

OBITER SCRIFTA.

ERRING SPIRITS.

The spooks have been at work again, and that unfortunate gentleman, Christian August Haase, for whose extradition to Germany on a charge of swindling an order has just been made, possesses an excellent chance of suffering for the misdeeds with which they are credited. His predecessors in the art of "magnetic healing" have been at times so lacking in luck as to come into the London courts in very similar circumstances. Indeed the story told at Bow-street this week is so old, and has been worked and exposed so frequently as to make it almost past belief that sane creatures on the earth are still to be beguiled. Thirty years ago the machinations of a "magnetic healer" and his wife were thoroughly shown up in the London courts. It may serve a useful purpose to recall some of the salient features of that trial. The prosecutrix was a lady of ample private fortune; the prisoners, a Boston, Mass., couple resident in London.

THE SAME OLD STORY.

"Brother Willie" and "Sister Bertie" this worthy pair soon became. Having introduced the lady to the spirit of her dead mother, they speedily caused the shade of the departed lady to dictate terms. The daughter must not wear her jewels; they contained so much magnetism that before she knew where she was they would whisk her off to the spirit world; her wardrobe, too, was also dangerous in the same way. With monumental self-abnegation "Sister Bertie" took both perils under her wing, and by wearing the jewels and the fine silks and satins, bravely risked the danger of being magnetised into an immaterial spook. The victim was kept well apprised of the hang of the ethereal market, and when the time came for her to make her will, devising everything she had to her devoted brother and sister, she obligingly did so. Just when the estimable pair had stripped the innocent bare of all she had, a rival magnetic healer bobbed up, exposed the knavery, assisted the lady to recover her property and to get Sister Bertie twelve months' hard labour. Brother Willie meanwhile had retreated in sorrow into spirit-land, and did not materialise at the trial.

INTELLIGENT ANTICIPATION.

In good time after the event, the world was apprised of the "prophecy" of the lady decreeing the assassination of the King and Queen of Serbia. Also it was presented with an opportunity of purchasing the garment of light worn by the prophetess when the vaticination was uttered. But we are all fatally familiar, too, with the little mistake which arose in connection with the announcement in New York of the death in the West Indies of Mr. Hoyt Sherman, the millionaire brother of the famous General. On the evening of the announcement, Spiritualistic New York assembled and summoned the spirit of the great financier. It told them what a good time it was having in the Elysian fields to which it had gained such rapid and easy entry. This was all very satisfactory. Only Mr. Sherman, with a barefaced disregard for the romantic and dramatic, was so unkind as to turn up in New York in the flesh. He never had been dead, hadn't been drowned, hadn't been overboard, hadn't been anything except a happy holiday-maker—and the victim of yellow journalism.

POOR LINDLEY MURRAY.

At a spiritualistic seance a lady who had suffered many things from her youth from the learning of English grammar, asked the medium to be permitted to speak with the soul of Lindley Murray. She was told after a while that it was in attendance. "Are you the soul of Lindley Murray?" she tremblingly inquired. "Yes, I am," was the reply. The experience of that lady recalls one which came the way of a London journalist who was invited to attend a seance just after the Gainsborough "Duchess" had been stolen. He asked that the spirit of the lady who had sat for the missing picture might be summoned. Duly the shade was announced. The medium evidently had not the vaguest notion as to the period in which the portrait had been painted, so the visitor asked him to inquire if the Duchess remembered anything about it. "Do you remember sitting for your portrait at Gainsborough?" inquired the medium. "Yes, I do," came the reply. The seance ended hurriedly.

FIFTY YEARS OF SPIRITISM.

In the grave and stately pages of Chambers' Encyclopædia is a lengthy article describing the origin of the spiritualistic cult. Need it be said that it originated in New York, and that the manifestations were precisely similar to those which have been examined and exposed scores of times elsewhere? The movement spread to England, and the Earl of Onslow should have been a proud and happy man, for at his famous Surrey seat, Clandon, the same sort of signs and wonders manifested themselves. The late Lord Bute and other distinguished members of the Psychical Research Society desired to investigate the phenomena. Lord Onslow has no soul for ghosts, and is not a psychicist. He took a shorter cut. He caused it to be known that he and all adult members of his family would for the future sleep with loaded revolvers at their sides, and would not hesitate to shoot at any ghost which came within aim. Since then Clandon has not been troubled with so much as a ghost of a spirit or an echo of a rap.

TURKEY'S MILITARY STRENGTH.

(By a Recent Traveller in Turkey.)

Whether or no there is to be immediate war between Turkey and Bulgaria, the Turks assuredly are not erring on the side of unpreparedness. For weeks, nay, for months, past, they have been pushing forward their military preparations with a fevered and yet orderly activity which is as surprising as it is wholly admirable. They have taken advantage of every plea that ingenious casuistry could suggest to move the necessary pawns on the chess-board. The supposed Albanian difficulty was eagerly seized upon by the Porte, and, being gripped, was turned to the utmost possible advantage. It enabled the Seraskierat (the Sultan's War Office) to mobilise great numbers of reservists, and to move them from the provinces of Asia Minor, which are their homes, to positions convenient to the frontier lines, which the Porte has rightly considered to be threatened. In good sooth, the Turks are a marvellous people. I have known them now for a long, long time, and yet as each year passes I am further astounded and impressed by their wonderful command of circumstances, and the amazing wealth in fertility of resource that they are invariably able to draw upon when occasion calls for it or necessity impels. The State, as a State, is wholly bankrupt—has been bankrupt, indeed, so long that folks have almost forgotten to think about it. And yet at the present time, as indeed before and throughout the Greco-Turkish war of '97, money is being poured out with a lavish and unsparing hand to meet the heavy claims involved by the action of the Bulgarian Committees in the Macedonian Provinces. It is, of course, the secret of Polichinelle whose is that lavish hand, and that it is from his Majesty's private purse that all these heavy expenses are being defrayed. That, perhaps, is as it should be—though there again wonder grows that the Sultan should deliberately and of persistence drive his country into ruin, merely to save it from that ruin when it is on the point of being overwhelmed. It looks almost as though he wore his tongue in his imperial cheek, to flout the world at large, and to prove to Europe, to his people, and maybe to convince even himself anew, that he is veritably the Supreme God out of the Machine to whom all things are permitted, and to whom everything is possible if he so desire.

Be that as it may, Turkey, apprehending, as she does, a conflict with Bulgaria for certain, and probably with Serbia also in, as we must expect, the immediate future, has taken all the precautions that naturally devolved upon her to meet the emergency. For months past Turkish transports have been daily landing troops—infantry, cavalry, artillery, at Dediagatch, Cavalla, and Salonika. Before I left the country some weeks since there had already been concentrated at Ferisovitch a force of one hundred and twenty-five battalions, and at other points of vantage convenient to the frontiers of Old Serbia and of Bulgaria had been assembled further large masses of men amounting, as I am assured, in the aggregate to two hundred and thirty thousand infantry, with whom were seventy-two batteries of artillery, making in all five hundred and thirty-two guns. Since then—for I am now speaking of a month back—yet another fifty-two battalions of Reservists have been called to the colours in Macedonia to repress the insurrection that pervades those provinces. This force, as will be understood, can be employed on its pacific mission without in any way depleting the big concentration camps in the vicinity of the Bulgarian frontiers. It is suggested in various organs of the Continental Press that the men of the Turkish armies in Macedonia are left unfed, and in their starving condition are selling their rifles and ammunition to the Bulgarian insurgents in order to obtain food. I have every reason to believe that these statements emanate from Bulgarian sources and are in every way untrustworthy. The Turk may be a savage, a barbarian, what you will—but he is in no sense a congenital idiot, and it would no more occur to the Turkish soldiers—I say it confidently—to sell their arms to the enemy arrayed against them than it would have occurred to British troops in South Africa to hand their weapons to the Boers.

So much for Turkey in arms in Macedonia; but in her Roumelian province of Adrianople, where she is even more cheek by jowl with Bulgaria, she is no less well prepared. When I left Constantinople some three weeks since I was given to understand that the Turks had massed along the Roumelian frontier a force of not less than one hundred and twenty-five thousand men. This force has now been augmented by twenty-five thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry, and with it fifty batteries of artillery. It may be said therefore that Turkey is well prepared for eventualities. It must, however, be borne in mind that the numbers of available troops I have given do not at all represent the sum of Turkey's ultimate resources. If needful His Majesty is able to equip and place in the field within a very short space of time not less than another two hundred and fifty thousand men. Of these forces many no doubt must of necessity be ill-clothed and ill-shod; but without question all will be well armed, and there is no lack of available ammunition. I have noticed that great numbers of the men landed at Macedonian ports are equipped with the Martini-Peabody rifle—a weapon of which Turkey acquired vast numbers at the time of her war with Russia. This arm, albeit possessing a range greatly inferior to the Mauser, the Mannlicher (the Bulgarian weapon), or even the Berdan rifle, is yet admirably adapted for the sort of