seen a spirit yet who has seen God, and yet here you know you live because you are just a particle from the Divine....

You say it hurt you to hear that poor woman who spoke through the other medium the other day; she seemed so terribly unhappy and uncomfortable. Well, poor woman, she was so unready to pass out of the world. She was killed suddenly through an accident while in perfect health.

She was a very worldly woman, and could not believe it when she came to herself and found she had left her mortal body. She had no real belief in "life after death," and felt she was in a dream and a very unhappy one, for, alas for herself, she had in her life on earth laughed her husband out of all belief in it too! And she realized the difficulty she would have in undoing this mistake.

As you make the conditions of your own life after death by your state of spiritual development, you can imagine some people, whose spiritual faculties have dwindled till they have become atrophied, almost a negligible quantity, - can see no beauty here; in fact, they live under unpleasant conditions.

Some people are earth-bound. All their interests are there, and they return for that contact with men and the old conditions they crave.

I know it is difficult to understand why discarnate souls should still hanker after

material and sometimes gross pleasures. It is because while on earth their senses ruled them, and stamped and coarsened the soul, instead of the spirit refining and purifying the body.

As I have already told you, for some time after people come here they continue to feel as if they were still in a mortal body. You can realize this in a small way from what is, alas, a common occurrence nowadays. Any soldier who has had the misfortune to lose a limb will tell you he can feel pain, discomfort, or irritation in it for days after it has been amputated.

In this way spirits continue for some time after they have left to “feel” their bodies after death, and you know from experience now that the first time a spirit returns through a medium, the death condition is generally reproduced or indicated.

GUIDES, INSPIRATION, AND GOD

You say you have heard so much of “Spirit-guides” to people on earth, and want to know who appoints these, and why? “Guardian Angels” I suppose they used to be called. Well, no one appoints them; they are spirit-friends attracted by something in the individual which appeals to them, and they try to influence and help those in whom they take an interest.

They may be earth-friends or relatives who having passed on still keep the bond of affection that held them while here, though they are often strangers attracted by mutual interests, who try literally to inspire those on earth. This does not mean in religious matters only; it applies to art, science, engineering, medicine, or any other subject. Can't you imagine a musician here, revelling in beautiful harmonies, trying to instil into the mind of an earthly musician some of the glorious sound which gives him such joy, and which he knows will benefit and uplift those still in the “bonds of the flesh”? or an artist surrounded by this exquisite beauty trying to inspire the mind of a friend, so that he may see with truer, clearer vision the hidden wonders that surround him? or a man of science or an engineer trying to impress the mind of a friend on earth with a new discovery or invention?

These things are being done every day, and the “flashes of genius” which illumine the world occasionally are the result of the influence of spirit-minds on the minds of those still in the world. When men realize it is possible to get help from these sources they will do great things, for to those who have passed on, the sources of information, though not limitless, are vast in comparison with those on earth. The secrets of Atlantis and ancient Egypt are obtainable if they care to work to learn them.

I have told you here, too, “like attracts like.” If a human being is spiritually and intellectually undeveloped, and lives only in the senses, the spirit-friends he attracts are of a very undesirable order. They are the souls of those who had no wish to live anything but a life of animal gratification, and still hang about the world and their

old haunts continually, trying to get a kind of second-hand indirect pleasure from the doings of the people who now follow in their footsteps.

Having told you something of "Guides," I will tell you now of some charming Elementals, and I'll give you an epigram, Mum. "Everything in animal life and the flower and vegetable kingdom in its highest development takes a certain resemblance to humanity, because the human entity is the highest expression of life demonstrating in a physical way on the earth-plane." For instance, you know when a dog or horse is loved and cared for by anyone it is said the animal becomes "almost human" in its intelligence. There are nature thought-forms, some of which are made by the emanations, the "excess life," as it were, from the flowers. These are the so-called "Fairies," which are not, as we supposed when we outgrew childhood, merely a charming figment of imagination, but actually exist and were seen in the beginning by those who lived in touch with nature and had unspoiled eyes to see the wonders and beauties of God's world. These creatures have intelligence without being intellectual, and are almost human in form. You want to know why they take this form? Well, all life must take some form when it emanates, and why not this? After all, there is no resemblance between the tiny seed you sow in the ground and the beautiful flower that springs from it eventually. The thought-forms of flowers are the spirit side of their life on the physical plane, and they are stronger than human thought forms, for the life that goes to them is a steady continuous stream, while that supplied by human thought varies and fluctuates.

The flowers here have no spirit-forms, for they are themselves spirits.

I know you sometimes find it very difficult to follow my explanations, and I find it difficult to explain, for our experiences are limited, and language is limited and is inadequate to express spiritual things. It is like trying to explain the glories of a splendid sunset to a man who was born blind. After all, we can only judge things by past impressions, and when these are lacking we can only believe, if we are willing to accept them, through faith the evidence of things unseen."...

You want to know what I feel about Religion now, and if my ideas on reincarnation have changed my ideas of Christ? Well, darling, I will answer the last question first.

I believe that Christ is a great and wonderful personality, a great Spirit in the form of a man, as near as possible to God, because the God-force plays so strongly in and through Him, a fit instrument and receiver of that power.

There was a specific reason why Christ was sent. God specially directed Him; the consciousness of God within Him was very acute. He knew He was the instrument and child of God.

He was sent to be man's example for all time, to teach how pure, and holy, and simple, and dignified, and useful, and beautiful life could be without any of the material aids of money or social position, to prove the individual continuity of life after death. But He did not come to save men from the results of their sins. It is a

comfortable theory, but not true.

Here we learn that every man has to earn his own salvation. Sin is a breaking of God's laws, and carries its own inviolable consequences, which must be worked out by each individual personally. You might as well set the law of gravity in motion and expect it not to act.

Christ's followers claimed His death as a sacrifice for sin, for they naturally looked upon God only as the people of their day knew Him - that is, as a tyrannical Jehovah whose altars ran with the blood of sacrificed animals.

As man evolves he gets nearer spiritual truth, and we know here that this is infinitely greater and more wonderful than anything ever yet told. One realizes the presentation of God usually taught on earth is utterly incorrect. He is not a glorified, mortal sitting on a golden throne, not a vengeful nor jealous God - not, in a way, even a "personal" God to be propitiated to grant special gifts to a favored few. He is not finite, but infinite; but, because it is so difficult to realize so vast a fact, we feel on earth we want to locate and limit our idea of God to bring it within our understanding.

God is everywhere and in everything: in the trees, in the flowers, in the air, and in the sunshine. God is all good, all beauty, all purity.

God is not limited, nor existing only in the seven spheres, He is also in the space beyond, for He fills all space.

The whole Universe is of God; the Planets revolve from the power of God within them, touched and supported by power without.

God is creative, from Him all life springs. Elemental man is a manifestation of God-power through form, which in the lower creation is manifest in a different way, though he can deteriorate to less than they.

All life as projected into human bodies is therefore a "bit of God," and we are in consequence truly His sons and by that fact immortal.

God works automatically. Those who live harmoniously with His laws can draw great power; they find too, in time, that soul satisfaction which brings the peace that passes all understanding.

I don't only know this, but feel actually conscious of it: if you are a ray of the sun you cannot mistake yourself for a tallow candle. This is why it is untrue and incorrect to teach men they are "miserable sinners" by birth. The body is not the man; his spirit is of God. However ignorant of the fact a man may be his soul, away in its dim consciousness knows this, and often in an emergency the "spark divine" asserts itself, and the man rises to the great occasion. It has been proved many times in this war.

God's laws are so steady, so regular, so businesslike, they can operate to great advantage in commercialism or organization of any kind on earth, provided these

things are brought into line with them.

A DAY'S WORK

You want me to give you details of a typical day of my life? You know there is no time here - that is only a limitation of the earthplane - so we will make it a day by your calculations, and suppose we begin at midnight, for that is when I come for you.

You know, for I have often told you, how when your body sleeps your soul comes over here and we spend hours together, you have sometimes dimly remembered things that happened as in a dream. Thousands of people come over in this way every night, and are more awake and alive while here than on earth in their mortal bodies. To do this, people must be spiritually evolved to a certain degree. Well, we go together to various places; sometimes we work on the third sphere among those who have just wakened in the spirit-world, and are bewildered, and puzzled, and strange in their new surroundings. We explain to them where they are and bring their friends to see them.

I know it seems curious to you that you should be able to do this even better than I, as you are still in a mortal body; but that is the very reason. You see, you are the "half-way house," as it were, for along that little cord that connects your soul and body are travelling thoughts and desires of the world in which you live. You are therefore more in touch with the earth and bring its atmosphere with you, and so feel more familiar to one who has just come over. You are still controlled and limited by your earth-body while connected with it.

Night before last we were helping a boy whom we could not make realize his new condition, when his mother came, to whom he had been devoted (she had been in the spirit-world two years). He burst into tears and said, "I know now I am dreaming, for my mother is dead and I shall never see her again." His mother put her arms round him and kissed him, and we left them together.

The meetings and reconciliations here are wonderful and touching; you and I often hug each other for very joy and sympathy....

On other occasions I take you to see one of the beautiful scenes in the higher spheres which I have described to you. We have been together to the "Blue" country, where there are a series of wonderful mountains which impress one by their curiously calm grandeur: no rugged rocks, nor jagged outlines; the heights are majestic but smooth and rounded, and surround one on every side. As far as eye can see the color everywhere is blue of varying shades, from almost grey on the mountain-tops to purple in the valleys, and every intermediate shade wonderfully blended in between.

Color has wonderful properties. In this case each color is confined to a certain particular locality. For a few miles away everything is varied in the normal manner. There is also a "Pink" country and a "Yellow" one. You get these effects on earth

sometimes for a few minutes in the glow of a sunset.

Blue is a spiritual color, pink a love condition, and yellow an intellectual one.

These color-effects help spirits, not by giving, but by stimulating the perception of those particular qualities. As you know, here in the "Summerland" spirits are still learning and progressing, but are very far from perfection.

Many come over here well developed mentally but lacking in spirituality; others are very spiritual but require that mental quality which is necessary if their spirituality is to be more than a divine ecstasy; while some have neglected to cultivate along with these good gifts enough of that love and charity which is essential to those who are willing to bear each other's burdens and so fulfill that law of Christ, which is the true way of progress.

People on earth are now recognizing the properties of color and are beginning to use it in a small way. It is useful for the cure of certain diseases, for it has a marked effect on mental conditions, and, as you know, various colored lights cause certain curious changes in plants and flowers.

When it is time for you to return I take you back and then go home for a rest. I bathe in the lake, and, refreshed, go either to earth again to help on the battlefield, or if I am not required for that I go on with my study of psychic laws.

After this, it would now be your afternoon, I have some recreation and amuse myself; later I go to look up friends on earth. On other days I listen to music, which is beautiful here beyond description: it thrills one. You know I used not to care very much about it on earth before I came over.

Tell Daddy when he plays the piano in the evenings I see his music in "colors" all the time. Nearly all major keys are like primary colors: "C" and "G" specially look red and yellow, "E" not so decidedly; "D," "F," and "A" are secondary colors such as mauve and green and certain shades of violet.

"B" is white. The sharps and flats are varieties of these; they tinge of blended colors. The colors vary in relation to the other notes played; for instance, "C" sharp, though actually the same note on the piano, is different when used as "D" flat.

Occasionally I talk to most interesting people, men who were noted on earth and left their mark there as great statesmen, scholars, poets, musicians, teachers, etc. There, of course, I should never have known them, - differences of age, wealth, position, etc., would have made it impossible, - but here there are no artificial barriers, and a community of interest is a sufficient bond of friendship.

You say you are surprised some of the men I mentioned have not progressed higher. Well, they could have done had they so desired, but many are anxious to help those on earth still, to see work and ideas through that they themselves originated; others have remained to help their friends through this world crisis.

When you get beyond the third sphere contact becomes more difficult, and it is only

when you begin to feel “impersonal” and have no direct interest left in people on the earth-plane that you desire to go on.

Eventually these spirits will probably progress more quickly through this work, for as they give help to those below it is also given to them, according to their needs, by higher spirits.

The law of compensation works in this way even in your world, for there, if love is given unselfishly, generously, and wisely, it will be returned in greater measure by spirits in the higher life by thought and influence which will materialize according to the requirements of the earth-plane.

Meanwhile, life is very happy here and full of interest; even the grief and pain of those you love and have left behind does not affect one in the old way, for one can see beyond the trouble of the day and know it is only for a little while.

VARIOUS PEOPLE, CHILDREN, AND AFFINITIES

What makes this place so interesting is the variety of the people in it, just as the world is interesting for the same reason. It would be very dull if human beings were all exactly of the same stereotyped pattern physically and mentally. I think that is what made the old idea of the conventional Heaven so uninviting; either you would have had to lose all individuality and become an “angel to pattern,” so as to be suitable to the environment, or else one would have to lose one’s sense of humor; for can’t you imagine the idea of one’s friends, large and small, old and young, fat and thin, some with some knowledge of music, others with none at all, sitting, clad in white, playing harps?

As a matter of fact, when we do eventually get to that Heaven, which I believe exists, we probably shall have become “stereotyped” to a certain extent, for we shall be so refined as to have become “all spirit,” and so nearer God. Probably our joy then may be in music, for it is, I suppose, the most exquisite sense, and even here it has held me thrilled and spellbound; and you know I am not musical, and could rarely rise to anything higher than a catchy, popular melody, or “chopsticks,” to which you so much objected!

I suppose these ideas in the first place started through the visions of saints who did not realize they were seeing states “afar off,” and thought they were conditions soon after death....

One amusing man I have met here is quite a “crank” in his way. He says he thinks, after having passed through the seven spheres, of which we have heard, that spirits must pass on still farther, as otherwise even these places would be overcrowded eventually: he thinks they may go to the moon! He has no grounds for this theory; it is, he acknowledges, purely his own idea! If reincarnation is a fact, as I believe it is, then of course there would be no overcrowding, for so large a number of spirits are

constantly returning for further earth experience. In any case, as it is probably several thousands of years away, there will be plenty of opportunity to study it farther on!

I also know some men here who are very keen on engineering and are trying to invent laborsaving devices of every kind.

They think it will be possible to invent tiny machines which will enable men to fly, not by sitting in an aeroplane, but by propelling each individual separately through the air - not high, just a little above the ground. It would require very great power very much compressed into a small space, so that you could strap, say, a large knapsack on your back and sail along above the ground without fatigue. It may come some day, but not in your time, I think, Mum.

Another man I know thinks moving pavements raised about fifteen feet above the road, on the principle of the staircases at the tube stations, will be used in large and crowded cities. (What a good idea)

They would go in one direction on one side of the road and in the opposite on the other, with stairs and stationary platforms at intervals. There would be no attendants required, for no tickets would be necessary; the expenses would go on to the rates and it would be free to all - though I acknowledge the small boys would find it irresistible till they got used to the novelty of it! This would save a certain amount of vehicular traffic. There would still be the ordinary pavement below for those who wished to walk slowly or shop-gaze.

You want to know something further about the children who come over? You remember at first you were quite surprised when I described your brother John to you, and did not recognize him when I told you he was a grown-up man; you had always thought of him as still remaining a little child.

He looks only about my age; of course in earth-life he would have been over forty. Here little ones grow up but never become old, for they have no cares and worries nor the pains of a material body to trouble them.

Many women here care for these little ones. Some have left children on earth they loved; others, the childless, who love children, look after them. Every child, even if unwanted on earth, can find a loving mother here.

Many an earth-mother comes over at night when her body sleeps to see her baby, and though with her limited conscious mind she may think of it as an infant always, her spirit-mind knows the facts, as she will recognize when she herself comes here permanently. These children grow in soul and mind and body, which is just as strong and more substantial than an earth-body, for it is indestructible.

They are all beautiful in varying degrees. They learn very quickly, for their minds are open; they have no consciousness that evil exists, so more readily absorb all they are taught here, and they very soon go on to the higher planes.

While on the third sphere they return to earth to play with children there. It is part of their education, and enables them to understand, and so later to help others still in the mortal body.

As many children in the world are clairvoyant they often see these spirit playfellows, and if they could keep this consciousness it would often be a help to them in later life.

Unfortunately, many grown-up people who do not understand these facts discourage the idea, and so in time the child loses this consciousness. The children here all see Christ; they seem to instinctively understand Him and His Mother. Having occupied a mortal body such a short time they easily go back to the things of the Spirit....

Now you want to know what happens when one of a married pair dies young and the other lives to be old? Well, it depends to a certain degree on the life of the one left on earth as to what extent death separates them. The few years of time would not actually make much difference. I will give you some examples of cases I know here, and explain through them what I mean. The actual soul does not “age” permanently, though it carries the impress of the body when it first comes over, but by degrees here, freed from material cares, the signs of “age” disappear and the spirit-body looks like that of an adult in the prime of life and in perfect health. You can’t tell by looking at a person in the ordinary way on the earth-plane how their souls would look at first on release from the body; you might judge from the character, perhaps.

I know a man here (let’s call him “Charles”) who came over fourteen years ago, leaving his wife (we never speak of widows here), to whom he was devoted. They were true affinities and spiritually developed people, and though not spiritualists professedly she was so conscious of her husband’s continued existence that she lived as far as she could as she knew he would wish.

She neglected no duties, made no parade of her great grief, and studied in every way in order to be his mental and spiritual equal when she should rejoin him. She came over recently, and on this account looks as young as he does.

I know another case of a different kind (let’s call the husband “Tom “), of a young couple married at the beginning of the war. He was killed at the Front a year after.

His wife made a great parade of her grief, wore elaborate, expensive, and becoming mourning, and even contemplated suicide, but decided it was too painful! She then found she could get into communication with Tom. Eventually he was not permitted to return to speak to her, for she only wanted him to help her in various material ways, and made him unhappy with continual reproaches and grumbling. Being out of the physical world he was no longer in a position to help her there, but she had no interest in spiritual or even intellectual things. Under these circumstances her soul will not of course develop properly, and so will “age” for lack of care.

She has married again, but “Tom” does not grieve; he quite understands they were unsuited to one another, and had they lived on earth longer together would soon

have discovered it.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATION

There is no subject probably that requires to be considered with such care as this of “spiritualism.” You understand how essential it is to use your own judgment in the matter, and common sense in weighing all you are told.

There are so many limitations to be considered - the sitter’s, the medium’s, and the spirit’s; and these are very severe.

In communicating, the spirit-message comes first from the spirit, who has to concentrate to give it to the “control” (the spirit actually using the medium’s organization), who has to impress it on the medium’s brain to such an extent that the nerves and muscles of the mouth and tongue of the medium will respond to the action of the brain, and will speak the message as it has been given.

I often think it wonderful how much does come through, when one realizes the many difficulties.

The bias of the medium’s mind, impressions from the sitter’s subconscious self, unconscious telepathy from other minds, and so forth, all have to be taken into consideration.

Telepathy is not so easy as some people imagine; if it were, there would be no difficulty in satisfying any sitter who went to a medium, for they would only have to do some mind-reading, whereas many go empty away.

You say spirits so often through mediums say that the sitters have great work to do, wonderful talents, etc., and you can’t understand it, as these people do nothing in particular eventually. Well, their spirit- friends may see they have the capacity; as to whether they will make use of it is another matter. Just as in school a master may realize that many of his boys have exceptional talent in various directions, and may say so, it does not follow that they will do well in life, for it entirely depends on their use of their capabilities. By being told of their possibilities, their ambition may be roused to make special efforts.

Try and develop your own psychic powers, if they are sufficient to make it worth your while for your own comfort, and certainly every one should try and cultivate “spiritual gifts.” Of course they are not synonymous terms. It is possible to be very psychic and not at all spiritual. Psychic talent is a “gift,” like music, painting, writing, etc., and like these can be used for beautiful and good things or the reverse.

Every one can learn to live in two planes, the material and the spiritual, to be a “practical mystic,” to know the truths and wonders and beauties of the life spiritual as well as to perform the duties and enjoy the pleasures of the life physical.

Many people would be great in the highest sense of the word, if they would only

believe that the source of unlimited good and knowledge is there to draw upon. The supply is unlimited, the only limitation being their own capacity.

We know and remember in the spirit-world everything that has happened in our earth-life (that is, if we wished to remember we could do so), as the subconscious mind is so active here. If I could come and speak to you direct with my spirit-mouth you would get any test you wanted, but as it is I have to operate through a strange brain and personality.

People sometimes say, "Why does my loved one not come to me direct?" The "loved one" probably does very often, but cannot make himself seen or heard, and if he could, might frighten his relatives if they did not understand.

The "controls" chosen for mediums are generally children or other, what we call "uneducated people," because their brains are more or less "blank" and pliable; otherwise you can imagine it would add still further difficulties and limitations to communications.

THE SPHERES AND THE SOURCE OF ALL POWER

Our bodies here are not made of ether; we call them that as they are the bodies in which we manifest on the "Etheric" Sphere.

Your physical bodies are walking about on a physical plane; they are of the earth earthy. Though you call them "physical" they do not look like the earth really; they look like a thing apart.

Our Sphere is in the Ether, resting on the Ether, not on nor near the earth-plane, nor interpenetrating the earth as some people think. Our Spheres are built of and formed in Ether, therefore you can call them "Spiritual" or "Etheric" planes as you like. My body as I exist on that Spiritual or Etheric plane is a spiritual or etheric body, just as my physical body was termed "physical" when I was functioning in the physical plane. We derive the name of the body from the plane we are on; "physical" body for physical plane, "astral" body for astral, and "etheric" body for etheric plane.

My present body is made of chemicals, and gases, and atoms - atoms certainly of a finer kind than one gets on the earth-plane. These are held together in much the same way as the atoms of the physical body, but this body does not disintegrate in the same way as the physical one does, because the life on the third Sphere is sure to be as long, and perhaps many times longer than the one on the earth-plane.

There is something substantial about my spirit-body. Suppose I had to leave the third Plane and to go to the fifth, sixth, or seventh Plane (for good I mean, not for a visit). I know then my entire etheric body would undergo a change: the atoms would be of a still lighter kind, because the nearer I go to the God-force, or Life-force, the more actual Life-force there is running through my body and holding those atoms together.

Because of this greater force in the higher spheres we would require less chemical matter.

On the third Plane the body in the way of its chemical constituents would be very much like that of the earth-plane - not so much in quantity, but the same in kind. Is it not correct that hydrogen and similar gases or chemicals can be obtained in a grosser or coarser or in a more refined state, a lighter state - lighter in pressure? Our bodies are made of the extremely refined variety.

Take coal, Mummy, for example; you can set it alight in the raw state, and you have a coarse flame of gas, or even if we don't light it we know there is gas there of a coarse kind.

If that gas is taken and put through certain processes it becomes purer and more refined in nature, simply because it has passed through those processes. It has passed through and over something, and is farther from its foundation in the lump of coal. The gas is drawn from the coal and blown right across steam, and when it reaches the other side it is caught in a purer state.

Now we come to the point. The gases and chemicals that go to make up our physical bodies, we know, need not be drawn only from the surface, or just above it, of the earth-plane.

We have proved those gases exist some distance from the earth-plane. The farther you go the purer and more refined in nature are those gases and chemicals. Just as your physical body is made of the grosser gases which belong to the earth-plane, so our bodies are made of the finer gases which exist in the air or atmosphere of our plane.

I'll give you a little chart (*Not found in this copy*). Draw a round for the earth; around that put seven circles one outside the other, for the seven spheres. Outside those, filling all space, is an enormous force, an actual force which seems to contain or consist of many strong powers or forces that we think we have discovered on the earthplane - electricity to wit, radium, etc.; but there are many more still undiscovered on the earth-plane, but which we know are contained in this, the God-force or Life-force.

Electricity was always there, but we did not know how to use it. I am mentioning "radium" and "electricity" because you might otherwise ask me what force it is, and why we call it a force. We know it's a force because we know that everything that has life is animated by that force, and the farther you go from the earth-plane and the nearer you go to it the more you can feel the force.

Electricity is only one of the many constituents of the force, but we know there are other manifestations of power in it; but we don't know what to call them yet, as they have not been discovered on the physical plane, where God meant all His work and all His goodness to be discovered by man. Man names these things and attains consciousness and understanding and control over them. In the spirit-world we don't call them by a name, we understand it's one enormous power, and we don't

give it a name - we just feel it, and know it's there; but as this power penetrates through the spirit-spheres and reaches the earth-plane it seems to become divided into different forms or manifestations of power - that is to say, it is in man's power to use it for different purposes.

Though it seems to come in a massed condition, as it touches the earth-plane it divides itself into different manifestations or kinds of power. Man has only of late years learnt to use some of these powers and to draw off and conserve a certain part, such as electricity, for instance. With electricity he has learnt how to draw upon, to "generate it," as he calls it - which means he has learnt to draw part of the massed power and to convert it to one particular species of form of power.

I have told you before, the God-force holds together every thing on the earth-plane - animates it. Take a humble thing - a cabbage, for instance. I say it's the God-force (or Life-force, if you prefer to call it that) in that cabbage that keeps it alive. When that force is withdrawn it dies, disintegrates (some would-be wit will say, "What about the God-force when it's boiled?"). The boiling process would eliminate some of the Life-force, and what remained would be changed or converted to a different form. Some people will say, "It's all nonsense; the cabbage is composed of so many ounces of this, and so many drams of that." Quite right, it may be so; and it's only held there and manifested because the God - or Life-force has projected, and is holding it there. Directly the Life-force is gone, one of the gases begins to get less, and the cabbage decays and gets mouldy; then another material is forced out, for it is only the Life-force which is keeping and holding them together. I'll give you a crude illustration. Suppose you want to make a lump of plaster. You get the dry powder and bind it together with some water. The God - or Life-force is to all atomic matter what the water is to dry matter - it consolidates it.

The whole Universe is full of revolving atoms, but unless they are gathered and solidified in a mass you would not see them. Take a handful of earth. Chemists, by employing certain gases, can blow¹ that earth which is visible (and the gases employed may not be) into absolute invisibility. Earth is only atoms gathered into solid form; if you can scatter them sufficiently they go out into the Universe again. They would go back into space from whence they came. Now, for a "twister," you might say, "Could one distinguish by any means that these are atoms of dust or of earth?" They are so minute that though they would be dust, it would be ridiculous to call them that; it would sound an exaggerated term, as if you called a tiny grain of soil a "piece of earth." These atoms are not noticed in space.

¹The word 'blow' cannot be right but unable to work out what it should be.

It seems to me the planets are like parts of a tree, a fruit tree, and as if at the end of the branches things grow - fruit, or leaves, or flowers: the manifestation of life to the onlooker is at the tips or terminations of the branches. The life or sap comes, doesn't it, from the trunk; but to the eye that is hidden. Take a cluster at the end of a branch to be our earth-plane. Just as the Life-force oozes up the trunk and along the branch,

feeding the cluster till it grows, and grows, and grows, so does the Life-force stretch out an arm, so to speak, to one place in the Universe, and gathers atoms together by the food and power it is pouring forth into that particular place and holding a cluster or a world together. It's a branch of God, with its manifestations of life at the tip of the branch.

The tree is the Universe, the God-force is the sap which supplies the life; the planets are the clusters of fruit.

Everything in existence is created and kept going by the Life-force; it is Life-force manifested in different ways.

Whenever there is disease it means a little of the Life-force has gone from whatever part of you is diseased. When the Life-force is abruptly withdrawn from one particular limb the manifestation of disease is more noticeable than if the Life-force was simply withdrawn a little from every part of the body.

The other planets have their own spirit-spheres round them. All in between and around every planet is the God-force; if you eventually went beyond the seventh sphere you would get into space and become part of the Infinite. You would then have no defined or finite form, for you would no longer be finite; you would then be only a consciousness.

As in the physical you were conscious of the physical more than of any other state, so if you progressed and became part of the Infinite you would then become conscious of God and God only.

You would not want to express or impose your little personality on others any more; you would be content to be of God and of the great Infinite; that would be to be divine.

Whatever state you are in, you are conscious in that state. On the earth you are conscious of the physical state, you wonder why you can't be more conscious of the astral; in the spiritual you are conscious of the spiritual state; in the Infinite you are conscious only of God.

I might tell you, no one we have ever known or heard of has ever stepped off into the Infinite. It will probably be a few million years before we shall want to go into the Infinite; it means the submerging of the personality. All personal desire must be dead; we have to learn to wish to be of and as God. That's where the old idea of sacrifice comes; it's the giving up of some personal desire....

I always start off meaning to be matter of fact and scientific, and find myself slipping back to the great spiritual truths to which science is only the stepping-stone.

I understand why spirits don't return and give more about the "make-up" of the spirit-world in a scientific way. There is so much that is so difficult to put into words at all, especially to have to imprint on another person (who is still in the limitation of the physical body - the medium) that which to us is a great shining light - the truth.

We feel it, we move in it, we breathe it; but it's too great and vast a thing to explain in an hour or so, for no sooner do I start to explain one phase, than I find it leads me to have to explain another, and then another, and so on. We are nearer the Infinite than you are, and are therefore more naturally conscious of the power of the Infinite, and do not require to have it manifested in detail or in finite form to the same extent as you do. People on the earth-plane clamor for materialization; they are not conscious of those passed over unless they can see them in some form.

We here do not often "see" Christ, but we can feel and are conscious of Him all the time; but if you ask me how I know I can't tell you.

Ether is one of the manifestations of the Life-force, it is difficult for me to explain; it spreads through it like moisture in the air. Ether is not a "power" like electricity, which we make from the embryo. Ether is not a force in that way at all. It's a state or condition that pervades the Universe, changing in degree or character as you get farther from the earth-plane.

Interpenetrating everything on Earth, all the Spheres, all the Universe, all Space, is a tremendous power which is God, or what (to simplify it) we call God-force. By this God-force all things live. Its withdrawing means death.

PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

We on earth with finite minds often visualize or think of God in a finite shape or form, as a man, because to us that is the highest experience of life manifest. You can imagine that is limiting God. We are apt to do this with all things beyond our physical sphere.

I told you we have atmosphere here. Just as we visualize God, and yet we know He is more than we can visualize, so much finer and greater, so is the atmosphere of the spirit-sphere to the atmosphere of the earth-plane; you cannot visualize it with a finite mind.

God is not known to science, because science can't measure or classify Him. But that does not show there is no God. It is the same with many things in the spirit-world.

Any time within the next thousand years the lighter and more refined kind of hydrogen I told you about may be known to science, but it will not be known by any name we have given it here; it will be named and classified by man when he discovers it.

I called it a "kind of hydrogen" because that is, it seems to me, the nearest approach to it on the earth-plane, and I must call it something that will present an idea to your mind that you can "grasp." It is a definite thing.

We don't name the particles or items of the great universal force or power that permeates and is the being of everything. It is only when it filters through to the earth-plane that you divide it and discover different parts and name them.

I know these things definitely; they are not my ideas, or “impressions,” for I am taught them by teachers and guides from the higher spheres. A great many others here have been taught these things too, but they do not get the opportunity to get them through to friends on earth.

Of course, not every one who comes over here learns these things, as some are more interested and pass their time in other ways.

Suppose a spirit here, a few hundred years ago, had tried to explain “electricity” or “medium” to a medium on earth, how would he have done it? (I suppose incidentally the medium would have been burnt as a witch, or a wizard, and that would have settled the matter for the time being!) You can imagine he would have been unable to express his ideas clearly. We are still in the same predicament. There are stages in man’s development: the physical, in which he feels and senses on the physical plane; the mental, which is the scientific; and the spiritual, which is above them both, because it’s nearer God. There are no very easy stages from the physical to the spirit-world; you have to get right out of one, to be of, and in, the other.

Man is a student in God’s school, namely, the earth-plane, and has to find out these things by hard work and study.

It is not necessary for us here to know how many “drams,” or “ounces,” of any substance make any other substance; it would not help us at all. You might say, “Yes, but it would help us; we want to know.” Your earth-plane is the school, and when the headmaster has set the student a problem in Euclid he does not supply the answer before the pupil has worked it out.

We don’t learn things here in terms that you understand; we learn spiritual things, which are necessary to us, for we are of the spirit-world, and to find out things in your world we have to work in your conditions.

Communication with me is so easy to you, I don’t think you realize the “great gulf” that divides us.

MAN’S CONNECTION WITH GOD

The peace of your heart, in spite of great anxiety, comes from the innate knowledge that, however bad things may seem sometimes, “God’s in His heaven: all’s right with the world.”

The mind of God is operating through the various spheres on to the earth-plane. It is almost as if a picture were thrown from a lantern first on to the seventh sphere; God projects his thoughts on to it, and those there get every thought, wish, desire, of God. It is as clear to them as if it were photographed on the atmosphere round them, so wherever they turn they know what God wants them to do. These “pictures” or thoughts of God seem to be composed of millions of “rays” (even in your atmosphere there are “rays” of which you are not cognizant on earth). On the sixth sphere the

picture is like a copy of the seventh, not quite so sharp in outline or detail, and so on, slightly decreasing in clarity and sharpness from sphere to sphere, till it gets to the first sphere, where it is much fainter, because so close to the earth-plane. On the earth-plane it is faint indeed; but there, man, who has great power if he chooses to use it, could reproduce that picture if he put himself in the right mental and spiritual condition to do so. It has to be redeveloped by man's attitude towards it. That's what I mean by saying we can interpret God if we choose. Man is given the power to see God's ways and wishes if he will put aside his lower self for a little while.

The guide who is teaching me said it is important for people to develop psychically as a step to the higher or spiritual side. Before people can become "psychic" properly they must develop physically and mentally too.

You say, "Mediums are often uneducated." Yes; they do not satisfy in consequence, but by their mediumship they are a bit better than they would have been without it. Still, I am not saying what is possible, but what is best.

People must learn to control the physical, the lower, or what is called "animal" part of them, and not give way to temper, greed, sensuality, jealousy, and so forth; they must cultivate the spirit, the higher or God part, the "higher self."

Sometimes the spirit wants to operate through the body (this is psychic or spiritual development), and is prevented by people giving way to any of the passions we have mentioned. It shows they must work harder to get control of the physical.

I have told you before, your spirit even now knows and can see everything; it is seeing me at present. Your spirit-mind is the subconscious mind; your spirit-mind can't put itself in touch with the physical mind, it cannot link up with your brain. It is unable to, because you can't concentrate on me; your brain is concentrating on what you are doing, not on seeing me.

Your conscious mind is operating through your brain. To be "developed" means you have gained such control over your body and brain that you are able to detach yourself from undesirable things and thoughts. It is this power a person 'sits' to try and develop by quiet, concentration, and prayer. You see how necessary it is to get complete control, so as to command the nature of the thoughts, to be able to lift the "lower self" to meet the higher.

You could not do it always, of course, for you have to use the physical brain for material things, and to protect the physical body from enemies. For instance, if you saw a man coming for you to hit you with a brick, it would be no use to stop to think beautiful thoughts; you would have to do something, and pretty quickly!

By a few moments, conscious practice every day, people can raise themselves so as to learn to "link on" or connect their minds and spirits, the lower and higher selves. The more and the oftener they do it the easier it becomes, so that in a little time there is a kind of semiconsciousness of that beautiful state helping them always.

The power you get by this “linking on” to the higher self has a great effect, not only on your own physical or lower self but on other people’s too; that shows that if the majority could believe and practise this, there would be no such thing as war or enmity on the earth-plane. It creates almost a tangible state or feeling.

It is the power given by the continual drawing down into the physical organism of the bit of the Infinite that is in themselves, and because it is Infinite it has infinite power, much greater than physical power; it is personality or temperament.

God is an impersonal personality. He is a personality of good, the personification of it, but impersonally good. “Why call Him personal at all?”

I call God that because He sends out certain forces or power, but He expects them to return (as, for instance, all He sends to inhabit physical bodies). Suppose we think of people as little ships sent out on the sea of life by God from His Harbor. His thought goes to each one, “May you return to Me,” and the little ship goes out.

When it has been out for some years it may make for other ports, evil ports, and stay away till it becomes battered and its white sails get grimy; and then perhaps it says, “I won’t go any more to any chance harbor, but will try and steer for my home port.” Every ship launched from His Harbor God hopes will return. There is a sort of feeble interpretation of God’s thought in the saying, “We shall go hence in God’s good time.”

If the ships stayed in sight of it, they could easily return, but they get independent and think they will do better for themselves by going afar off; and the farther they go the more thoroughly they forget the Harbor from which they started.

Again, to speak of the God-force and try to explain more about it. It’s a mind that permeates everything. Next to being a mind it’s an organism of forces - all the forces or energy or power ever known or to be known. God’s mind controls everything - all the forces in the Universe.

MAN’S BEGINNING

I will try and explain as clearly as I can about man from his “beginning,” and I am going to tell you the truth as far as I know and can express it, but I leave it to you to put only what you think suitable in the book, for I tell you everything, knowing there is nothing that God has made, nor any operation of His laws we need be ashamed of; and you understand and realize this also, but there are people who do not see things as we do, and might be “shocked!” My feeling is of awe and reverence now I have learned how really “fearfully and wonderfully” we are made, and I marvel all the more at the greatness of God.

The physical of us is created on the earth-plane. The mental is born of the union of the spirit and the body of each one of us, because, till the spirit enters and controls the body, there is no life in it. The baby’s spirit is not contained inside its body in its

pre-natal condition, but is connected with it by the silver cord (exactly as any other person's body and soul are when the latter is operating independently, as it does often when the body sleeps or is under an anaesthetic), and remains outside in its mother's aura. When any woman is going to be a mother, the orange life-giving ray is attracted to her. It is in the earth-atmosphere, always ready to be diverted. Directly this ray is connected with the mother's organism, from God starts a little atom, or brilliant drop, trickling down the "ray." (I am speaking, please understand, of a new soul, not a reincarnated one.) It is like a drop of quicksilver. As it starts, it divides into two, like quicksilver can; so whenever there is one new soul born there is always its counterpart.

The drop does not start from any one particular spot, or place, or part of God, and it leaves something there - a trail, as it were - which remains linked up still in the God-element and still connected to the little drop, like a very long, slender twig connecting a leaf to a branch - connected always, however low a man may fall, for severing it would mean annihilation. This is a subtle point. The place from which you start, and to which you remain connected, is your particular 'bit of God;' so one need not think of oneself as lost in God, but as having one's own little part in Him that belongs to one alone.

As I told you, the drop just as it starts divides into two. One part goes to one mother, and one to another. (Remember, we are only speaking of new souls now.) One is always male, and the other female. As the drop travels slowly to earth it gets larger and larger, and it begins to shape out and take more space. By the time it reaches the mother's aura it is almost the size and shape of a tiny, weeny baby, and so remains with the mother till the time of birth. If this is premature, the spirit is jerked or drawn rather abruptly into it, and so does not get control of the little body as well as if it had had the proper time to do it. This partly accounts for the high death-rate under these circumstances. It's not only physical reasons, but because the Life-force has not a strong hold of the body. As the child is born, the spirit goes into it. The spirit, because it is of God, has a consciousness of its own, but not conscious personality, that has to be developed. It will be developed by the spirit operating through the body. Therefore, by unison of soul and body, we have mental growth and growth of personality.

God does not work separately for each individual. He does not say, for instance, "That nice little woman, Mrs. Smith, loves children and longs to have one; I will direct a life 'ray' to her." No, the world is full of this "Life-force," or these rays, and they automatically act in suitable environments.

God works automatically always through the regular operation of His laws. I will give you a very simple everyday illustration; let us say the "Postmaster General." He is responsible for the general direction of the Post Office, but he does not do the detail work, like sorting letters, and delivering them, but he has certain rules for the same. Well, God is the "Postmaster General" of the Universe.

THE MADONNA AND A LITTLE EARTH MOTHER

Yes, I saw all the lovely mass of blue and white of the flowers in the garden, Mummy, but I did not try to impress you with thoughts of the Madonna; rather I seemed to catch your thoughts of her. The colors suggested that train of ideas, because they are associated with her especially.

Paul says he considers her the most beautiful spirit in the spirit-world, and I don't think he is far wrong.

She is so kind and tender to all the young men who have come over in the war, always ready to talk to and take an interest in them, and when she looks at you, you feel she is not only thinking of you but of your mother.

She is very beautiful, but not with the beauty of a woman on earth. You would not remark anything especial in detail about her, or say, "Oh, what lovely hair!" or, "What an exquisite complexion!"

She is the ideal Mother-woman, and has all the beautiful expression of all the most tender mothers of the world - pity, love, and holiness. She is indeed "the Mother of Compassion."

There is no feeling of fear or even of awe in connection with her, but you feel you can go and talk to her and be comforted if you feel lonely.

Talking of mothers, I must tell you of a little earth-mother I have been trying to help lately. She came over quite unexpectedly after her baby's birth, and her grief and disappointment were very great when she woke to life here and found she had left the earth-plane, her young husband, and the baby.

Her relatives over here are all elderly people, and she refused to be comforted by them. She said they were old, and it was natural they should be content, while she was young, and resented having her earth-life cut abruptly short just as it was so full of new and wonderful interests. They happened to know me, and asked me to see and try to comfort her, for I am about her age, loved my earth-life equally, and yet have found life here so full of happiness.

I went to her, sat down beside her and took her hand, and felt full of sympathy and understanding. (I could not help thinking how on earth I should have enjoyed an innocent flirtation with a pretty girl like this, and should have looked at her with a world of "sloppiness" in my eyes, but here I have quite a different feeling. I might have been her grandmother, one feels so impersonal.) She talked to me of her hopes and fears, and gave me details of the pain-racked body she had left on earth, which would have been quite embarrassing there, but here one is not ashamed of natural things. I explained to her as far as I could the psychic side of physical things, and tried to show her that though she could not tend her baby's little mortal body any more, - some other woman would have to do that, - she could keep watch over its spirit, and try and impress it with right and beautiful things, and be in very truth its

guardian angel.

She is beginning to understand and to become more reconciled, and I have helped several others since in similar circumstances. Some of them will probably help to look after the babies here.

I often go to the colony where the "Red Indians" live, for I have several friends among them, and I love their jolly little brown babies, and their horses too!

Yes, people here live in "sets" or "colonies," because those of like interests and nationalities gravitate naturally to each other, and to their own people. Otherwise one can imagine it would not be very happy if you found yourself mixed up with people of every nationality, with dissimilar tastes and experiences, and with nothing in common between you, for the fact of dying does not change you in any way.

THE AURA

The aura looks like a kind of "halo" (I have no doubt the painters of old, inspired for their task, may have seen or "sensed" the halo round the head of Christ, for of course it would have been very definite) that surrounds and outlines not only the head but the whole body of every living person.

The aura, properly speaking, is an emanation from a body to which spirit is still allied; it interpenetrates the surface of the body, it is a dissemination of the spirit over the body.

We talk of the spirit as being in a body, but in speaking of it are hard put to locate it.

The aura is of various sizes and colors and part-colors, and is always in movement, and changes in the same person at different times, for it is affected by emotion, character, and health.

Intellect and intelligence determine the shape, for there is a fine head aura round any one who is well developed mentally.

Spirits can tell by looking at the aura if a person is psychic - that is how they know a medium, and come to them when they want to communicate with people on earth.

I think the aura goes to make up the spirit-body, for when the physical body dies there is no aura. In dying, the aura gets gradually less and is drawn inward and upward. I have noticed many times (for I have seen many men die on the battlefield) that at the same rate at which the aura absorbs into the body the spirit begins coming out of the head.

I think also the fact that it is possible to put all the aura on one side of the body under certain circumstances, shows it is soul. If it were only connected with the physical it would only disappear as the body grew cold at death.

The soul, too, when out of the body looks like the aura, which does not totally disappear till the spirit and body are severed.

At a materializing séance you can see the same substance (as the aura) coming from the body of the medium, meanwhile the aura greatly reduces.

The physical “door” of the spirit, which it uses to enter and leave the body while it sleeps, is below the ribs in front, pretty nearly the centre of the body; at death, when it leaves for good, it comes out of the head.

When the spirit is going to travel, the aura apparently sinks into the body en masse, and a strong column of “spirit-matter” comes from the door I have just spoken of. It “builds up” or shapes into the spirit-body, and is connected with the physical one by a cord. In the case of a spiritually and mentally developed person the spirit can travel a long way, for the cord would be more pliable and elastic than in the case of anyone who was not developed in these respects.

Though you don’t know it, it is through a person’s aura you “sense” them. It is a sure indication of character, and the colors which indicate characteristics are the same as I mentioned before in another connection: blue and violet (certain shades) for spirituality, yellow and orange intellectuality, pink indicates an affectionate nature, an apple-green a well-balanced mentality.

The undesirable colors are certain shades of grey and brown, murky reds, and greens, which indicate sensuality, jealousy, and other unpleasant traits.

Of course there are tremendous varieties in “auras” (they are naturally as varied as the people in the world), in shades of color, in combinations of colors, shapes, and sizes; also in some people they are clear and well defined, while in others they are uneven, almost “sagging,” or “lumpy-looking,” or misty.

When any organ of the physical body is out of order or diseased, the aura in that spot dwindles for the time being; for this reason a clairvoyant can sometimes locate illness.

ASTRALS AND THOUGHT-FORMS

You want to know the difference between “Astrals” and “Thought-Forms?” They are quite different and by no means interchangeable terms, though people often speak as if they were, for the latter is only a “picture” and not a “spirit” at all.

There are two kinds of “Astrals” (so called because they are functioning on the “Astral” plane). First, there are the spirits existing there in their Astral bodies, which are made out of actual atoms. The Astral, though fine in comparison with the physical body, is still coarse (for it is only undeveloped people who are not spiritually evolved who live on that sphere). There is a great difference between it and the bodies of those on the third sphere.

There is no “death” after you leave earth, but this further difference in degree makes people think sometimes one has to undergo that ordeal again on going higher through the different planes. This is not so, though a great change certainly does

take place in the “astral body;” the chemical condition alters, it becomes refined, but it is no greater than that which takes place in your earth-body continually, all the cells of which change and renew several times in the course of your life there, though you are not conscious of it in either case.

When a man in the Astral changes mentally, his body changes too in sympathy with his development, and in corresponding degree, but more quickly than with you.

If a man longs to progress very fast, and makes up his mind and concentrates on it, he can change in a very short time; but if he makes no special effort, and progresses slowly mentally, his body changes slowly too. This gradual refinement continues through the spheres; the change comes from within.

The second kind of Astral is a spirit connected with a physical body, and functioning temporarily only on the Astral plane, while its earth-body sleeps or is unconscious. It looks much the same as the other, but its body is actually different, for it has an astral “husk” only, much on the same principle as the temporary body made for a materializing spirit at a séance, and like that composed of astral atoms consolidated.

These astral atoms collect round the aura of a developed man, and on his soul emerging (as I have already described to you) from the centre of his body, these atoms close round his spirit and form a “husk” or covering to protect it in its travels.

He could not function in his real “astral” body, for that is not complete; it is not complete for a curious reason. It is this: that a certain amount of the material that makes his astral body is not available while he is connected with his physical body, for it goes to make the vital cord or connection between his travelling spirit and his stationary body, which is only severed at death (for the severing means death).

After this has occurred, of course, no cord being then required, this material is available for his astral body, and so he no longer requires to borrow astral atoms to protect himself; his spirit is sufficiently clothed, being complete.

As I am not in the Astral I find it difficult to tell if a person is in their permanent astral body or not.

This accounts too for the difficulty a clairvoyant sometimes has in being able to say if a person is in or out of their physical body permanently. They too are, it must be remembered, seeing in other conditions than their normal. Sight varies enough even on the earth-plane; no two men there see exactly alike.

If you took a collection of people to a hilltop and asked them to describe the view without artificial aid, they would all see in different degrees: some only things near, others only things distant, some as it were through a haze, and others clearly. This is why normal clairvoyance is often incorrect - things are difficult to see in the right perspective; and it varies too according to the bias of the medium’s brain on which it is registered by the sight.

A “Thought-Form” is a picture, a thought-photograph, projected through the

atmosphere by some one, but the recipient would have to mentally “develop” it, as it were, in order to see it; by that I mean they would have to be thinking of the sender at the right moment, and in the right way. Space is nothing, for it takes no longer to think four or five hundred miles than into the next room. So if you are in the right mental condition you can see a thought-form; it’s only a picture in the atmosphere.

This explains certain things; for instance, visions of Christ to the dying. Hundreds on the battlefields may see Him individually and spontaneously. If He is projecting His thought to all who are lying there, all who are attuned in mind can and may be able to see Him. Just as when a ship at sea sends out a wireless message or a call for help, it is not confined to one receiver, but is open to all ships and receiving stations which are suitably attuned. So all who are suitably attuned and harmonized can receive thought pictures, impressions, and inspiration. This explains also how various people in widely separated places may simultaneously be “inspired” by one individual. “Inspired” I said, not “controlled” remember, Mum; that is a very different matter (people should always use common sense in judging what they are told). Personally, I don’t believe spirits from the higher spheres ever “control” people on earth. It is hard enough for us who are only on the third sphere to get back into the old conditions, for those it would be exceedingly difficult and a deliberate waste; it would be like engaging a tutor of the highest scholastic attainments to teach an infant its A B C!

Now as regards a so-called “ghost” haunting a particular spot. If it is a persistent haunt that has continued for many years, even for centuries, it is almost certainly a thought-form and not a spirit; for it is very unlikely that any spirit would be so unfriended as to be permitted to go on in this aimless and unhappy manner indefinitely, for as soon as any one desires help here it is forthcoming.

What happens is this. Certain events (probably tragic), which are felt very intensely by the participators at the time, leave a very clear-cut and well-defined picture in the atmosphere, and at first for a short time the actors in the scene may return in spirit to the spot, and by thinking over what happened revivify and intensify that thought picture.

Ordinary people then come to that place knowing its history, and some may see the “ghost,” and they see it because they are psychic and unconsciously psychometrize the atmosphere, and so mentally develop the picture that is there, and so constantly renew the image, which thus becomes almost permanent. Yes, I know it does seem difficult to realize, but it also applies to “feeling” as well as “seeing” past conditions; thus a medium feels pain and discomfort when describing the illness of any one. The medium is psychometrizing the condition connected with the spirit while it was a body, and not the spirit itself.

I say this because I have been told and have noticed myself that spirits are surprised on returning to earth to hear themselves described with symptoms of disease they have almost forgotten they ever suffered. For instance, your father, who “died” over

thirty-five years ago, here is in perfect health, yet whenever he returns to earth the mediums describe him as having a cough, and discomfort in his chest; that was true when he passed over (he died of pneumonia), but of course is totally unlike his present condition.

Another man I know, who had some very painful disease which affected one leg, tells me he gets quite angry when he hears it described now, as he no longer feels it at all even when he returns to earth-conditions, and yet the mediums describe it most accurately, and one might imagine he was still in suffering instead of in perfect health!

RELIGION AND SCIENCE, THOUGHT, AND THOUGHTS

It is curious that modern investigations have reconciled Religion and Science, for there was a time when religious teachers feared the revelations of scientists; but as a matter of fact these taught better than they knew, for further knowledge has strengthened faith and not undermined it. Truth will always bear the light.

Many in the past who disbelieved Bible statements now realize it was possible for these seeming "miracles" to have really happened.

They know that the appearance of Christ after His resurrection, in a locked and barred upper room, was a possible fact, for He was in His "Spirit-body," and thousands of men revisit the earth in this way daily now, though only those who are psychically developed can see them.

It is possible for "spirit-bodies" to go through apparently solid substances, just as sunlight goes through glass, or heat through metal, for as a matter of fact no atoms of matter are actually touching, however solid they may appear to be.

Man is a triune being, and consists of body, soul, and spirit, though in the world we live as if we consisted of a material body only (with a small spirit tucked away somewhere as a kind of afterthought). Through his ill-balanced development man does not half realize his own possibilities.

I want to impress upon you, apropos of this, the enormous importance of thought; if men only realized and cultivated their powers in this direction they might do wonderful things.

Thoughts should be guarded as carefully as deeds, for thought is actually creative and impresses an image on the surrounding atmosphere of which a permanent record remains. Some men are haunted when they come over here by what they have themselves unwittingly created.

Of course on earth thought is creative also, for everything has there to be planned or arranged in some one's mind before it is made by hands or machinery.

In the spirit-world, too, we can speak by thought, by telepathy; that is how we

overcome the difficulty of different languages. This does not mean that I have no privacy of thought, and that my mind is open for all to read. I have to project a thought when I want to communicate it, just as all a hypnotist's thoughts are not conveyed to his patient, but only those which he directly impresses. If you could get people "attuned" properly, they could even think music at each other!

All wrong thought goes to build up and strengthen the power of evil (called by men the devil). In the beginning, I am told, it was almost negative; man increased it himself by inflicting pain, by cruelty, by lust and envy.

There is great spiritual and mental "unrest" among men now and has been for some time past, however undefined, obscure, and misunderstood, because man is evolving and there is an unconscious struggle between the spiritual and animal in him. Chaos and disturbance are the result.

As to the people whose "faith" you say is "shaken" by the war, all I can say is, it's not much of a faith! They are trying to limit God again; He does not work for one country, but for the good of all mankind, and each nation will learn what it requires for its future development. It would be as sensible for a doctor to treat one symptom of disease in the body only, instead of strengthening and cleansing the whole of it. The systems of the world are being purified. In the past we have put aside or trifled with things that now must be faced in earnest.

The earth-plane is God's garden, and it was a beautiful garden; what is left of God in it is still beautiful, but it is now full of weeds of evil, disease, poverty, and selfishness.

The gardeners are beginning to realize that further trimming is of no use, and these things must be uprooted utterly. In the past so many enjoyed the sunshine and fruit and flowers, and neglected the weeds, which were brushed aside and hidden as unlovely and troublesome things; they have now become rampant, and only drastic measures are any use.

I know sometimes things look depressing, but I solemnly promise you there is a silver lining to this dark cloud. Men in the old days worked for individual progress; in future the ideal will be to work for others, for the good of the whole and the improvement of the community.

I am told the sacrifices of this war have not been in vain; that a purified England will result. There will be a spiritual revolution; people will try to face truth, to drop some of the shams that are now used to veil it. Perhaps present events do seem to you like a "dark tunnel," but I see the sun shining at the end of it, and I know there has never been a crisis in the world's history which has held so much certainty of ultimate good arising out of it.

Nations and peoples, like individuals, sooner or later reap what they themselves have sown of good and evil; and knowing this, one realizes that no life, nor the life of any nation, is a succession of disconnected events. There is a sequence running through them all. They fit into each other like the pieces of a puzzle, though one only

sees it clearly as a whole when life on earth is over and the last piece has fitted into its place.

II. - CLAUDE'S LETTERS

[A Letter written when Claude was in the ranks.]

August 1914

MY DARLING MOTHER, - Hope you arrived home safely last night. On my way back after leaving you I overtook a lance-corporal in the Engineers coming in my direction, so we walked along together. We became quite "pals." He took me into his tent, one of those situated below the gymnasium, and showed me several dodges in using the rifle. After that we sat and yarned till just before ten, when I turned in.

The daring "Sergeant-saucers" were not in good form last night; the threat of having up the offenders before the Major appears to have had the desired effect. The corporal with whom I was yarning had three brothers in the Zulu and Boer Wars, so that his stories were extremely interesting.

Parade this morning commenced at 6.15 and breakfast at 7.30. At the 9 o'clock parade about a dozen of us were picked out, including myself and I—, to form what might be termed a "super-recruit" squad, as we are more advanced than the others. We are to be rushed on and drafted to our companies this week, if possible.

The selected few were drilled by one Sergeant K—, the humorous character with the crisp repartee. During the 10 to 11 interval, L— and I sat in the shade of the canteen with Sergeants K— and B— and another sergeant, whose lack of military knowledge is only surpassed by the superabundance of flesh round his "Plimsoll line"!

By dint of a half-pint of beer all round and a winning smile, I soon got on excellent terms with the lot, and was rewarded with some shockingly humorous anecdotes from Sergeant K—.

In the Zulu campaign his experiences were positively sidesplitting, especially as he sees the funny side of everything.

The story of one of his friends, who was shot on his bare back by a Zulu whose blunderbuss was loaded with chopped-up telephone wires, and leaped into the trenches with a yell, with his back bristling with copper spikes, takes a lot of beating. The cream of the joke was that the miserable victim had to spend the rest of his military career in explaining to wilfully incredulous but secretly delighted inquirers how he came to be shot in the back if he wasn't running away.

Needless to say, the more indignantly he denied the soft impeachment the more sceptical his tormentors became!

Scarcely less funny are his experiences when serving with the British Expedition to

quell the riots in Crete.

I nearly put my foot in it to-day. After 12 o'clock I went to read the paper on the hill overlooking the sea near the Fort entrance, and fell asleep. L—— left me to go to dinner; I slumbered peacefully on. Our next parade was at 2, but at five minutes past I was still dreaming, until the breathless L—— dashed up to say that drill had started ten minutes before! However, Sergeant K——, seeing us coming in the dim distance, relapsed into a spasm of deep thought, with his back to the squad, and consequently pretended not to notice our arrival. But I nearly had a "spasm" over it. I am going down to the "Ship" to-night and I shall be very glad to get some "grub," as I've had nothing for dinner but sleep, which isn't very filling. I have fallen on hard times: I have a cold in my right eye, a pain in my left arm, due of course to the vaccination, and a bit of a headache, due I expect to the same cause.

However, I am getting used to the floor of the "Jimmy-Nasum," as I heard it called this morning. I will write again soon.—

Your loving son, CLAUDE

[The following Letters were written from the Front after Claude joined the Royal Flying Corps.]

FRANCE

MY DARLING MOTHER, - Thank you so much for your letters and the cakes. I believe, as a matter of fact, that a postal transport was lost, stolen, or strayed recently, as no one got any letters for a day or two.

I had a two-hour trip yesterday on wireless work, over Ypres as usual. But owing to a clear sky and an erratic course, "Archie" didn't risk straining his neck over us!

After tea I had one of the most miraculous escapes on record in the Flying Corps. It happened thuswise:-

I was taking up an F.E., our largest fighting pusher biplane in the Service, for the first time.

H—— being very anxious to accompany me to save ballast," as he put it, came too.

Everything went well getting off, and I was beginning to congratulate myself when the engine stopped without a second's warning.

On reviewing the situation the prospects were hardly promising. We were 60 feet up, and over an impermeable square of fifty-foot trees, and too low to turn, not to mention it was a strange machine!

Rather awkward, wasn't it? However, I kept straight on for the trees in front, gliding as flat as I dared, hoping to clear the top and reach a ploughed field beyond. Nothing doing!

Note, Providence had ordained that two trees should be cut down, and those two left a gap the exact width of my machine, though it looked smaller.

Trying to get over them I got too flat, and losing flying-speed stalled the machine.

As an A.S.C. mechanic told me afterwards, she got through that gap with just a 2-inch clearance on both sides.

No sooner had she passed, than down went her nose almost vertically for earth, and about 40 feet up!!!

There was nothing for it but to hold the stick hard back and wait for her to pick up enough speed to answer the elevator.

Rather unpleasant that wait! Thirteen feet off the plough she started pulling up, and instead of striking the ground vertically, she struck it at 45°.

By all the laws of nature she ought to have turned over and deposited her engine through yours truly and H—, and made a hole in the ground.

But no; we weren't "for it" this time. She struck a bit sideways at 50 miles an hour and 450 down, spun round, smashed to smithereens, top to bottom. H— and I got out without a scratch! But, facing the gap in the trees, how, I dunno!

The getting out, consisting of placing one foot straight on the ground, which in view of the fact that ordinarily the "Cock-pit" is 11 feet up and has to be reached by a step ladder, is no mean symptom of the condition of the machine.

We both got out, shook hands spontaneously, and laughed. It really was rather funny.

But our adventures were not at an end. Within three minutes of crashing, a rapidly increasing whistle changed to a moan and finished up with a bang!

On first thoughts, I thought we were being shelled, as the explosive pitched 300 yards off, though in view of our distance from the lines it was highly improbable.

However, a more distinct and regular drone betrayed a Hun machine, about 7000 feet up, and apparently vertically above.

The advent of another whistle, precisely like the first, made the crowd that had collected disperse with considerably greater alacrity than one is accustomed to see in Belgian peasantry.

The second one was a darned good shot considering his height, as it fell within 200 yards of us, and blew a hole in the ground.

He then went on his way rejoicing, and gave Abeelee another, though with what result I have not hitherto ascertained.

I have secured half a dozen portions of his second shot at us, as mementoes of the occasion.

The local damage was considerable; seven potatoes were irretrievably damaged! One

in particular was riddled with shrapnel and quite inedible.

So my first real crash has been a good one. I have taken a couple of “snaps” of it; I hope they will turn out satisfactory.

I have also got the canvas off my Q.c. tail, with sundry patches, most of them acquired in our scrap over Lille. Think we shall have to start a museum after the war.

By the way, it was lucky I did not fly over, as Captain C—— flew over last Friday, the day before I came out, and spent half an hour in the Channel with a dud engine, and was salved by a destroyer.

Rather nasty if there had been two of us on board the machine.

Well, it's about time I did some work - 11 a.m. I must go and test my Q.c. if it has been finished.

Good-by for the present. Tons of love to all.

Your loving son, CLAUDE

FRANCE

MY DARLING MOTHER,—Another “dud” day, but by no means a wasted one.

After breakfast, four of us started off on foot for a trudge to the trenches, though we got a lift right up to Ypres.

The town is in a most extraordinary state, just as though a stupendous earthquake had paid it a visit; and is so deserted that it is veritably a city of the dead.

The remains of the far-famed Cloth Hall and Cathedral have still traces of their old beauty, with here and there traces of frescoes and carvings.

The cemetery has been shelled beyond recognition, and the gasometer is by no means gas-tight.

We went southwards by the Lille gate and visited a battery dugout near X—— where we refreshed the inner man.

Thence we entered the first communicating trench, quite half a mile long, and worked up into the reserve trenches towards “Sanctuary Wood” and “Maple Copse.”

Most extraordinary the way the trenches run, each with its name on a post at the ends.

“Lover's Walk,” “Bond Street,” “Suicide Corner” were a few I noticed in passing.

The ground around was a mass of shell-holes, graves, and fallen trees.

The air was none too pure either, as the recent attacks have kept the men too busy to dispose of all the poor devils who were knocked out.

In the wood itself, one can walk about in comparative safety, though 70 or 80 per

cent of the trees have been lopped off at the base by passing shells.

The German trench-mortars were pretty active and making lots of noise, whilst every now and then, about seven or eight times a minute, one could hear the crack of a rifle, as one or other of our snipers spotted a target, and quite as frequently a “ziph,” “ziph,” as the Germans did the same, and the bullets came over the trench we were in.

They make a noise almost like a sigh, but are not nearly so unpleasant to my mind as the shells one can hear coming for ten or fifteen seconds with a noise like a heavy goods train, finishing up with a crash that makes one jump like a shot rabbit.

Eventually we found ourselves in the front-line trenches and within twenty yards of the Germans.

Looking through a periscope they only appeared about five, with stacks of barbed wire and men who had fallen in the last attack in between.

Indeed, in some places, where a trench had been only partially taken or lost by one side or the other, they were actually in the same trench, with a dozen or so coils of barbed wire as a partition - five yards distance between their barricade and ours.

Coming away they sniped at us, but with no success, and we got within twenty yards of one of our machines brought down last month, and within thirty of the remains of the one H— strafed on one of his many duels.

Three o'clock found us on our way back, and within an hour we were having tea in an Artillery dug-out.

Thence we skirted Ypres, and by walking along the remains of the railway line struck the main road homeward bound.

Walking along the line we were surprised to hear a hidden voice yelling at us to “clear out,” which we didn't take long to do, as I spotted the muzzle of a 6-inch gun within 20 feet of us loaded and cocked and pointing our way, but it was so well hidden that we hadn't noticed it till the gunner yelled out.

Anyway, it went off within thirty seconds with a pretty resounding bang!

That's one of the beauties of life out here, you never know what's going to happen next.

In passing all that is left of Ypres Station we gave a peep in at the running-sheds.

One of the only two engines inside was a rickety and prehistoric old pram, and the other had had its chimney taken off as clean as a whistle by the shell that had plonked a neat hole in the wall, and was too knocked about to ever be serviceable again.

Fifty yards down the line was another loco, with a shell-hole plonk through the boiler, with tubes sticking out all over like a hedgehog.

Another hundred yards and there were the two largest shell-holes I've ever seen, and there are some sizey ones in Ypres!

Two pits about 25 feet deep and the bottom full of water with a circumference of at least 30 feet!

When one sees that the edges of the holes are about 10 feet apart and the "Jack Johnsons," cannot have been fired at a range of less than 15 miles, one cannot but respect the German Artillery.

Besides, they were both beautifully placed in the middle of the station sidings, with rails lying about torn and twisted like so much cotton.

The town walls show innumerable scars in every direction, and the whole presents a picture one can never forget.

The trenches we had visited were at the very apex of the Ypres salient, surrounded by Teutons on three sides, though the Highlanders who were in them were as cheery as larks.

A few hunks of shell accompanied me home as souvenirs. Time I knocked off now; post orderly's just going. Love to all. - Your loving son,

CLAUDE

MY DARLING MOTHER, - Just a line to let you know that I am in excellent form, though very hard worked, having done eleven and a quarter hours in four days, which is rather stiff considering the heights vary from 6000 feet upward, and "Archie" has been increasingly active and accurate.

However, I think things will cool off again by the end of next week, which is comforting.

Moreover, the prospect of a week's leave is distinctly cheering, and it may come in three, or four, or ten, or eleven days, or later, according to circumstances.

We are rather a sad little party just now, as "B" Flight Commander and an observer, both awfully good fellows, fell victims to "Archie" the day before yesterday.

However, H— promptly went up and "did in" one of their scouts in return, so things are almost square again.

The weather has cleared up beautifully, and shows symptoms of starting another summer.

I saw England yesterday for the first time from here.

The brilliant white cliffs lining a sea of the deepest blue, whilst the entire world lay under an ocean of mist, tinged pink with the rising sun, was a sight that it is not easy to forget.

One does see most wonderfully beautiful sights flying high at dawn.

The shadow of the machine follows one along the clouds below, surrounded by a white halo, which in turn is encircled by a complete little rainbow.

And just as one is beginning to be sentimental “bang!” goes an “Archie” with a yellow flame and a puff of smoke, and makes you jump like a jack-in-the-box and dodge like a squib, and one’s mind returns to the job in hand with a jerk.

Trying to take photographs yesterday I dived through a valley in the clouds down to 6000 feet, but before I got over the target off went four well-placed 4-inch high explosives, and I was back in the clouds before you could say snap.

However, the Germans are nothing if not methodical, and they tried to pepper the entire cloud!

Rather amusing.

We have a new and swollen-headed, youth here (who can’t have been properly brought up) who is training as an observer, and who is very given to criticizing pilots and their flying.

He was rash enough to tell me that he didn’t think I had had long enough in the air to be safe, and other offensive remarks of a like nature.

Well, having finished a “job of work,” as wireless duty is called, I brought him back to the aerodrome with the fixed determination to give him a lesson; so I tail-slid him, and side-slipped, and nose-dived, and stalled, and pitched, and rolled.

Towards the end of five minutes he looked round very sheepishly and said he’d be ill in a minute; naturally I sympathized deeply, and gave two colossal tosses!

He was wrong, he didn’t hold out for nearly a minute, and I must confess I was cruel enough to slow up the machine in order that he could hear me chuckling.

I haven’t heard him criticize my flying since.

Alas for him, he had me as a pilot again to-day, and I brought him over the aerodrome at much the same height.

However, as he had made so much fuss about the previous performance, I brought him down “sarcastically” - that is to say, so slowly that he might have been a rich and elderly relation.

But all to no purpose; he had already been ill at the prospect of what he thought he’d have to go through.

Dear, dear, it’s a hard world, but it’s a bilious air! Good-bye for the present; fondest love to all. - Your loving son, CLAUDE

FRANCE

MY DARLING MOTHER, - It Must seem quite an age since I last wrote to you.

We have had quite a gay time for the last three days, though very little in the flying line.

On Monday, the weather being pleasantly unpleasant, we “Dunkirked” in the afternoon, lunched there and did some shopping, but returned almost immediately, as the roads were so bad that we didn’t like to face them in the dark.

Tuesday proved a very rough morning, but after tea four of us went into the little town of X—— four miles from here, to a cinema.

The show is run by the Sixth Corps, and entertains two to three hundred men every night.

Fancy an army carrying a cinematograph with it!

Unfortunately, we got back too late for the post. Next morning the news leaked out that the King was going to inspect us.

About 6000 infantry were paraded on the aerodrome, and a flagstaff erected in the centre.

The Flying Corps were well represented. I had had instructions to fly up and around, to give the show a “finishing touch,” but a darned thunder-storm came up and provided that instead!

The King arrived at 10.30, and the men marched past in great style.

Unfortunately the rain prevented the royal party, including the Prince of Wales, and accompanied by Sir John French, from coming round the sheds afterwards, though a number of the Staff, commonly called “Tin-hats,” had to be shown round.

Two buttoned me, and, there being no means of an honorable retreat, I did the “showman act” for half an hour.

In the evening the entire flight, with two exceptions, motored into X—— to see a “pierrot show” there, run by five officers and two Belgian girls, who are let off for the purpose of entertaining the men.

Darned good show, too! Anything that makes one forget the war for a couple of hours is very welcome.

I ran across a chap I knew at Eastbourne at “The Fancies,” as they style themselves.

I believe he and I used to have hotly contested competitions for the bottom seat in class.

Honors were more or less even, if my memory serves me right.

I told him to come over this way on the off-chance of getting a joy-ride. As a matter of fact, the “joy” part of the proceeding’s is usually one-sided - the pilot’s side.

More rain again this morning; indeed, "an ideal dawn and very promising," as we remarked at breakfast.

There are rumors, though as yet not officially confirmed, that the strength of the R.F.C. is being reduced in the winter to ten pilots per squadron, instead of the present strength of twelve.

The only way it would seem to affect the remainder would be that leave would come a week sooner each time, and very nice, too!

At the present rate of progress, another four weeks ought to see me home again.

I had a very nice letter from Mrs. D— and G— yesterday, and of course one from you too.

By the way, I forgot to mention that yesterday afternoon I had to do an aerial patrol over B—, as the King was reviewing some troops there. Fearfully rough up, as we, H— and I, spent most of our time dodging thunder storms, but in the absence of "Archie" the trip was distinctly pleasant.

A perfect gale is in progress just now. The trees are shedding their leaves, while the rain is beating an infernal tattoo on the roof, which, being of canvas stretched on a wood frame, resounds like a drum.

I have got an extensive stock of letters to polish off by to-night's post, so I'll shut down for the day. Love to all.

[This is Claude's last letter. He wrote a few lines on the 8th to say he "would be home in a few days on leave," but he never came for he went out on the morning of the 11th November and did not return. He was reported "missing," and it was nearly a month before he was known to have been killed in mid-air that morning, fighting two German aeroplanes.]

FRANCE,

November 5, 1915

MY DARLING MOTHER, - Success at last! Had a real adventure, involving several minor ones in its train, and it was thuswise:-

Yesterday being the first fine day, I had instructions to go up in an F.E., with P— as observer, to take some photographs over X—: about the most unpleasant job going, as the numerous woods about there are absolutely bristling with "Archies" of no mean prowess, as I can testify, having had, perforce, to sample some of their wares on many a reconnaissance of late. It took us, roughly, an hour to get up to 9,000 feet, which time we spent between Y— and X—, climbing, climbing, and climbing still. The air was pretty full of machines, it being the first fine day for some considerable time. We saw no Huns, though we afterwards heard that there were three hanging about behind their lines, and worrying a number of our fellows doing

photography. Twenty to twelve found us east of X— —, not far short of 10,000 feet up, and distinctly chilly.

A biplane and a monoplane appeared east of us, the biplane leading, with ample evidence of being in a hurry, with the monoplane - which appeared to be one of our "Morane" type - overhauling it hands over fists. We were about 2500 feet above the buses, and when within about a mile I got a glimpse of the monoplane's top wing. Black crosses on a white base! Good enough!

Down went my F.E.'s nose almost vertically, my observer standing on the wireless set, which in the normal flying position is straight up in front of the passenger seat, but in the present case was of course considerably more horizontal than the "floor." Two thousand feet we came down, while the air-speed indicator went up to 160 m.p.h. and then stuck - not having been designed for the purpose of exceeding recognized limits. I expected the F.E. to fold up under the strain any moment, but she stood it like a rock.

By this time the other two machines were almost vertically below us. The Hun had caught up the Be.Qc., and was emptying his gun into it at 50 yards' range. It subsequently transpired that just at this moment he had put three bullets in the observer's arm, and one through the main petrol tank, with the result that the precious fluid was pouring all over pilot, observer, and fuselage.

I started pulling the F.E. out of her nose dive about 200 feet above the Hun, as too sudden a shock would inevitably have crumpled her up. The consequence was that we found ourselves above and behind the unfortunate Teuton, and within 20 yards of him. To my mind he never saw us until we opened fire. Thank the Lord, the machine-gun worked, for a change! Twenty rounds of lead were planted into the back of his neck, though apparently they did not hit him. He then turned his attention to us, turning left-handed and passing directly below us. This necessitated our getting on to a perpendicular bank, and doing a complete circuit to see where he'd got to. The little beggar was describing circuits round us, while we did a sort of "inner circle," conducted, of course, with a perpendicular bank; but owing to the fact that our speed was so great, and that we were doing complete turns in about twice the length of our machine, the centrifugal force was so great that P— couldn't hold the machine-gun on its mounting. As it is hinged centrally, the heavier half being inwards, it swung down, and though the whole gun only weighs twenty-eight pounds he could not pull it up square.

Things being at the moment at a distinctly unsatisfactory status, we weren't sorry to see the Hun head for home. After him we went, both diving lustily, while P— (more familiarly known as "Pongo") gave him the rest of the drum - another twenty-eight rounds.

I was beginning to get a little anxious, as we were getting very low and expecting "Archie" to get us any minute - when we got him.

A lucky shot found its billet, and the pilot was no more.

The evolutions that machine described falling 7000 feet with no man at the wheel were extraordinary.

Viewed from above - first wheels tip, then right way again, a loop, several cartwheels, a nose dive, more loops, and several turns on to and off its back, sideways, until it was lost to sight almost on the ground. Good enough!

By this time another F.E., a Bristol Scout, and two C.c.'s had arrived, but - fortunately for me - too late to claim a share in the finale.

The next I remember doing was looking at my watch, 12.45.

The incident over, we started climbing again, as those infernal photographs had to be done. At this point the engine began to have a say in the matter, and one cylinder decided to strike. So homeward we wended our weary way, though, I must confess, not without a frequent exchange of handshakes and chuckles.

Quite an ovation on landing - the only person who wasn't cheery was the unfortunate observer of the Q.c. who entered into the commencement of the scrap. The satisfaction of knowing that the Johnny who'd pushed three holes into his right arm - considerately avoiding to touch the bone - had been properly strafed, didn't bear any weight. However, he'd had a rotten time in the air; it wasn't to be wondered at.

This little beggar we had the luck to account for had, in company with two Aviatiks, given two other Q.c.'s of ours a busy time when they were on photography and reconnaissance duties, which rather mitigates the sorrow which one naturally feels for the poor beggars, whom the laws of war made our victims, though they might have been the best of fellows in themselves.

The major was delighted, as it was the first machine of this type to show up in this quarter. A number of "Fokkers," as the German Moranes are called, have been giving our machines a lot of trouble down south, and it is rather thought that this one may have been a picked pilot sent up to put some more heart into the other machines working in this sector of the Front.

For his first appearance he had certainly done remarkably well, driving off three of our machines and wounding an observer. For speed and climb, he left our machines absolutely standing, so he was well out of the way.

I must say that he was the first German we have run across who put up anything like a real decent show, and our jubilation is tinged with regret at the loss of a very gallant fellow. So much for the episode itself.

We got back satisfactorily to a late lunch, and soon after having entered up our report as to whether or not it was worth salvaging, were granted permission to go up to the wreckage. Meanwhile complications arose. An Anti-Aircraft ass who, as usual, knew about as much of his job as a cat does of cooking, had 'phoned up to the "V"

Corps to say that a "Vickers" had brought down a German machine inside our lines. No. 5 Squadron, who share the aerodrome with us and have some "Vickers" machines, promptly came to the conclusion that to them was the credit, and sent in a claim to it to the Wing Headquarters.

The Major's tactics were masterful. You remember, I told you that at the close of the scrap another F.E., a Bristol Scout, two Q.c.'s, and sundry others arrived at the conclusion of the fracas up aloft? Well, he instructed each pilot to send in a report of what he saw. Five witnesses all round us and ample - not to say irrefutable - evidence that no "Vickers" had been within ten miles of the scene all day. Result: Verdict for my Squadron.

P— and I, with a flight-sergeant from my flight and a mechanic, set out about four by car. We turned off the — road just after passing —, and left the car down a side-road and waded through twelve inches of liquid mud for 300 yards to the Headquarters of an Artillery Brigade, where they insisted on us having tea. By this time it was dark, and a mist was in the making. Thence we were directed through more seas upon seas of mud to an Infantry Brigade Headquarters - our primary objective. Here, after considerable delay, due to the fact that one brigade was moving in and another out, we got a very braw Scotsman for guide. After that the journey is beyond description; words fail me when trying to portray the journey four miles in the dark and a thickening mist. For a mile we kept our direction by holding one hand on a wire run along posts three feet high for that purpose, through woods, across fields, over trenches, jumping ditches when one could, and wading through when one couldn't. Never less than six inches mud, and sometimes so thick that it was impossible to shift a leg without pulling it out of the morass, by hand if you please!

We thereupon struck a wooden track, known as the "ration railway," having wooden lines with trucks worked by hand. Imagine if you can the difficulties of keeping one's footing stepping from sleeper to sleeper when they were under four inches of mud and water at irregular intervals and only three inches wide, slippery as an eel into the bargain. When you missed one—which you did every third or fourth step (if you were lucky, or every other one if you weren't) - you were up to your knees or sometimes over them in the slime, without exaggerating one atom. A mile of line had been followed by this distinctly laborious method when it finally disappeared from sight altogether under a pond.

A consultation which we proceeded to hold was disturbed by a mysterious creaking, much splashing, and a volume of oaths in an outlandish tongue, which I came to the conclusion was Gaelic. Behold, through the pond streamed a battalion of the Royal Scots coming out of the trenches for a rest. There being obviously nothing for it but to take the plunge, we waded knee-deep in water, and followed the direction of the track, using the various baggage trucks on the line, with their attendant perspiring Scotties, as milestones.

The ground being strewn with shell-holes with the regularity of a honeycomb, I was

lucky to get off with four immersions, some members of the party faring worse. Three miles were covered in this way, and we weren't sorry to find ourselves in a wood, covering the battalion headquarters that we had to interview. A chat and a drink of water, - and even that is precious up there, - and an officer volunteered to take us out to the scene of the crash. A walk of five hundred yards - more mud, more water - brought us up to a line of trenches and dugouts about one hundred yards from the German trenches, though screened from those nearest us by a slight rise in between. That we were in unpleasant proximity was soon apparent, as the phew! phew! of the bullets came with most disturbing regularity. All the time, star-shell magnesium flares went up and made you stand still as a rock, as the least movement would give one away. But by now we had reached the wreckage. As far as I gathered, viewed from the ground, the fall was full of excitement, and our troops for four miles along the lines had stood up and cheered to a man for several minutes on end.

In fact, a few had said to the officer in command of the battalion, so he told us, that they all felt it was worth four days' discomfort to see it come down 7000 feet, as the engine was going all the time, and he only took thirty-five seconds to drop the best part of two miles. You can imagine the pace it was going when it hit the ground! Finishing its descent in a nose dive, as I said with its engine going, it first struck the top of a dug-out. It would seem that fellows watching its descent, and seeing its course to be headed towards them, had taken refuge in the dugout. The roof was built of trunks of trees of reassuring dimensions, covered with three feet of earth.

The impact was so great that, owing to the weight of the engine, it had gone slap through the roof and buried its nose into the bottom of the dugout, leaving a portion of its tail outside, but the rest so telescoped as to occupy not more than a cubic yard. Remembering the fact that this type of machine has an all-steel frame, and that behind the pilot's seat there is nothing of weight, it helps to emphasize what a colossal speed he must have been travelling. The four occupants of the dug-out were all wounded as a result, but none seriously. One in particular lay there under the impression that he was in another world for some time! About a quarter of an hour after striking, the debris caught fire, possibly due to the shells which the Germans promptly proceeded to put over. It was then that the "would-be-corpse" decided that a little activity might be helpful, and as he had begun to smoulder, he was dropped into a convenient shell-hole full of water, which restored him to his status ante-crash, if one may coin an expression. The debris was still smouldering when we got there. Of what we saw in that dug-out ten feet by twelve feet, by the light of an electric torch through the smoke and smell, the time being midnight, and shells going off all around, I shall never forget as long as I live.

Beyond repeating the official report I sent in, details would be too blood-curdling to put on paper. I don't think such a situation has been conceived in the most hair-raising novel ever written.

Awful, isn't it? Shook my nerve up to a mince, but it may straighten out again soon.

Personally, I couldn't stick it for more than a few minutes, and fled into the fresh air, though a particularly close "pew-phut!" drove me into the trench again. A half-hour's wait, while the sergeant and mechanic made a more thorough examination and traced many peculiar items of interest.

As mementoes of a very gruesome occasion, I have got two decoration ribbons the observer was wearing, though no medals were found; one of the ribbons is that of the Iron Cross. I have also the magneto from the engine, and a pistol for firing colored flares to range their anti-aircraft batteries on our machines, a portion of the fabric and plane (though the crosses from the wings had already been collared), and a few regimental buttons from the pilot's tunic, which we shared out to the mechanic and sergeant with us.

Starting home soon after twelve, the process of alternate wading, staggering, paddling, and wallowing was repeated with an increased intensity, owing to the mist having become a proper old fog. Besides getting lost several times, we did an unnecessary four miles, as we missed the proper turning. As you may guess, we were mighty thankful to find our tender again, and infernally fagged too. But our adventures were not at end even then.

Of course we are not allowed lights out there, and we ran slap into a horse and wagon, fortunately missing the former, who proceeded to bolt into the fog in the opposite direction.

More than once one wheel of the car went into a shell-hole, and such a jolting as we got takes a long time to forget.

You may be sure we weren't sorry to turn into the aerodrome at two o'clock this morning, as we hadn't had a bite for what must be easily the most eventful twelve hours of my life.

Having sorted out and apportioned the relics, we turned in, and as for myself, slept like a top.

Thanks so much for your letters and the magazines - I have read the article by the "Junior Sub."

Just off to bye-bye. I'm afraid this is too late for to-night's post, but I thought it better to get it finished, as you may suppose I hadn't even time for a P.C. yesterday.

Good-by, mother dear; thank you and Dad so much for your letters.

Fondest love to all. - Your loving son,

CLAUDE