

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "RAYMOND."\*

For the information of readers who have not had the opportunity of hearing this book discussed, we will first explain its *raison d'être*.

Raymond, the young son of Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, was killed at the Front during the autumn of 1915. He was a young man of physical beauty, judging from the pictures, and of great personal charm. His parents looked forward to a brilliant future for him.

The first portion of the book is devoted chiefly to letters from young Raymond relating to his life at the Front. Bright, happy descriptive letters with no hint of *grousing*.

Indeed, he seemed to possess the happy gift of seeing the sunny side of everything.

Then came the short announcement of his untimely death. His last letter says: "I shall be insufferable, I know I shall want everything done for me on the word of command. Never mind—roll on the end of the war!"

After his death, his father, who had before experience in such matters, determined to endeavour to get into communication with him by means of a medium—and the second portion of the book gives detailed account of these proceedings.

The rest of the family who before Raymond's death took no interest in spiritualism also communicated with him by the same means.

To those who are unacquainted with the procedure of sésances, we would explain that the communication is established by means of a medium. The medium in this case was chiefly Mrs. Leonard, whose guide or "control" was a young Indian girl Feda. It is Feda who directly communicates between Raymond and his friends.

In attempting any explanation, we feel that we ourselves are in strange waters and will therefore pass on to the experience of the life beyond, which Raymond is able to describe by these means.

"Mother, darling, I am so happy, and so much more because you are." If he comes to them at Christmas "there must be no sadness—I don't want to be a ghost at the feast."

His mother tells him she will put a chair for him; he replies he will come and sit in it.

"Can you fancy you see me in white robes? Mind, I didn't care for them at first and I wouldn't wear them. Mother don't go doing too much, you tire yourself and it troubles me."

"There are men here and there are women here. I don't think they stand to each other quite the same as they did on the earth plane, but they seem to have the same feeling to each other with a different expression of it."

Raymond seems puzzled by the material feeling of the other world, and that the material

desires go on for some time after people have passed over.

"When they first come, they do want things. Some want meat and some strong drink. But when they've had one or two they don't seem to want it so much."

"You know flowers, how they decay. We have flowers here. Your decayed flowers flower again with us—beautiful flowers."

Another time, Sir Oliver receives a message by automatic writing.

"I have been here such a long time; please tell father I am here. Father, it was difficult to say all one felt, but now I don't care. I love you; I love you intensely. Father, please speak to me. I have been home to-day; I spoke to mother; I don't know if she heard me; I rather think so." Again he implores his father to "keep jolly" at Christmas, or it will hurt him horribly. "I shall never be out of the house one instant on Christmas Day."

He speaks of progress in the other world and of passing to higher spheres, though "those who are fond of you never go too far to come back to you; never too far to meet you when you pass over. You gravitate here to the ones you're fond of. You gravitate to the place you're fitted for. I've seen some boys pass on who had nasty ideas and vices. They go to a place I'm very glad I didn't have to go to, but its not hell exactly. More like a reformatory. It's a place where you're given a chance, and when you want to look for something better, you're given a chance to have it." When he was permitted to see the Highest Sphere, "it made me wish in the few seconds I was able to think of anything, that I had led one of the purest lives imaginable."

This is, perhaps, the most widely discussed book of the hour, and it would be impossible to read it without its leaving a strong impression of some kind.

Are Sir Oliver Lodge's methods the answer to the longing cry:—

"O God that it were possible for one short hour to see

The souls we love that they might tell us  
Where and what they be."

There are two questions which confront us as we read: *Can* such communications be established? Is such communication in accordance with the will of God? In answer to the first question there are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy, but though the veil be very thin, we must beware how we ruthlessly tear it asunder, lest we loose forces we cannot again control.

Tennyson expresses this reticence as to the unseen in his reference to the raising of Lazarus:—

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?  
He told it not; or something sealed  
The lips of the Evangelist."

It should be remembered that it was a witch that had power to call back Samuel, who asked, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?"

\* By Sir Oliver Lodge. Methuen & Co., London.

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