

SOME IMPORTANT RECENT WORKS ON
PSYCHIC SCIENCE.

The Psychic Riddle. By I. K. Funk, D.D., LL.D. Cloth. Pp. 244. Price, \$1.00 net. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

Borderland of Psychical Research. By James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., LL.D. Cloth. Pp. 426. Price, \$1.50 net. Boston: Herbert B. Turner & Company.

Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death. By Frederic W. H. Myers. Edited and abridged by his son, Leopold H. Myers. Cloth. Pp. 470. Price, \$3.00 net, postage, 20 cents. New York: Longmans, Green & Company.

Proofs of Life After Death. By Robert J. Thompson. Cloth. Pp. 366. Price, \$1.50 net, postage, 12 cents. Boston: Herbert B. Turner & Company.

TO ONE who has followed the progress of the new psychology and psychic science during the past thirty years, the changes that have taken place in the attitude

*Books intended for review in THE ARENA should be addressed to B. O. Flower, Editorial Department, THE ARENA, Boston, Mass.

of the public are very interesting. Thirty years ago spiritualism was a flourishing religion. It had a well-sustained and vigorously aggressive press, a large and growing literature and a number of well-attended societies. But at that time the scientific world and the church were aggressive and all but a unit in their uncompromising hostility. When Alfred Russel Wallace and Professor William Crookes, after long personal investigation of psychical phenomena were forced to accept the claims of the spiritualistic hypothesis, they were almost ostracized for a time by the scientific and literary world. The church was as hostile and intolerant as was the great majority of the evolutionary and materialistic scientists. After a period of almost phenomenal growth in the face of bitter and combined opposition, spiritualism as an organized religious movement began rapidly to decline. This was doubtless largely due to the fact that spiritualism had no creed and no compact organization in a time when the current of society had set strongly in favor of united, coöperated and close organizations. It insisted on the largest possible liberty for the

individual, and in this respect resembled that other great liberal religious organization which arose in the nineteenth century—Unitarianism, a church but loosely held together and with no special creed. Both these organizations represented decentralization in a period when a strong current had set in in favor of centralization. Consequently as organizations both have largely waned, but the influence of their theories and views has probably more largely permeated the thinking element of society, in and out of the church, than any other distinctive religious movements of the nineteenth century. Spiritualism was also greatly handicapped and weakened by the unquestioning credulity of many of its followers and the unscientific attitude taken by some of its leading papers, which were often found defending psychics or mediums that had been exposed and whose actions were certainly on many occasions of the most questionable character.

While, however, spiritualism as an organized religious body began to wane, the interest in psychical phenomena from without was immensely stimulated by the serious investigations of a large number of thoughtful persons who in many instances began their investigations for the purpose of demonstrating that the alleged phenomena, when not fraud, were susceptible of explanation on the hypothesis of telepathy. These investigators usually soon encountered phenomena which could not be explained on either of the above hypotheses.

Finally the English Society for Psychical Research, composed of a large number of the more thoughtful scientists of Great Britain, Europe and America, was organized, and this body, with its American branch, has for a quarter of a century steadily, persistently and uninterruptedly prosecuted its research in the most scientific and painstaking manner. Among its active members have been many of the foremost psychologists, physical scientists and acute investigators in various special lines—men like Professor Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Dr. Charles Richet, Cesare Lombroso, and Professor William James.

It was not long before the investigations of this society attracted world-wide attention among the more thoughtful people. William E. Gladstone, a short time before his death, said, in speaking of the work of this society: "It is the most important work which is being done in the world to-day—by far the

most important." And to-day we find a large and constantly growing number of thinkers of the first rank in every land giving the most earnest consideration to this subject; while the great number of extremely able books that are appearing almost monthly from the presses of the leading houses, dealing with this subject, speaks in an eloquent manner of the growing popular interest.

Thus to-day we are confronted by a condition almost diametrically opposed to that which prevailed from 1850 to 1880. It will be remembered that Victor Hugo severely criticized the intolerance of science in the presence of psychical research, and some of the leading spiritualists of thirty years ago earnestly strove to show the religious leaders that with the steady advance of a soul-deadening materialism in society and even in the church, religion would find in psychic phenomena a powerful argument in favor of the doctrine of a future life. Religious leaders at that time, however, were not in a mood apparently to accept this suggestion, but to-day we find a growing tendency on the part of the more thoughtful members of the clergy to join in scientific investigations of a phenomenon which promises to be a powerful weapon in the attempt to beat back the forces of materialism.

We have before us four very notable volumes which have recently reached our office for review, and which well represent the growing interest in psychical research. The first which we shall notice is *The Psychic Riddle*, by the Rev. I. K. Funk, D.D., LL.D. For many years Dr. Funk has been the master spirit in a great orthodox religious publishing house and the editor of those important religious journals, *The Homiletic Review* and *The Missionary Review*. He was also editor-in-chief of *The Standard Dictionary*. If twenty years ago one had predicted that this great Lutheran clergyman would become one of the ablest and most critical yet broadly sympathetic investigators of spiritual phenomena, he would have been derided by nine out of ten readers of Dr. Funk's able publications. Yet in recent years this prominent clergyman has become one of the most earnest and efficient investigators of psychical phenomena in the New World. His former work, *The Widow's Mite*, published a few years since, was one of the best semi-scientific discussions of this great question that has appeared. Like everything written by Dr. Funk, it was

highly interesting; but it was far more than a fascinating volume. It was an important contribution to the literature of the new psychology—the literature dealing with a realm that even yet must be regarded as a dark continent whose shores alone have been but partially explored.

His new work, *The Psychic Riddle*, though not so large as the former book, is, we think, even more interesting and important than *The Widow's Mite*. In it, from first to last, the reader feels he is in the company of a critical investigator who is at once shrewdly skeptical yet sympathetic and open to conviction.

The work contains six chapters, the first two of which are largely concerned with the views of eminent men in regard to psychical phenomena and the reasons why the scientific study of this subject should be encouraged. Dr. Funk, without himself accepting the spiritualistic hypothesis, refers to the astounding drift toward its acceptance on the part of master scientists—such men as Cesare Lombroso of Italy and Charles Richet, the most famous physicist of France, both of whom have been forced by their investigations to accept the spiritualistic hypothesis, as years before Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace and Professor William Crookes were driven to the same conclusion after long personal investigations. Indeed, our author is amazed at the radical temper of the great scientists. He says:

"It is almost startling to one so conservative as I am to see how far really some of the ablest of the world's scientists now go. Sir William Crookes, accepting the presidency of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1898, in the presence of that august body did not hesitate to say that he had seen no reason to change his reports of actual spirit materializations witnessed and photographed by himself in his own home. In the April number, 1906, of the *Annals of Physical Science*—published simultaneously in Paris and London—that chiefest of French physicists, Charles Richet, hotly defended his recent marvelous reports of materialization séances which he tells us he witnessed under test conditions a short time before in Algiers—wonderful phenomena, spirits actually taking form so as to be seen and heard and handled. These extraordinary marvels Richet reported over his own name in a scientific magazine published under the direc-

tion of a committee made up of such well-known scientists as Sir William Crookes, Cesare Lombroso of Italy, Dr. Joseph Maxwell of France, Sir Oliver Lodge, men of international fame as trained scientists."

Dr. Funk is very insistent in urging his readers to divest their minds of the idea that the present world-wide interest in psychical research is due to ignorance, superstition or an unscientific temper born of man's desire to believe that the loved dead still exist. "The reader throughout the perusal of these strange stories," he says, "should bear in mind that it is not superstition, that it is not ignorance that is now pressing this psychic question upon the public mind; instead, it is the experience and observations and reasonings of such trained scientists as Lombroso of Italy; Richet and Flammarion and Maxwell of France; Crookes, Lodge and Wallace of England; Hyslop, James and (until his recent death) Hodgson of America."

His attitude throughout is that of a truly scientific man who believes that the riddles of the universe are here to be solved by man and for man's advantage.

"Let us," he says, "keep our souls in patience and our brains wholly sane. It is well to remember that electricity for twenty-three hundred years yielded scarcely any recognizable phenomena. Yes, amber could be excited a little by its electric current, and it could be made to raise the hair on a manikin. Yes, yes, currents sent through the foot of a frog would curiously contort it, which gained for the scientific discoverer of the fact the derisive nickname of 'The Frog's Dancing Master.' But little electricity was believed to be obtainable, and those who believed it something more than a trick did not venture to think that it would ever be anything more than a toy or curiosity. But now the laws are somewhat understood and this force, though only partially controlled and harnessed, does a goodly share of the world's work."

Of his own personal attitude he observes:

"Now understand me. I do not say that Spiritualism has been scientifically demonstrated. I say exactly the contrary, believing that we are many miles distant from such a demonstration. What I do say is that such a demonstration is to my mind, after nearly thirty years of investigation, far more likely

than are the probabilities that Spiritualism is not true; that the proofs in favor of its truth are much stronger than those against it; that to-day, as the proofs stand, a man is more logical, more sane, in accepting the Spiritualistic belief of the communion of spirits through the physical sensories than he is in rejecting it. In my judgment he to-day is wrong in either accepting or rejecting it."

[Chapters three, four and five deal with special experiments, many of them conducted by Dr. Funk himself, one chapter being devoted to the messages that claim to come from Dr. Richard Hodgson. Another highly interesting division deals with independent voices, and embraces Dr. Funk's somewhat extended personal investigations of this phase of the general investigation of psychical phenomena. Chapter five deals with "Typical Cases of Several Classes of Psychic Phenomena"; while the last chapter considers "Some Things that Seem Proven and Some Things that Seem Not Proven."

The general reader will find the entire volume as fascinating and compelling as romance, and to any person interested in psychical research it will be far more interesting than a well written novel. Dr. Funk is, we think, doing a very important service to the cause of religious advancement no less than to scientific progress, for in our age, when the dead hand of materialism is falling so heavily on church and society, all evidence that points to a continuance of life after the change we call death should receive serious attention.

In *Borderland of Psychical Research*, James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., LL.D., who was formerly professor of logic in Columbia University, and who since the death of Dr. Richard Hodgson has been ably carrying forward his great work, contributes another important volume to the literature of psychical research prepared for the general reader. This work shows something of the complex character of and the difficulties attending psychical investigation. In his opening words the professor strikes the key-note of the volume when he observes:

"I have here written on the more conservative side of the general question, and so have taken pains to show why it is necessary to be cautious about admitting supernormal phenomena. The book is devoted mainly to

normal and abnormal psychology, with philosophical reflections bearing upon the problems of both. It is intended, of course, that it shall be helpful to all who sympathize with the present movement to investigate the residual phenomena of mind, and yet do not understand how they may be connected with the accepted doctrines of traditional knowledge. To the present writer all new facts and theories must, in some way, find an assimilation with previous knowledge, and however great the departure involved in the discovery of the new, it must have some point of contact with the old. The present work, therefore, should serve as a preparation for the consideration of supernormal problems, especially upon the evidential side."

The book is very conservative in character, so much as at times almost to suggest the man who in his effort to stand straight was wont to lean over backwards. Still, such cautious and skeptical attitude is valuable on the part of scientists when they essay to explore a dark continent or to sail on an uncharted sea.

In the twelve chapters that constitute the work the following subjects are treated: "Sense Perception," "Interpreting and Associating Functions of the Mind," "Memory," "Dissociation and Obliviscence," "Illusions," "Hallucinations," "Pseudo-Spiritistic Phenomena," "Subconscious Action and Secondary Personality," "Mind and Body," "Hypnotism and Therapeutics," "Reincarnation," and "Reservations and Morals."

The spirit of the work is, as we have observed, rigidly critical; yet the author is no pessimist. He himself has been forced to entertain views which for years he did not accept. In the closing pages of this work we find the following lines:

"We are passing through the reactionary period against the exclusive otherworldliness of the past centuries, and as it has become a mark of intelligence to disbelieve all that the religious ages held sacred, we must expect scientific Philistines to parade their peculiar wisdom as the last word of omniscience. When the materialistic cycle has run its course and civilization has ended in repeating the experience of Sodom and Gomorrah, we shall expect sober thinking to begin again. We shall then learn what the larger view of the universe for a spiritual life means, and listen

to the advice which experience has always shown us in regard to the value of the belief which may even reconcile men to a life of pain and suffering. . . . I believe that the evidence for a future life is sufficient to make it the only rational hypothesis to account for the facts, but I do not believe that we have reached that amount of scientific proof which is necessary to make the belief general in the minds of the intellectual classes. The duty lies in further investigation, until its perplexities, which are many, have been removed. This is the necessary step in the establishment of a conviction that carries in its flux the destinies of the coming ages in their resurrection from the materialism of all our present life."

In the abridged edition of Frederic W. H. Myers' fundamental work, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, we have one of the most valuable contributions that has been made to the literature of psychic science. Many readers of THE ARENA will remember our extended review or book-study of Professor Myers' unabridged work when it appeared. It was an exhaustive treatise, filling two large volumes and published at a price prohibitory to many people. In it was marshaled the vast array of evidence on which the author's careful arguments and reasonings were based—evidence that might be said to be the very cream of authoritative data compiled during nineteen years of arduous labor of the English Society for Psychical Research, in which work from its inception Professor Myers had been one of the most untiring and efficient laborers. The author of this great work appreciated the fact that the exhaustive character of his treatise, while immensely important to students who had the time to devote to the subject, rendered it too lengthy for the general reader. He anticipated the demand for an abridged edition and indicated in many instances parts that might be omitted. His untimely death prevented him from preparing the abridged edition, but this work has now been most admirably performed by his gifted son, Leopold Hamilton Myers. The very extensive appendices to each chapter in the former work have been liberally but judiciously curtailed, and such other matter as could be omitted without material injury has been dispensed with, in order to bring the present work down to less than five hundred pages. Only those familiar

with the difficulties of such labor can realize what it meant to thus condense a work of between thirteen hundred and fourteen hundred pages in such a manner as to present each argument and sufficient evidential material to sustain and illustrate the author's contention. This has been achieved in an exceptionally happy manner by young Mr. Myers, with the result that we have here a work costing but one-fourth the price of the unabridged edition, yet containing the matter of special interest and worth to the general reader.

The work treats of "Disintegrations of Personality," "Genius," "Sleep," "Hypnotism," "Sensory Automatism," "Phantasms of the Dead," "Motor Automatism," and "Trance, Possession and Ecstasy." And here is also an epilogue in which the author, after indicating his own views, based on his investigations, passes to a deeply thoughtful argument on the grave importance of the great work to which he had dedicated his life. He recognized the fact that the authority of creeds and church was rapidly falling, but he believed that the result of the labors of the scientific psychical researchers would give new impetus to faith and raise "even higher than now the highest ideals of man."

This last discussion is, it seems to us, one of the noblest essays of our age—an essay that it would be well indeed if every clergyman could be induced to read.

Proofs of Life After Death, which has just been brought out by Herbert B. Turner & Company, is an interesting and important work compiled by Robert J. Thompson and embracing opinions as to a future life given by many scientists, psychical researchers, philosophers and eminent spiritualists, among whom are such thinkers as Professor N. S. Shaler, Professor Charles Richet, Camille Flammarion, Professor Brunot, Sir William Crookes, Professor Th. Flournoy, Professor Elmer Gates, Professor William James, Dr. Paul Joire, Dr. Lombroso, Professor S. Newcomb, Professor Hyslop, Dr. M. J. Savage, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, Cardinal Gibbons, Andrew Lang, and others scarcely less eminent. Many of these distinguished thinkers contributed especially to this symposium, and their views and opinions will be read with deep interest. The work, however, was prepared in 1901 or 1902, and things have moved so rapidly in

the world of psychic research since it was compiled, that the views of some of the investigators have become much more pronounced than they were when they contributed to the symposium. This is notably the fact in the case of Cesare Lombroso. When he contributed to Mr. Thompson's work he did not consider the question of a future life as solved by any means, though he thought the probabilities were in favor of such contention. But in the January issue of the *Grand Magazine* of the present year, Professor Lombroso announces his firm conviction of the truth of the spiritualistic hypothesis. But in spite of the fact that in a few instances the thinkers who wrote for the symposium or whose opinions are here cited, have advanced to more positive grounds since the book was compiled, it is a volume of real merit, not the least interesting part being the writings of Mr. Thompson introducing the subject and the different groups of thinkers. There is also a very suggestive chapter near the close of the work, entitled "Immortality from a New Standpoint," by Professor Elmer Gates.

The work, which is handsomely printed, is a volume that will prove helpful to students of life who are seeking further light on the question of the ancient Arabian poet: "If a man die, shall he live again?"