

No less than four other European waters were also called Rhodanos by the Greeks, but their later history has been more varied than that of the Rhône. One Rodanus, as it was called in Latin, flows into the Moselle and is to-day known as the Ron, or Ren. A little stream now called the Rone passes through Mans. There was once a third Rhodanos somewhere in the Garonne basin, but it has long since disappeared, at least in name, while in Italy the Rodano that joins the River Po was called Rhodanos in Greek and Rodanus in Latin.

The origin of this word has been explained in various ways. A Latin philologist of some fifteen hundred years ago asserted that 'rho' was a Celtic prefix meaning 'too much' and that 'danos' came from the Hebrew root, '*dan*,' meaning 'judge,' which was also the name of one of the twelve sons of Jacob. But modern research cannot take such naïve efforts seriously. 'Rhodanos' is now supposed to be derived from '*rot*,' a secondary form of the Indo-European root, '*ret*.' This root underlies the Latin word, '*rota*,' which literally means something that runs, and the Irish verb, '*rethim*,' 'I run.' It was some Ligurian variation of this ancient word that the Greeks heard when they went to Marseille and that they transformed into 'Rhodanos' when they wrote a letter home.

THE SPIRITS TALK TO CONAN DOYLE

WE ARE ABOUT TO DIE—you and I. My age is just seventy, and I suppose an actuary would give me five more years.'

These strange words from an open letter recently written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to 'those of my own generation' may sound a little plaintive to the unenlightened, but to their author they are full of cheer. For he goes on to explain, not only that his belief in a future world is unshaken, but that he positively looks forward to an infinity spent in tapping tables and conversing with agitated ex-

plorers of the region beyond the grave. He admits that his belief in personal survival has occasionally faltered, but, he adds, 'always, when I have finished, my judgment, which has so seldom failed me in affairs of this world, tells me that there is no error and that this is indeed the greatest release of consolation and knowledge that has ever come to mankind.'

His faith in spiritualism he justifies as follows:—

'For eighty years, it has withstood all human ridicule, prejudice, and misrepresentation. It grows, increases, and broadens. It is a religion of knowledge and it is gained by getting in contact with Intelligences which are on a higher sphere of spirituality and power than ourselves.'

The creator of Sherlock Holmes does, however, admit that many psychical phenomena are vain and foolish, taken by themselves, 'but,' he continues, 'they have a definite object for which they are well adapted, and which, in fact, they have attained. That object is to attract attention and to show the existence of an invisible and apparently intelligent force.'

The messages emanating from this force are, he contends, the most important event in the history of the world. 'They constitute the first definite, authentic, detailed news as to the fate which has been reserved for all of us.'

To that fate Conan Doyle looks forward with positive enthusiasm and he closes his letter by describing how he converted an old man of eighty to Spiritualism.

'He used to come to our meetings and speak,' writes Sir Arthur. 'When he was eighty-three, he said from the platform, "I am three years old, and there"—pointing to me—"is my father." Soon he died in great peace. After he had lain rigid for some minutes, and all thought that life had gone, he opened his mouth and cried in a loud voice, "God bless Conan Doyle." Then he returned into death. That cry from the grave was one of the rewards which have come to me as ample payment for my work.'